

A
CHRISTMAS
CAROL

CHARLES
DICKENS

TIMELESS CLASSICS



| 1 |

Scrooge's Office

Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. Old Marley was as dead as a doornail.

Of course Scrooge knew he was dead. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his only friend and his only mourner. And even Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the sad event.

The mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the point I started from. There is *no doubt* that Marley was dead. This must be distinctly understood—or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am about to tell you.

Scrooge had never painted out Marley's name on the sign. Years afterward it still hung above the door: *Scrooge and Marley*. Sometimes people called Scrooge "Scrooge," and sometimes

“Marley.” He answered to both names. It was all the same to him.

Scrooge was a very tightfisted man! He was secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features and nipped his pointed nose. It shriveled his cheeks and stiffened his walk. It made his eyes red and his thin lips blue. The hair on his head, eyebrows, and chin was frosty white. He seemed to carry his own low temperature with him. He iced his coffee in the summer, and didn’t thaw it one degree at Christmas.

Outside heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No sun could warm him; no winter weather could chill him. No wind that blew was more bitter than he. No falling snow was colder. No pelting rain was less open to mercy. The heaviest rain, snow, hail, and sleet had only one advantage over him. They often “came down” handsomely—but Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, “My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?” No beggars asked him for anything. No children asked him

what time it was. No man or woman ever asked him directions. Even the blind men's dogs seemed to know him. When they saw him coming, they would tug their owners into doorways. Then they would wag their tails as if to say, "No eye at all is better than an evil eye, master!"

But what did Scrooge care! This was the very thing he liked.

One Christmas Eve, old Scrooge was busy in his counting house. It was cold, dark, biting weather. He could hear the people outside, stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks said it was 3:00 P.M., but it was quite dark already. It had not been light all day. Candles were flaring in the windows of the nearby offices. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole. It was so dense outside that, even though the street was very narrow, the houses on the other side were hard to see.

The door of Scrooge's office was open so he could keep an eye on his clerk. In a dismal little cell beyond, the clerk was copying letters. Scrooge had a small fire in his own fireplace.

The clerk's tiny fire was so much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't add to it, for Scrooge kept the coal box in his own room. The clerk had put on his white comforter and tried to warm himself at the candle. Not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

"A merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was Scrooge's nephew, who had just come in.

"Bah!" said Scrooge. "Humbug!"

Fred, Scrooge's nephew, was all in a glow from walking in the fog and frost. His face was ruddy and handsome. His eyes sparkled.

"Christmas a humbug, Uncle?" said the nephew. "You don't mean that, I am sure!"

"I *do*," said Scrooge. "Merry Christmas? Why be so merry? You're poor enough."

"Come, then," laughed the nephew. "Why be so dismal? You're rich enough."

Scrooge had no better answer than to say, "Bah!" again and then "Humbug!"

"Don't be cross, Uncle!"

"What else can I be," returned the uncle, "when I live in such a world of fools? Merry

Christmas! What's Christmas to you but a time for paying bills without money? You find yourself a year older, but not an hour richer. If I had my way, every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips would be boiled with his own pudding. Then he ought to be buried with a stake of holly through his heart!"

"Uncle!" pleaded the nephew.

"Fred! Keep Christmas in your own way. Let me keep it in mine."

"But you *don't* keep it."

"Allow me to leave it alone, then," said Scrooge. "Much good it may do *you!*"

"I have gotten some good from many things by which I have not made money," said the nephew. "Christmas is one of those. It is always a good time—a kind, forgiving, pleasant time. It is the only time I know that men and women seem to open their hearts freely. Maybe it has never put any gold or silver in my pocket. But Christmas has always done me good, and *will* do me good. So I say, God bless it! Please don't be so glum, Uncle. Come! Dine with us tomorrow."



“Yes, you have a wife now, don’t you?” Scrooge asked in a grumpy voice. “Why did you get married?”

“Because I fell in love.”

“Because you fell in love!” growled Scrooge. He spoke as if that were the only thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas.

“You never visited before I got married. Why use it as a reason for not coming now?”

“Good afternoon,” said Scrooge.

“I am sorry, with all my heart, that you won’t join us. But I have come in honor of

Christmas—and I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. A Merry Christmas to you, Uncle!"

"Good afternoon!" barked Scrooge.

At that, his nephew left the room. He stopped to say Merry Christmas to the clerk. Cold as he was, the clerk was warmer than Scrooge, for he said Merry Christmas back.

"There's another one," muttered Scrooge to himself. "My clerk, with 15 shillings a week, and a large family. Even *he* is talking about a merry Christmas. They're all crazy!"

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The Day Gets Colder

After Scrooge's nephew left, two other men came in. They now stood, with their hats off, in Scrooge's office. They had books and papers in their hands, and bowed to him.

“Scrooge and Marley's, I believe,” said one of the gentlemen, looking at his list. “Tell me, sir—am I addressing Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley?”

“Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years,” Scrooge said. “He died seven years ago this very night.”


“Ah, well, Mr. Scrooge, then,” said the gentleman, taking up a pen. “It is good to help the poor. They suffer greatly in this festive season. Many cannot meet their needs. Hundreds of thousands do not have common comforts, sir.”

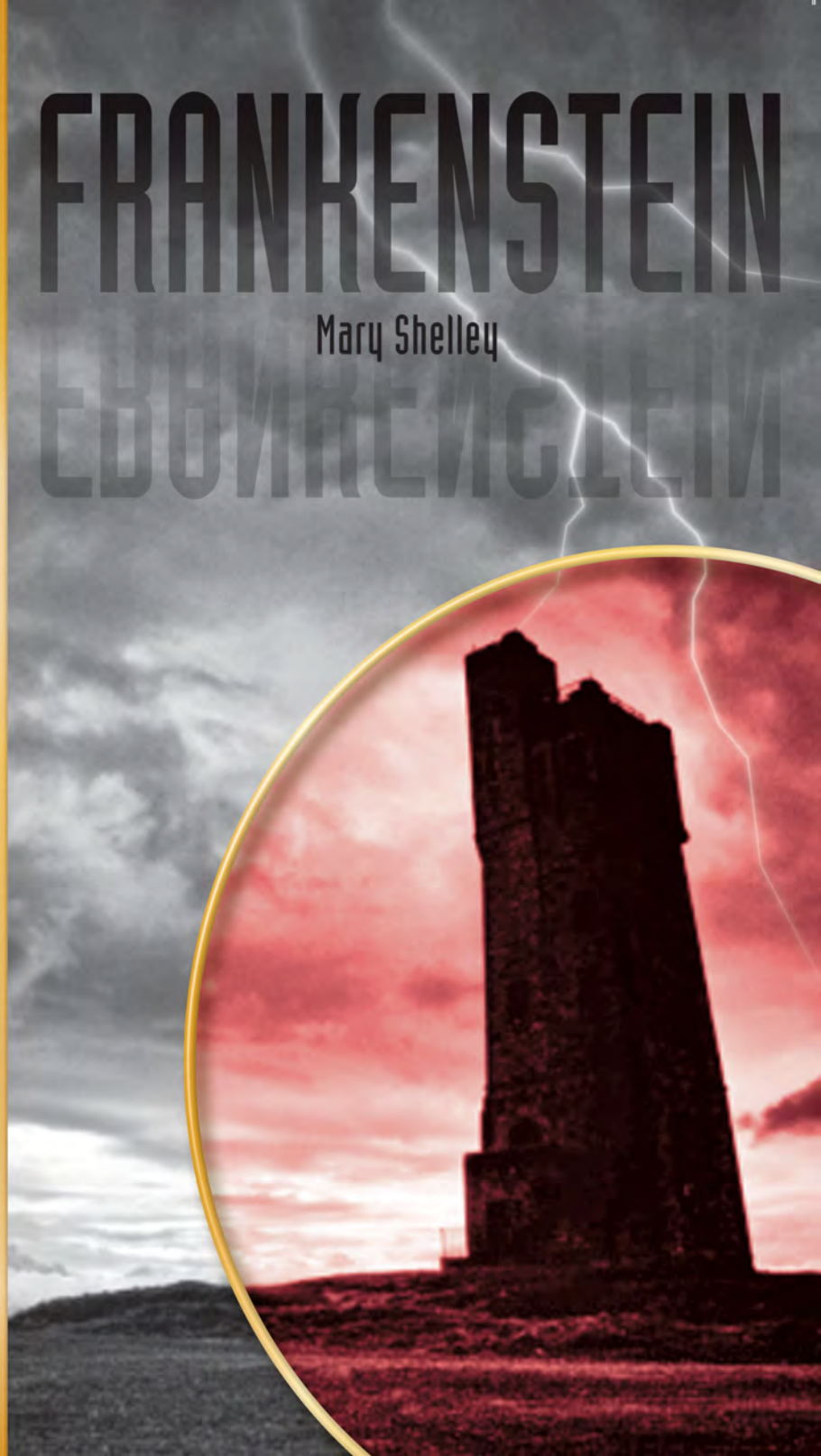
“Are there no prisons?” asked Scrooge.

FRANKENSTEIN

Mary Shelley

FRANKENSTEIN

 TIMELESS CLASSICS



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| Opening Letter |

To: Mrs. Saville, England

August 5, 17__

Dear Sister,

First, I want to tell you that I am alive and well. My dream of traveling to the North Pole seems closer than ever to being fulfilled. But second, I want to tell you a strange story about what has been happening.

Our ship is nearly closed in by ice and fog. Now and then the seas churn, and huge chunks of ice break up. The other day, I stood looking out over the vast plains of ice. Suddenly, about half a mile away, I saw a dog sled going north. The figure in the carriage had the shape of a man, but it was the size of a giant. He was gone before I could see more.

The next morning, we came upon a second sled. Only one dog remained alive. There was a man, nearly frozen, in the sled. We got him on board and carried him to my cabin. I never saw

a man in so wretched a condition. Two days passed before he was able to speak. We have become friends. He is a kind, intelligent, gentle, and well-educated man. I am very fond of him. Something, however, is troubling him deeply.

Last night, he told me that he has a story to tell me. Tomorrow, he will begin it. I plan to write it down in his own words as much as possible.

*Your loving brother,
R. Walton*

| 1 |

Frankenstein Begins His Story

My name is Victor Frankenstein. I grew up in Geneva, Switzerland. My family is one of the best-known families there. For a long time I was my parents' only child. But that changed when I was about five years old.

My parents passed a week at Lake Como in Italy. My mother was always interested in helping the poor. One day, they visited a poor farmer who had five hungry children.

One of the children, a little girl named Elizabeth, attracted my mother more than the others. She wasn't like the other children in looks or in personality. The farmer's wife told my mother about the girl. She was not their child, but the daughter of a nobleman. The girl's mother had died, and her father had put her in the farmer's care. The father then went off to war

and had not been heard from since. Since then, hard times had come to the farmer. He had very little money and four children of his own.

My mother had always wanted a little girl. She asked the farmer if she and my father could adopt the girl. Although the farmer and his wife loved the child, they knew she would have a much happier life with my family. So they let my parents take Elizabeth.

Soon Elizabeth Lavenza became more than my sister. She became the beautiful and adored companion of my childhood. We called each other “cousin” and shared a deep love until the day she died.

When I was seven years old, my brother Ernest was born. At that time my parents gave up their travels and stayed home. We had a house in Geneva. We also had a place in the country, on the shore of a lake, where we stayed most of the time. It was here that my brother William was born.

Our family did not know a lot of people. I had one close friend, Henry Clerval, the son of a Geneva merchant. Henry, Elizabeth, and I were like three parts of one person. Elizabeth

was the soul, Henry was the heart, and I was the mind. Henry told stories of heroes and great adventurers. Elizabeth had her art. And I began to study science.

When I was 13, my father found me reading one of the books in his library. “Ah, you’re reading *this*?” he said. “My dear Victor, do not waste your time. This is sad trash.” If only my father had explained that no one believed in these books anymore, everything might have been different. Science had already proved that these ideas were silly, but I didn’t know this. I was angry. My father thought the books I liked were trash! Instead of taking his advice, I found more books like them.

Looking back on it, I know that I was foolish. I tried using spells to change lead into gold. I tried to raise ghosts. Of course, none of these spells worked. I might have gone on this way for years, but then an accident happened that changed my life.

When I was about 15 years old, we were at our country house. A violent and terrible storm came up. As I stood at the door, I saw lightning hit an old and beautiful oak. As soon as the light

vanished, the oak had disappeared. Nothing remained but a blasted stump. The next morning, I saw that the tree was reduced to thin ribbons of wood. I never saw anything so completely destroyed.

A friend of my father's was visiting us that day. He was a scientist. He explained a theory of his on the subject of electricity. This was new and astonishing to me. What he said made my earlier studies seem foolish. It seemed to me as if nothing would or could ever be known. So I gave up the study of science and immediately began to study mathematics.

When I look back, it seems to me that this change of attitude was caused by a guardian angel. It was perhaps the last effort of that angel to save my life.

It was a strong effort of the spirit of good, but it did no good. Destiny was too strong. Her laws had already sealed my terrible fate.

Frankenstein Learns the Secret of Life

When I was 17, my parents said that I should begin my studies at a university in Germany. But before I could leave, the first sorrow of my life came. It was an omen of my future misery.

My mother became ill with scarlet fever. On her deathbed, she called Elizabeth and me to her side. “My children,” she said, “I have always wanted you to be married one day. This hope will now be a comfort to your father. I regret that I am being taken from you. I pray that we will meet in another world.”

She died calmly. We were all grief-stricken. I stayed home for a few more weeks. Finally, it was time for me to leave. My friend Henry spent the last evening with Elizabeth and me. The three of us had never felt closer. None of us

knew that we would never be as happy again. I left the next day.

After a long, hard trip, I arrived in Germany. The next day I went to the university and met one of my professors, Dr. Krempe. He was a rude man, but he knew a lot about science. He asked me what science books I had read. I mentioned the books about magic spells. "Have you really spent your time studying such nonsense?" he said. "You'll have to start your studies all over again."


About a week later, I stopped by the lecture hall to meet Dr. Waldman, the chemistry professor. He was about 50, a kindly man. He was everything Krempe was not. His voice was the sweetest I had ever heard. And he was a good teacher. He started off with a history of chemistry:

"The old masters promised things they could not do: turn lead into gold, stay young forever. These were all empty dreams. Scientists today are different. They don't promise much, but look at what they have done! We know how the blood moves through our bodies. We know what makes up the air we breathe. Who

DRACULA



BRAM STOKER

 TIMELESS CLASSICS





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Journey to Transylvania

Passages from Jonathan Harker's journal:

May 3. So far, my business trip to Eastern Europe has taken me through London, Munich, Vienna, and Budapest. While in London, I visited the library at the British Museum. I found out that Count Dracula lives in the Carpathian Mountains. This is one of the wildest and least known areas of Europe. I read that every known superstition in the world comes from Transylvania—my final destination. If so, my stay there should be very interesting.

It was evening when we got to Bistritz. Count Dracula had directed me to go to the Golden Krone Hotel. I was greeted by a cheerful, elderly woman who gave me a

letter from the Count. In it, he said that his carriage would meet me at the Borgo Pass tomorrow and bring me the rest of the way.

I asked the hotel manager if he knew anything about Count Dracula or his castle. At the mention of Dracula's name, both he and his wife crossed themselves. They insisted that they knew nothing at all of the man and refused to speak further.

May 4. Just before I left the hotel, the old lady came to my room. "Must you go?" she asked worriedly. "Do you know what day it is? It is the eve of St. George's Day. Tonight, when the clock strikes 12, all the evil things in the world will come out."

Then she got down on her knees and begged me not to go. "At least," she said, "wait one or two days." It all seemed very ridiculous, and I did not feel comfortable.

There was business to be done, however. I could let nothing get in the way of it. My employer, Mr. Hawkins, had sent me to deliver some papers to Count Dracula. They were the ownership documents for the London estate he had bought.

I told the old lady I must go. Worriedly, she then took a crucifix from around her neck and put it around mine. “For your mother’s sake,” she said, and left the room.

May 5. The Castle. Yesterday, the trip from the hotel to the castle was quite frightening. When the other coach travelers heard where I was going, they looked at me with pity. Of course they did not speak English. Looking up some of their strange words in my dictionary, I found that they meant “werewolf” or “vampire.”

It was after dark when we got near the Borgo Pass. Then suddenly, a horsedrawn carriage drew up beside the coach. The horses were splendid, coal-black animals. They were driven by a tall man wearing a great black hat. His face was hidden. I could only see the gleam of his eyes, which seemed strangely red in the lamplight.

I got out of the coach and into the carriage. Without a word, the driver shook the reins, the horses turned, and we swept into the darkness of the Pass. As I looked back, I saw the passengers in the coach crossing themselves. I felt a strange chill, and a lonely

feeling came over me.

It seemed that we rode for hours. At a few minutes before midnight, I struck a match and looked at my watch. It was then that I heard a wild howling. It seemed to come from all over the countryside. The horses began to strain, but when the driver spoke to them quietly they calmed down. Then the driver jumped to the ground and disappeared into the darkness. A while later, the moon broke through the clouds. I saw around us a ring of wolves, with white teeth and lolling red tongues.

Then I saw the driver standing in the roadway. He swept his long arms about, as though brushing something away. As if at his signal, the wolves fell back! Just then a heavy cloud passed over the moon again, and we were in darkness.

A feeling of dread came over me. I was afraid to speak or move. The driver got back into the carriage, and we went on. It seemed like a very long time before we pulled into the courtyard of an old castle.

The driver jumped down and helped me out of the carriage. He placed my bags on the

ground beside me. Then he jumped again into his seat, shook the reins, and drove off.

I stood in silence at the door, for I did not know what to do. There was no bell or knocker. What sort of place had I come to? My business trip was becoming a nightmare.

Just then, I heard a heavy step behind the great door, and a key was turned. When the door opened, a tall old man looked out at me. He was clean shaven except for a long white mustache. He was dressed in black from head to foot. He held an antique silver lamp. The old man motioned me in. "Welcome to my house!" he said. "Enter freely and of your own will!"

As soon as I was inside, he shook my hand. His fingers were cold as ice! His hand was like that of a dead man.

"Count Dracula?" I said uncertainly.

He bowed and replied, "I am Dracula, and I bid you welcome, Mr. Harker. Come in. You must need food and rest." He carried my bags along a hall, up a winding staircase, and down another hall. At last he threw open a heavy door. Inside I saw a well-lit room in which a



table was spread for supper. A fire was burning in the fireplace. He showed me another room right off this one. It was a welcome sight, for it was a large bedroom with another bright log fire.

“I pray you, sir, be seated and have something to eat. I won’t be eating with you, as I have dined already,” said my host.

After I had finished eating, we spent some time talking. I could not help but notice that his appearance was very unusual. His ears were pale and extremely pointed at the top.

His chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks were firm but unusually thin.

His hands were rather coarse. Strange to say, there were hairs in the center of his palms. The nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point. As the Count leaned close, a horrible feeling of nausea came over me. Somehow the Count must have noticed my discomfort, for he drew back.

As I looked toward the window, I saw the first dim light of the coming dawn. The Count quickly rose and said, "But you must be tired. Your bedroom has been made ready for you. Tomorrow, you shall sleep as late as you want. I must be away until the afternoon, so sleep soundly and dream well!"

| 2 |

The Mysterious Castle

Passages from Jonathan Harker's journal:

May 7. It is again early morning. I have rested and enjoyed the last 24 hours. Today I found breakfast waiting for me. A note from Dracula was beside my plate. In it he explained that he had to be away for a while. After breakfast, I opened a side door in the dining room and found a sort of library.

In the library I discovered shelves of English books, magazines, and newspapers. While I was looking at them, the door opened, and the Count entered. He told me that he had been studying English ever since he had thought of going to London. Then he said that he wanted me to stay for a month to help him with his English. His plan was to speak it well enough so that he would not be seen as a foreigner when he moved to London.