

Advertisement for a Local Charles Dickens Play

Journey back in time to the 1840s on one unforgettable Christmas Eve when Ebenezer Scrooge's life is about to be changed forever. Scrooge is a greedy, miserly, and extremely cold-hearted man who has no place in his life for love, charity, kindness, or compassion. He is rude to everyone in which he encounters and treats his loyal employee, Bob Cratchit, terribly and overworks him without reward.

As Ebenezer Scrooge settles in for the night on this Christmas Eve, he is visited by the ghost of his former business partner, Jacob Marley — who passed away exactly seven years prior on this day. Marley's spirit cannot rest and has been wandering aimlessly since his death, which was punishment for being too consumed with money and business and not showing thoughtfulness or love for others. His ghost had visited to caution Scrooge that if he continues down the same selfish path, he will encounter the same fate — a horrible afterlife with no peace. The ghost informs Scrooge that three spirits will be visiting him, which Ebenezer shrugs off and falls into a slumber.

Ebenezer Scrooge is, indeed, woken by three ghosts throughout the night — each having its own reason for being there. The first spirit, the Ghost of Christmas Past, will take him on journey to his youth and remind Scrooge of the love and innocence he felt in boyhood. The second spirit, the Ghost of Christmas Present, is going to transport Scrooge through a variety of scenes in the present day and shows him the joy and love in other's hearts, regardless of status or money — including a current scene of his impoverished worker, Bob Cratchit, with his crippled son, Tiny Tim, whom desperately needs financial help to survive. The final spirit will arrive, the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, and he does not bring good news for Scrooge. He is going to show him a very frightening future that is set to happen if Scrooge does not change his selfish ways.

Frightened and scared, Ebenezer Scrooge drifts off to sleep and awakens to learn that the entire adventure only took one night — not many days, like he had thought — and it is still Christmas morning. It is not too late to change his ways and transform his existence — if he chooses to do so. Does Scrooge decide to turn things around? The end will have the reader contemplating his own actions and how he, too, may wish to live his life.

We have all had times in our lives when we have witnessed a situation or been a part of one just like this Charles Dickens' classic. Perhaps you have seen someone treated cruelly and wished you would have helped or maybe it was you — yourself — that lost your temper or patience and said or did something that you sorely regretted. Reading, "A Christmas Carol," truly makes you think about the kind of person you wish to be — especially during the holiday season — when generosity and kindness are at their peak and all around you.

Charles Dickens portrayal of generosity in this story encompasses more than just giving money away. He wants you to realize that it also necessitates the giving of one's empathy and goodwill. Throughout the story, he gives many instances of this. The generosity of spirit is something that

we all need to think about and what it means to us — as individuals — and also as a society. What can you do to make a significant contribution to those around you that does not require elaborate amounts of money? This story will have you contemplating that exact question.

The virtue of memory and seeing things in good and bad light from the past are also encompassed in, “A Christmas Carol.” It will leave you pondering about your own childhood and past memories — good and bad — and what you have taken from those and learned from. Have you followed in the steps of significant others around you or did you carve out your own present from these memories? By the time you are through reading, you have the answer and it may surprise you.

In this story, we are also taught that our actions greatly affect others. Ebenezer Scrooge may not have been condemned to a lonely life if his greedy and penny-pinching ways only hurt himself, but they didn't. His selfishness extended to all in which he encountered and impacted those individuals in a very sad and negative way. Dickens wants us to realize this for ourselves. In today's society, how many people have you seen treated poorly who are starving and have no place to go? Do you simply choose to ignore it — as if the problem does not exist — or do you help in any way that you can?

Charles Dickens shows the importance for a clear call-to-action that if we — as a society — ignore the poor and those in need, the future of humanity may be doomed. After reading, “A Christmas Carol,” you will be moved to do something for your fellow mankind and will be enthused to live a more rewarding and fulfilling life by being the best person you can be and by giving more to others. This is a truly uplifting story of the good that can be found in all of us and will lead you down a more selfless path to self-discovery.