

**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

Charles Dickens  
**A Christmas Carol**

Read by **Anton Lesser**

**CLASSIC  
FICTION**

**UNABRIDGED**



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1	<b>Stave 1: Marley's Ghost</b>	7:44
2	'A merry Christmas, Uncle!'	4:59
3	This lunatic, in letting Scrooge's nephew out	7:18
4	Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern	9:17
5	The same face: the very same. Marley in his pigtail,	6:21
6	'Jacob,' he said imploringly. 'Old Jacob Marley, tell me more.'	8:23
7	<b>Stave 2: The First of the Three Spirits</b>	4:45
8	It was a strange figure – like a child:	6:41
9	They walked along the road.	6:07
10	Scrooge's former self grew larger	4:29
11	Although they had but that moment left the school behind	2:56
12	In came a fiddler with a music-book,	6:07
13	His former self turned down the lamps	5:42
14	They were in another scene, and place;	6:13
15	<b>Stave 3: The Second of the Three Spirits</b>	7:08
16	Holly, mistletoe, red berries,	8:46
17	And perhaps it was the pleasure the good Spirit had in showing off this power	5:07

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18	Such a bustle ensued	3:33
19	At last the dinner was all done	6:47
20	By this time it was getting dark,	5:44
21	It was a great surprise to Scrooge	5:40
22	After tea they had some music.	6:59
23	Much they saw, and far they went,	5:26
24	<b>Stave 4: The Last of the Three Spirits</b>	8:15
25	They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town	8:42
26	He recoiled in terror, for the scene had changed,	6:43
27	The Ghost conducted him through several streets	6:38
28	'Spectre,' said Scrooge, 'something informs me that our parting moment is at hand.'	4:52
29	<b>Stave 5: The End of It</b>	5:52
30	It was a Turkey.	5:06
31	But he was early at the office next morning.	4:26

**Total time: 3:13:09**

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Charles Dickens

# A Christmas Carol

**A Christmas Carol**, first published in 1843, is the best-known and best-loved of Dickens' 'Christmas books'. Indeed, for the English-speaking world the story, characters and themes of this novella have become almost as much part of the Christmas tradition as carols and plum pudding: many film versions (for example) have been made, so that even those who have never read the book will be familiar with Scrooge, the four ghosts and Tiny Tim.

The story is plain enough. Scrooge, the old miser, is visited on Christmas Eve by the ghost of his former partner, Jacob Marley. He, too, had been a tight-fisted materialist, but now comes to warn Scrooge that unless he mends his ways he will be condemned after death to an eternity of suffering in which he will be compelled to witness injustice and misery without being able to alleviate it. The ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future will successively show Scrooge a series of visions. Scrooge is first shown himself as he was, before the desire for wealth corrupted him; this is followed by contrasting views of 'Christmas Present'; finally, and most terrifyingly, he is shown his own death in the future and the

unflattering response to it of those who had known him. It will come as no surprise to say that Scrooge triumphs over his own inhumanity...

The whole story, in fact, is built on elements of strong, simple contrast. The intensely selfish values of Scrooge and Marley are set against the pure morality of the spirits but also (more memorably) against the cheerful Christian charity embodied by two families – his nephew's and that of his clerk, Bob Cratchit. Significantly, the Cratchits are almost penniless, yet still find something joyful in their meagre celebrations: our sympathy for them is increased by the fact that one of the children, Tiny Tim, is frail, moves on crutches and seems to be not long for this world. If this seems shamelessly sentimental on Dickens' part – and it is – it is nevertheless true that few listeners are likely to remain unmoved by the Cratchit story. Without wishing to overload **A Christmas Carol** with undue thematic weight, it is perhaps worth noting that what drives the narrative, as almost always in Dickens, is a powerful yearning for the sort of stable, loving family life which the author himself

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never experienced, either as child or adult. The effect of this, in conjunction with Dickens' stylistic and story-telling wizardry, is to make genuinely moving what would otherwise be intolerably sentimental. **A Christmas Carol** is, in fact, a small masterpiece.

Charles Dickens was born in 1812 in Portsmouth. His father was imprisoned for debt and the twelve-year-old Charles sent to work in a blacking-factory: these experiences influenced (for instance) **Little Dorrit** and **David Copperfield**. Having learnt shorthand, he became a parliamentary reporter and began to submit magazine pieces. In 1837 **The Pickwick Papers** brought Dickens fame, and the rest of his literary career was almost uninterruptedly successful. His personal life was less happy: eventually he separated from his wife Catherine, partly as a result of his growing intimacy with Ellen Ternan, the actress, and he died relatively young in 1870, his last novel, **The Mystery of Edwin Drood**, unfinished.

**Notes by Perry Keenlyside**

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Cover picture: *Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol* courtesy AKG Images, London

# Charles Dickens

## A Christmas Carol

Read by **Anton Lesser**

**A Christmas Carol** is the best-known and best-loved of Dickens' 'Christmas books', and the story of the miser Scrooge's redemption has become as much part of the Christmas tradition as plum pudding and carols themselves. Will Tiny Tim live to see another Christmas? Can Scrooge recover his humanity and learn to love the fellow-men he seems to despise? Dickens will make you laugh and make you cry as you follow Scrooge's supernatural adventures on Christmas Eve...



**Anton Lesser** is one of Britain's leading classical actors. He has played many of the principal Shakespearean roles for the Royal Shakespeare Company, including Petruchio, Romeo and Richard III. Appearances in major TV drama productions include *The Cherry Orchard*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Mill on the Floss* and *The Politician's Wife*. He also reads Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Homer's *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad* and Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, *David Copperfield*, *The Pickwick Papers*, *Hard Times* and *Great Expectations* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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