



A Christmas Carol: A Ghost Story of Christmas

Charles Dickens

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'And the fruiterers were radiant in their glory. There was great, round, pot-bellied baskets of chestnuts, shaped like the waistcoats of jolly old gentlemen, lolling at the doors, and tumbling out into the street in their apoplectic opulence. There were ruddy, brown-faced, broad-girthed Spanish Onions, shining in the fatness of their growth like Spanish Friars, and winking from their shelves in wanton slyness at the girls as they went by, and glanced demurely at the hung up mistletoe.'

A Christmas Carol is a work of power and beauty. It has delighted and enthralled readers since it was first published in 1843. Perhaps Charles Dickens' best-loved work, the story follows the trials and tribulations of Ebenezer Scrooge, man of business and notorious skinflint even by the City's stringent standards, who is taken on a journey of self-discovery by his late business partner, the spirit Jacob Marley, with the help of three supernatural apparitions: the Ghosts of Christmases Past, Present and Yet to Come. Many adaptations, be they on film, television, or in the theatre, fail to capture it whole, often reducing it to over-sentimentalised syrup. Certainly there is pathos and sentimentality here in good measure, there are tears to be shed in the company of the Cratchit family and Tiny Tim, but there is so much more: politics, religion, morality, social history, London low life, London high life, and a large measure of Christmas cheer. Vivid scenes describing festive foodstuffs on display on snowy London pavements; the shocking, squalid vision of two children, Ignorance and Want; the pivotal scene in which Scrooge is released from his engagement are all essential, all interconnected, all enthralling. *A Christmas Carol* is a book that deserves to be heard in its unabridged form and in this un-stuffy, vibrant reading for Magpie Audio, narrator Greg Wagland brings the story to life.

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