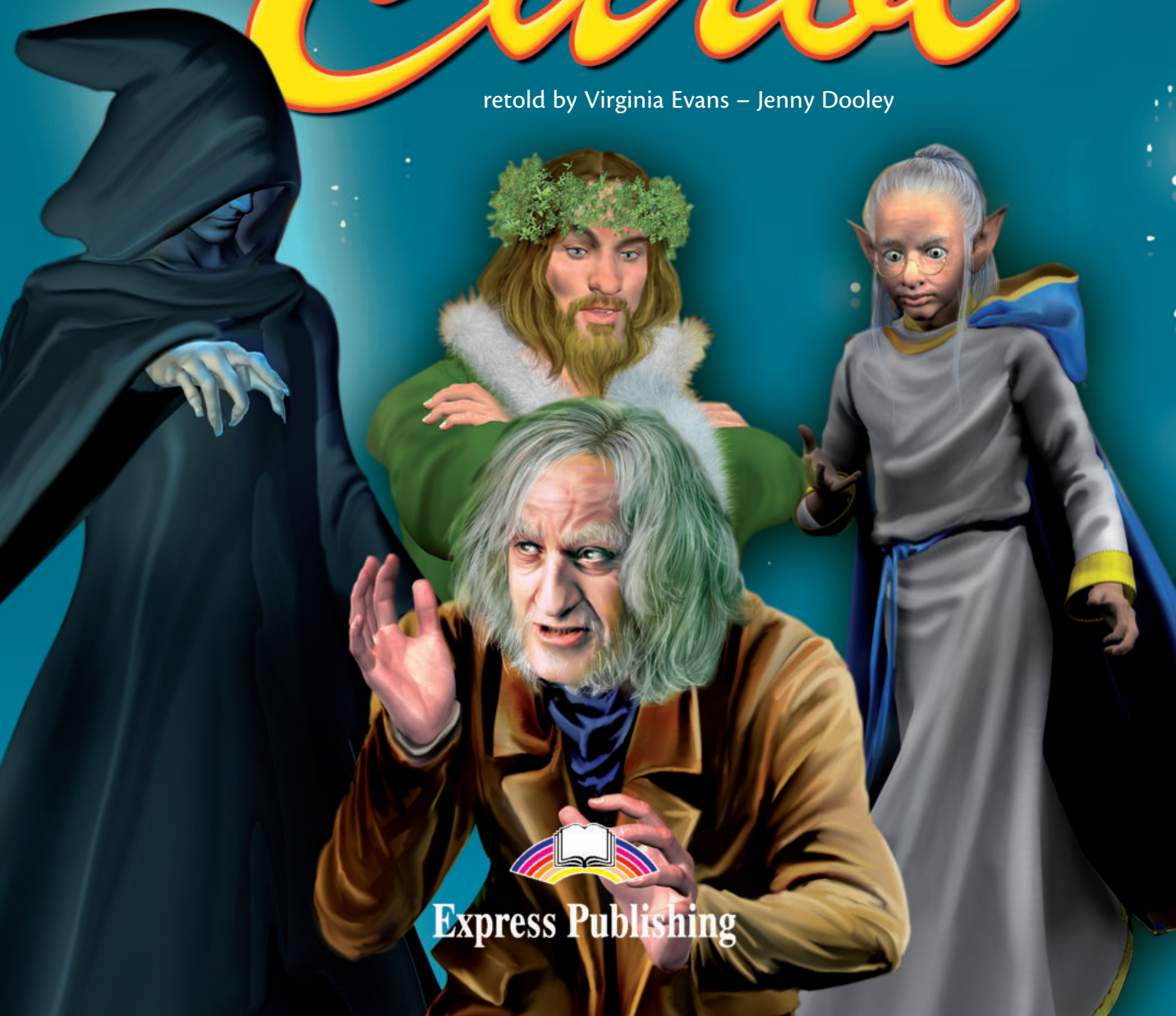


illustrated
READERS

CHARLES DICKENS

A Christmas Carol

retold by Virginia Evans – Jenny Dooley



Express Publishing



Charles Dickens

Charles John Huffam Dickens was born in Portsmouth, Hampshire, on 7th February, 1812. When he was five, his family moved to Chatham, Kent and when he was ten, the family moved again to London. Dickens' early years were happy. His family was quite well-off and he received some education at a private school. In his spare time, he enjoyed reading outdoors.

Unfortunately, when Dickens was twelve, his father was sent to Marshalsea debtor's prison because he owed money. Dickens started working in a factory in order to earn money for his family, as most of his family members were living in the prison with his father.

After a few months, Dickens' family was able to leave the prison, but his mother did not immediately remove Charles from the factory. Dickens never forgave his mother for this. His unhappiness with his situation and the

conditions under which working-class people lived later became major themes in his stories. In May 1827, Dickens began working as a law clerk and trained to become a lawyer. However, he did not enjoy his work, so he became a journalist. He enjoyed writing and in his early twenties, he published his first novel, *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-37).

On 2nd April 1836, Dickens married Catherine Thompson Hogarth. They had ten children together. Dickens continued to write and he produced many entertaining stories, such as *Great Expectations* (1860-61), *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-44), *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65) and *A Christmas Carol* (1843). His books were extremely popular in his time and are still just as popular today.

Dickens died on 9th June, 1870. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, in London. He is remembered by many as one of the greatest writers in the English language.

Read the biography of Charles Dickens and answer the questions.

- 1 Where was Dickens born?
- 2 What did Dickens do in his spare time when he was young?
- 3 Where did Dickens live after the age of ten?
- 4 How old was Dickens when he started working?
- 5 Why did Dickens have to work when he was a child?
- 6 Why did Dickens stop working as a law clerk?
- 7 How many children did Dickens have?
- 8 Where was Charles Dickens buried?





A Christmas Carol

A Christmas Carol was first published on 17th December, 1843. The story was an instant success and sold six thousand copies in the first week. Dickens wrote the story in order to earn money to pay off a debt. He did not realise that the story would become one of the most popular Christmas stories of all time.

Christmas had been a time when people in England helped the poor, gave money to charity and treated others kindly. However, in 1843, people in England had begun to forget the importance of Christmas and Christmas traditions. Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* reminded people that Christmas was a time to help others and to be kind and generous. Dickens also hoped that his story would make readers realise how difficult life was for poor people in England at that time. Like Scrooge, he hoped that people would stop being mean and greedy and become thoughtful and caring instead.

A Christmas Carol has been adapted for theatre, film, radio and television countless times. Perhaps the most popular film adaptation of the story was *Scrooge*, which was made in Britain in 1951 and starred Alastair Sim.



1. SCROOGE

It was a cold, foggy Christmas Eve in London, and Ebenezer Scrooge was working in his office ...





*Before Reading*

- 1 Look at the first picture. Describe the ghost's appearance.
- 2 What is so different about this ghost's appearance in comparison with the other two?

*While Reading*

- 3 Read or listen to the episode and mark the sentences *T* (true) or *F* (false).
 - 1 The Ghost of Christmas Future is friendly and chatty.
 - 2 Scrooge knows the people the ghost shows him.
 - 3 Scrooge hears about someone's death.
 - 4 The dead man spent a lot of money.
- 4 Read or listen to the episode, then complete the sentences.
 - 1 Scrooge wants to
 - 2 People talk about a dead person who was very
 - 3 The man died last
 - 4 They stole the dead man's things.
 - 5 It is a he died, because a lot of people owed him money.
 - 6 No one will him.

*After Reading*

- 5 Answer the following questions.
 - 1 How would you characterise the Ghost of Christmas Future?
 - 2 The ghost doesn't speak until the end of the episode. Why do you think this is?
 - 3 What are the attitudes of the people towards the dead person?
 - 4 Do you think that the visions of the future could convince Scrooge to change his life?
 - 5 Would you like to travel into your own future? Why (not)?



Before Reading

- 1 Look at the pictures and name the characters in this episode.
- 2 Look at the second page. Where do you think the Ghost of Christmas Future has taken Scrooge this time?



While Reading

- 3 Read or listen to the episode and put the events in the correct order.
 - The ghost disappears.
 - Scrooge begs the ghost not to leave him.
 - Scrooge sees his own grave.
 - 1 The ghost takes Scrooge to the Cratchits' house.
 - Scrooge realises that Tiny Tim is dead.
 - Scrooge finds himself back in his bedroom.
 - The ghost takes Scrooge to a graveyard.
 - Scrooge promises to be a better person.
- 4 Read or listen to the episode again. In pairs answer the questions and explain the reason for your choices.

Who: A is comforting Mrs Cratchit?
 B wants to change?
 C died very young?

Why: A does the ghost take Scrooge to a graveyard?
 B are the Cratchit's sad?
 C is Scrooge relieved?



After Reading

- 5 Answer the following questions.
 - 1 In your opinion, how does Scrooge feel about Tiny Tim's death?
 - 2 How does Scrooge feel when he sees his name on the grave?
 - 3 In what way does Scrooge promise to change his present life?
 - 4 What causes Scrooge to change his mind?
 - 5 What kind of lesson does Scrooge learn from the third ghost?

A Christmas Carol

Scrooge is rich, but mean and miserable. He particularly hates Christmas. His assistant, Bob Cratchitt, is poor but happy, even though his son, Tiny Tim is very ill. One Christmas, three ghosts visit Scrooge to show him his past, his present and the terrible future. Will this soften Scrooge's heart and change him into a generous man?

Components:

- Reader
- Audio CD



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