

# A Christmas Carol

A Reading A-Z Level Z2 Leveled Book  
Word Count: 2,711



## Connections

### Writing

Imagine what Scrooge's life would have been like if he had married Belle. Write an alternate ending to this part.

### Social Studies

Create a timeline showing events from Part 4. Describe each event and discuss with a partner how Scrooge's relationships changed over time.

# A Christmas Carol

Part 4



Adapted from the Writings of Charles Dickens  
Illustrated by Yevgenia Nayberg

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# A Christmas Carol



"I have endeavoured in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it."

*Their faithful Friend and Servant, C. D.*

*December, 1843*

Adapted from the Writings of Charles Dickens  
Illustrated by Yevgenia Nayberg

## Focus Question

Do people grow wiser as they age?  
Did Scrooge grow wiser?

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## Words to Know

agitation	jovial
apprenticed	pillaged
aspirations	pinioned
avarice	plundered
brigands	pommel
brood	principle
capacious	render
comely	repentance
corroborated	reproach
despoil	supposition
domestic	tumult
irrepressible	uproarious

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### Correlation

#### LEVEL Z2

Fountas & Pinnell	Y-Z
Reading Recovery	N/A
DRA	70+



*In Part 3 of A Christmas Carol, Scrooge is visited by the first of three spirits, the Ghost of Christmas Past. The spirit takes Scrooge back to his last lonely day at boarding school when his sister arrives to bring him home for Christmas.*

**T**hey had but that moment left the school behind them and they were now in the busy thoroughfares of a city, where shadowy passengers passed and repassed; where shadowy carts and coaches battle for the way, and all the strife and **tumult** of a real city were. It was made plain enough, by the dressing of the shops, that here too it was Christmas time again; but it was evening, and the streets were lighted up.

The Ghost stopped at a certain warehouse door, and asked Scrooge if he knew it.

“Know it!” said Scrooge. “Was I not **apprenticed** here?”

They went in. At sight of an old gentleman in a Welsh wig sitting behind a high desk, Scrooge cried in great excitement:

“Why, it’s old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it’s Fezziwig alive again!”

Old Fezziwig laid down his pen, and looked up at the clock, which pointed to the hour of seven. He rubbed his hands; adjusted his **capacious** waistcoat; laughed; and called out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, **jovial** voice:

“Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick!”

Scrooge’s former self, now grown a young man, came briskly in, accompanied by his fellow-prentice.

“Dick Wilkins, to be sure,” said Scrooge to the Ghost. “Bless me, yes. There he is. He was very much attached to me, was Dick. Poor Dick. Dear, dear.”

“Yo ho, my boys!” said Fezziwig. “No more work to-night. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, Ebenezer. Let’s have the shutters up,” cried old Fezziwig, with a sharp clap of his hands, “before a man can say Jack Robinson.”

You wouldn’t believe how those two fellows went at it. They charged into the street with the shutters—one, two, three! Had them up in their places—four, five, six! Barred them and pinned them—seven, eight, nine—and came back before you could have got to twelve, panting like race-horses.

“Hilli-ho!” cried old Fezziwig, skipping down from the high desk, with wonderful agility. “Clear away, my lads, and let’s have lots of room here. Hilli-ho, Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer.”

Clear away! There was nothing they wouldn’t have cleared away, or couldn’t have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on. It was done in a minute. Every movable was packed off, as if it were dismissed from public life for evermore.

The floor was swept and watered, the lamps were trimmed, fuel was heaped upon the fire. The warehouse was as snug, and warm, and dry, and bright a ballroom, as you would desire to see upon a winter’s night.

In came a fiddler with a music-book, and went up to the lofty desk, and made an orchestra of it, and tuned like fifty stomach-aches. In came Mrs Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile.

In came the three Miss Fezziwigs, beaming and lovable. In came the six young followers whose hearts they broke. In came all the young men and women employed in the business.

In came the housemaid, with her cousin, the baker. In came the cook, with her brother’s particular friend, the milkman. In came the boy from over the way, who was suspected of not having board enough from his master. He was trying to hide himself behind the girl from next door but one, who was proved to have had her ears pulled by her mistress.

In they all came, one after another; some shyly, some boldly, some gracefully, some awkwardly, some pushing, some pulling; in they all came, anyhow and everyhow. Away they all went, twenty couple at once; hands half round and back again the other way; down the middle and up again; round and round in various stages of affectionate grouping.

Old Fezziwig clapped his hands to stop the dance, and cried out, "Well done!" as the fiddler plunged his hot face into a pot of porter, especially provided for that purpose.

There were more dances, and more dances, and there was cake, and there were mince-pies. When the clock struck eleven, this **domestic** ball broke up. Mr and Mrs Fezziwig took their stations, one on either side of the door. They shook hands with every person individually as he or she went out, and wished him or her a Merry Christmas.

When everybody had retired but the two apprentices, they did the same to them. Thus the cheerful voices died away, and the lads were left to their beds; which were under a counter in the back-shop.

During the whole of this time, Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He **corroborated** everything, remembered everything, enjoyed everything, and underwent the strangest **agitation**. It was not until now, when the bright faces of his former self and Dick were turned from them, that he remembered the Ghost.

He became conscious that it was looking full upon him, while the light upon its head burnt very clear.

"A small matter," said the Ghost, "to make these silly folks so full of gratitude."

"Small!" echoed Scrooge.

The Spirit signed to him to listen to the two apprentices, who were pouring out their hearts in praise of Fezziwig: and when he had done so, said,

"Why! Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?"

"It isn't that," said Scrooge, heated by the remark, and speaking unconsciously like his former, not his latter, self. "It isn't that, Spirit. He has the power to **render** us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count them up: what then? The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune."

He felt the Spirit's glance, and stopped.

"What is the matter?" asked the Ghost.

“Nothing in particular,” said Scrooge.

“Something, I think?” the Ghost insisted.

“No,” said Scrooge, “No. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now. That’s all.”

His former self turned down the lamps as he gave utterance to the wish; and Scrooge and the Ghost again stood side by side in the open air.

“My time grows short,” observed the Spirit. “Quick!”

This was not addressed to Scrooge, or to any one whom he could see, but it produced an immediate effect. For again Scrooge saw himself. He was older now; a man in the prime of life. His face had not the harsh and rigid lines of later years; but it had begun to wear the signs of care and **avarice**. There was an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye, which showed the passion that had taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall.

He was not alone, but sat by the side of a fair young girl in a mourning-dress. In her eyes there were tears, which sparkled in the light that shone out of the Ghost of Christmas Past.

“It matters little,” she said, softly. “To you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve.”

“What Idol has displaced you?” he rejoined.

“A golden one.”

“This is the even-handed dealing of the world!” he said. “There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!”

“You fear the world too much,” she answered, gently. “All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid **reproach**. I have seen your nobler **aspirations** fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?”

“What then?” he retorted. “Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you.”

She shook her head.

“Am I?”

"Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so, until, in good season, we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You are changed. When it was made, you were another man."

"I was a boy," he said impatiently.

"Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are," she returned. "I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I have thought of it, and can release you."

"Have I ever sought release?"

"In words? No. Never."

"In what, then?"

"In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in another atmosphere of life; another Hope as its great end. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this had never been between us," said the girl, looking mildly, but with steadiness, upon him; "tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no!"

He seemed to yield to the justice of this **supposition**, in spite of himself. But he said with a struggle, "You think not?"

"I would gladly think otherwise if I could," she answered, "Heaven knows. When I have learned a Truth like this, I know how strong and irresistible it must be. But if you were free today, tomorrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a girl without a dowry—you who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by Gain. Or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your one guiding **principle** to do so, do I not know that your **repentance** and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were."

He was about to speak; but with her head turned from him, she resumed.

"You may—the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will—have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. May you be happy in the life you have chosen."

She left him, and they parted.



“Spirit!” said Scrooge, “show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?”

“One shadow more!” exclaimed the Ghost.

“No more!” cried Scrooge. “No more, I don’t wish to see it! Show me no more!”

But the relentless Ghost **pinioned** him in both his arms, and forced him to observe what happened next.

They were in another scene and place; a room, not very large or handsome, but full of comfort. Near to the winter fire sat a beautiful young girl, so like that last that Scrooge believed it was the same, until he saw her, now a **comely** matron, sitting opposite her daughter. The noise in this room was perfectly tumultuous, for there were more children there, than Scrooge in his agitated state of mind could count. Unlike the celebrated herd in the poem, they were not forty children conducting themselves like one, but every child was conducting itself like forty.

The consequences were **uproarious** beyond belief; but no one seemed to care; on the contrary, the mother and daughter laughed heartily, and enjoyed it very much.

The latter, soon beginning to mingle in the sports, got **pillaged** by the young **brigands** most ruthlessly. What would I not have given to be one of them. Though I never could have been so rude, no, no! I wouldn’t for the wealth of all the world have crushed that braided hair, and torn it down; and for the precious little shoe, I wouldn’t have plucked it off, to save my life.

As to measuring her waist in sport, as they did, bold young **brood**, I couldn’t have done it. I should have expected my arm to have grown round it for a punishment, and never come straight again. And yet I should have dearly liked to have touched her lips; to have questioned her, that she might have opened them; to have looked upon the lashes of her downcast eyes, and never raised a blush.

I should have dearly liked to have let loose waves of hair, an inch of which would be a keepsake beyond price. In short, I should have liked, I do confess, to have had the lightest licence of a child, and yet to have been man enough to know its value.



A knocking at the door was heard, and such a rush immediately ensued that she with laughing face and **plundered** dress was borne towards it the centre of a flushed and boisterous group.

She was just in time to greet the father, who came home attended by a man laden with Christmas toys and presents. Then the shouting and the struggling, and the onslaught that was made on the defenceless porter.

The scaling him with chairs for ladders to dive into his pockets, **despoil** him of brown-paper parcels, hold on tight by his cravat, hug him round his neck, **pommel** his back, and kick his legs in **irrepressible** affection. The shouts of wonder and delight with which the development of every package was received.

The terrible announcement that the baby had been taken in the act of putting a doll's frying-pan into his mouth, and was more than suspected of having swallowed a fictitious turkey, glued on a wooden platter. The immense relief of finding this a false alarm.

The joy, and gratitude, and ecstasy. They are all indescribable alike. It is enough that by degrees the children and their emotions got out of the parlour, and by one stair at a time, up to the top of the house; where they went to bed.

And now Scrooge looked on more attentively than ever, when the master of the house, having his daughter leaning fondly on him, sat down with her and her mother at his own fireside. When he thought that such another creature, quite as graceful and as full of promise, might have called him father, and been a spring-time in the haggard winter of his life, his sight grew very dim indeed.

"Belle," said the husband, turning to his wife with a smile, "I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon."

"Who was it?"

"Guess!"

"How can I? Tut, don't I know," she added in the same breath, laughing as he laughed. "Mr Scrooge."

"Mr Scrooge it was. I passed his office window; and as it was not shut up, and he had a candle inside, I could scarcely help seeing him.

His partner lies upon the point of death, I hear; and there he sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe."

"Spirit!" said Scrooge in a broken voice, "remove me from this place."

"I told you these were shadows of the things that have been," said the Ghost. "That they are what they are, do not blame me!"

"Remove me!" Scrooge exclaimed, "I cannot bear it!"

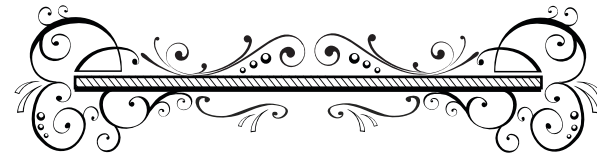
He turned upon the Ghost, and seeing that it looked upon him with a face, in which in some strange way there were fragments of all the faces it had shown him, wrestled with it.

"Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!"

Scrooge observed that its light was burning high and bright; and dimly connecting that with its influence over him, he seized the extinguisher-cap, and pressed it down upon its head.

The Spirit dropped beneath it, so that the extinguisher covered its whole form; but though Scrooge pressed it down with all his force, he could not hide the light, which streamed from under it, in an unbroken flood upon the ground.

He was conscious of being exhausted, and overcome by an irresistible drowsiness; and, further, of being in his own bedroom. He gave the cap a parting squeeze, in which his hand relaxed; and had barely time to reel to bed, before he sank into a heavy sleep.



## Glossary

<b>agitation</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a state of excitement, worry, or disturbance (p. 7)
<b>apprenticed</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	learned a skill or trade from a skilled professional (p. 4)
<b>aspirations</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	high hopes or ambitious goals (p. 10)
<b>avarice</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	intense desire for money or things; greed (p. 9)
<b>brigands</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	groups of thieves or robbers (p. 14)
<b>brood</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a group of children belonging to a particular family (p. 14)
<b>capacious</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	capable of containing a large amount; roomy (p. 4)
<b>comely</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	attractive or with a pleasing appearance, often referring to a woman (p. 13)
<b>corroborated</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	supported or confirmed something with evidence or other information (p. 7)
<b>despoil</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	to damage or ruin something; to remove valuables or possessions with force (p. 15)
<b>domestic</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	of or relating to one's family or household; relating to or occurring in a particular country (p. 7)

<b>irrepressible</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	unable to be controlled; filled with enthusiasm and energy (p. 15)
<b>jovial</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	good-natured or joyful; friendly (p. 4)
<b>pillaged</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	robbed in a destructive way, especially during war (p. 14)
<b>pinioned</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	restrained, held, or tied someone's arms or legs (p. 13)
<b>plundered</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	robbed of everything valuable (p. 15)
<b>pommel</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	to hit or strike something over and over ( <i>British spelling</i> ) (p. 15)
<b>principle</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a basic value or ideal that guides an action or decision (p. 12)
<b>render</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	to cause someone or something to end up a certain way (p. 8)
<b>repentance</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the expression of regret or sorrow for one's actions (p. 12)
<b>reproach</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	an act or expression of disapproval or criticism (p. 10)
<b>supposition</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	an idea or theory believed to be true without proof or confirmation (p. 12)
<b>tumult</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	loud noise and commotion, often from a crowd; a state of disturbance or disorder (p. 3)
<b>uproarious</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	very loud; causing laughter or excitement (p. 13)