



**Back by  
Popular Demand!**

*15-Min!*  
**A Christmas Carol**



*Based on the original story by Charles Dickens  
Adapted and directed by Stephen Burdman*

# *The Tale:*

The story opens seven years after the death of Jacob Marley, the former business partner of the elderly miser, Ebenezer Scrooge. Scrooge disdains the holidays and their focus on giving instead of greed. After turning down an invitation to dine with his nephew's family, refusing to donate to the poor, and cutting his clerk's pay for wanting to go home early on Christmas Eve, Scrooge retires for the evening, calling Christmas a "humbug." During the night, he is visited by the ghost of his partner, Jacob, who has spent the last seven years wandering the earth, carrying heavy chains, and unable to reach the afterlife. Jacob's ghost offers Scrooge a stark warning about the importance of charity, family, and love, and says he will give Scrooge one chance to avoid the same cruel fate that Jacob suffers.

During the night, Scrooge is visited by three ghosts. The Ghost of Christmas Past, who shows Scrooge how disappointed those he used to love are in the man he has become. The Ghost of Christmas Present comes next, and shows Scrooge how his greed is affecting the lives of others. Lastly, the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come arrives. Will Scrooge change his ways and save his soul?

*Stay tuned...*

## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

The full title of the book is "*A Christmas Carol. In Prose. Being a Ghost Story of Christmas.*"

## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

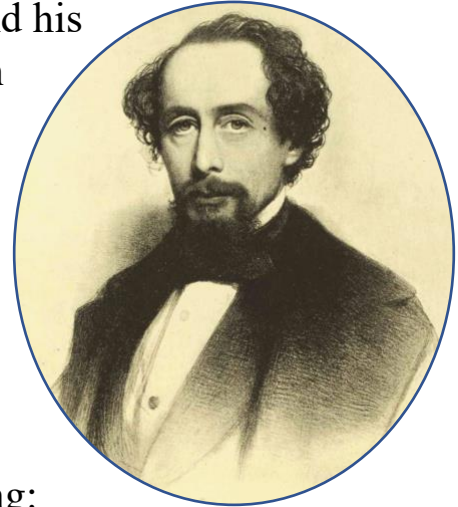
The tradition of eating turkey for Christmas dinner was popularized with "*A Christmas Carol.*" Prior to the publication of the novella, the traditional Christmas meal was a goose, which the Cratchit family eats when Scrooge is visited by the Ghost of Christmas Present. Turkeys were incredibly expensive and only consumed by the rich, making Scrooge's gift of a turkey to the Cratchits a grander gesture than we may recognize today.

## *The Author:*

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is widely considered one of the greatest authors of Victorian England. At the age of 12,

Charles's father, John, who accumulated debt far beyond his means as a clerk for the Royal Navy, was imprisoned in Marshalsea debtor's prison. While John's wife and young children joined John in the prison, as was custom at the time, Charles began to board with a family friend and took on work at a boot-blackening warehouse. The unsafe and strenuous working conditions of the warehouse would fuel Dickens's interest in the socio-economic burdens of the poor—a theme that would appear throughout his works, including:

*"A Tale of Two Cities," "Oliver Twist," and, of course, "A Christmas Carol."* When John Dickens's mother died, she bequeathed him 450 pounds, enough for John to pay his debts and for Charles to leave his



### ***DID YOU KNOW?***

Because Dickens was engaged in a dispute with Chapman and Hall Publishers over the declining sales of his previous book, Dickens paid for the publication of *"A Christmas Carol"* himself. He insisted on such high production values, including a leather cover and gold gilded edges, that despite the fact that the initial run of 6,000 copies sold out in only three weeks at 5 shillings each, he only made 230 pounds off of the entire run.

indenture at the boot-blackening warehouse. With no education and no direction, Dickens worked various jobs from law clerk to actor, eventually becoming a political journalist covering the House of Commons. This position allowed him access to various facets of upper-class society, and he parlayed his wit and demeanor into the position of editor at *"Bentley's Miscellany,"* a literary magazine. While working as editor, he published his first commercial success, *"The Pickwick Papers,"* a series of

narratives produced to accompany a set of engravings commissioned by Chapman and Hall publishers in 1836. Dickens became an immediate star, and over the next five years, four of his novels: *Oliver Twist,*





**"Scrooge Extinguishes the  
First of The Three Spirits"**

John Leech

1843

Steel engraving

6.7 cm x 5.3 cm vignette

Fourth illustration in *A Christmas  
Carol* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1843),  
facing p. 78.

## *Famous Scrooges*

Ebenezer Scrooge has become an iconic character both in literature and performance. Some of the more famous performances are by:

### Film:

Alastair Sim (1951)

Albert Finney (1970) in the musical "*Scrooge*"

George C. Scott (1984)

Bill Murray (1988) in "*Scrooged*"

Michael Caine (1992) in "*A Muppet Christmas Carol*"

Colin Baker (2015)

Simon Russell Beale (2020)

### Voice:

Tim Curry (1997)

Simon Callow (2001)

Jim Carrey (2009)

### Television:

James Earl Jones (1990)

Patrick Stewart (1999)

Kelsey Grammar (2004)

Guy Pearce (2019)

### Cartoon Characters:

Mister Magoo

Fred Flintstone

Scrooge McDuck

Yosemite Sam

## FUN FACT:

Stage Adaptations of "*A Christmas Carol*" can require up to 43 performers to portray all of the characters. New York Classical Theatre performs it with only two performers.

Patrick Stewart occasionally performs the entire play by himself.