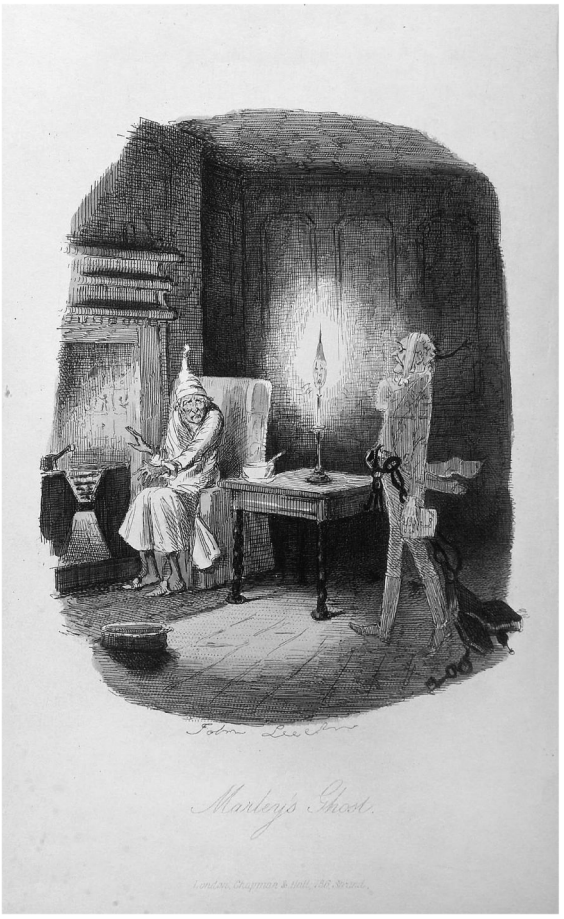
LITERATURA EM INGLÊS

A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens · 1843 · Clássico de Natal



Um Conto de Natal — Capítulo I: Marley's Ghost

Três níveis de inglês, com glossário em português · literaturaemingles.com.br

NÍVEL 1

Fácil

A1–A2 — Frases curtas, sem subordinação

I

Marley's Ghost

O Fantasma de Marley · Fácil (A1–A2) · 11 min de leitura

Marley was dead. He died seven years ago. Scrooge signed the burial book. The two men were partners for many years. Scrooge was his only friend.

Scrooge never changed the sign. It still said Scrooge and Marley. Some people called him Marley. He answered to both names. He did not care.

Scrooge was a hard old man. He was cold inside. No fire warmed him. No winter made him colder. He kept his office cold in summer. He kept it cold at Christmas too.

Nobody stopped him in the street. Nobody asked him for help. Dogs pulled their owners away. Scrooge liked this very much.

One Christmas Eve, Scrooge sat in his office. Thick fog filled the streets. The clocks struck three. The sky was already dark.

Scrooge kept his door open. He watched his clerk. The clerk copied letters in a tiny room. Scrooge had a small fire. The clerk had almost none. Scrooge kept the coal in his own room. The clerk put on his white comforter. The candle gave him no heat.

“A merry Christmas, uncle!” said a happy voice. It was his nephew Fred.

“Bah!” said Scrooge. “Humbug!”

“Christmas a humbug, uncle!” said Fred. “You do not mean it.”

“I do mean it,” said Scrooge. “You are poor. You have no reason for joy.”

“You are rich,” said Fred. “You have no reason for gloom.”

Scrooge said “Bah!” again.

“What else can I be?” he said. “The world is full of fools. Christmas is a time for bills. You get no money. You only get older.”

“Keep Christmas in your way,” said Scrooge. “Leave me in mine.”

“But you do not keep it,” said Fred.

“Then leave it alone,” said Scrooge.

Fred did not stop. “Christmas is a kind time,” he said. “People open their hearts. They think of poor people. Christmas never gave me gold. It still did me good. God bless it!”

The clerk clapped his hands. Then he poked the fire. He killed his last spark.

“One more sound from you,” said Scrooge. “Then you will lose your job.”

“Come to dinner tomorrow, uncle,” said Fred.

Scrooge refused with hard words.

“Why?” cried Fred. “Why?”

“Why did you marry?” said Scrooge.

“I fell in love,” said Fred.

“You fell in love!” growled Scrooge. “Good afternoon!”

“I want nothing from you,” said Fred. “Why can we not be friends?”

“Good afternoon,” said Scrooge.

Fred left without one angry word. He wished the clerk a merry Christmas. The clerk answered him warmly.

Two men came in next. They carried books and papers. They took off their hats.

“Scrooge and Marley, I believe,” said one.

“Marley died seven years ago,” said Scrooge. “He died tonight, seven years ago.”

“We collect money for the poor,” said one. “Many people need food and warmth. How much will you give?”

“Nothing,” said Scrooge.

“You want no name on the list?”

“I want peace,” said Scrooge. “I do not enjoy Christmas. I cannot pay for lazy people. We have prisons. We have workhouses. Poor people can go there.”

“Many cannot go,” said one. “Many prefer death.”

“Then let them die,” said Scrooge. “We have too many people.”

The two men left in silence. Scrooge felt pleased with himself.

Outside, the fog grew thicker. Men lit a fire in a metal pot. Poor boys warmed their hands over the flames. The shops shone with holly and light.

A small boy came to Scrooge’s door. He sang a Christmas song at the keyhole. Scrooge grabbed his ruler. The boy ran away in fear.

At last the office closed.

“You want the whole day tomorrow,” said Scrooge.

“Please, sir,” said the clerk.

“It is not fair,” said Scrooge. “I pay a full day for no work. But take it. Come early the next morning.”

The clerk promised. Scrooge walked out with a growl. The clerk slid on the ice. He ran home to Camden Town.

Scrooge ate alone in his usual tavern. Then he went home to bed. He lived in Marley’s old rooms. They were dark and empty. Nobody else lived there.

Scrooge put his key in the lock. He looked at the door knocker. The knocker was not a knocker now. It was Marley’s face.

The face had a pale, sick light. It looked at Scrooge with dead eyes. Scrooge stared at it. Then it was a knocker again.

Scrooge felt a cold shock. He turned the key and walked in. He looked behind the door. He found only screws and nuts. “Pooh, pooh!” he said. He shut the door with a bang.

Scrooge went up the wide stairs. He checked every room. Nobody under the table. Nobody under the bed. Nobody in the closet. His gruel sat by the fire.

He locked his door. He locked it twice. This was a new habit. He put on his gown and slippers. He sat down with his gruel.

The fire was very low. Old Dutch tiles covered the fireplace. They showed many holy pictures. Scrooge saw only one face in them. He saw Marley on every tile.

"Humbug!" said Scrooge.

An old bell hung on the wall. Nobody used it now. Scrooge watched it swing. It rang softly. Then it rang loudly. Every bell in the house rang.

The bells stopped together. A new noise came from the cellar. Something heavy dragged a chain. The cellar door flew open. The noise came up the stairs. It came straight to his door.

"Humbug!" said Scrooge. "I do not believe it."

The ghost came through the heavy door. The dying fire jumped up. Then it fell again.

It was Marley. Scrooge saw the same face. A long chain hung around his body. Marley made it from cash boxes and keys. It held padlocks, ledgers and heavy purses. Scrooge looked through his body. He saw the buttons on his back.

"What do you want with me?" said Scrooge.

"Much!" said the ghost.

"Tell me your name."

"In life I was your partner. I am Jacob Marley."

"Can you sit down?" asked Scrooge.

"I can."

The ghost sat by the fire.

"You do not believe in me," it said.

"I do not," said Scrooge. "Bad food makes my eyes lie. You are a bit of old beef."

Scrooge made jokes. He hid his terror with jokes. The ghost's voice shook his bones.

The ghost gave a terrible cry. It shook its heavy chain. Then it took off its bandage. Its lower jaw fell to its chest.

Scrooge dropped to his knees.

"Mercy!" he said. "Why do you trouble me?"

"Do you believe in me now?"

"I do," said Scrooge. "I must. Why do spirits walk the earth?"

"Every man must walk among people," it said. "He must share their lives. My spirit stayed inside our office. Now my spirit walks forever. I see the world. I cannot help it."

"You wear chains," said Scrooge. "Tell me the reason."

“I made this chain in life,” it said. “I made it link by link. I put it on myself. Your own chain is longer. You worked on it every day.”

Scrooge looked at the floor. He saw nothing.

“Speak kind words to me, Jacob.”

“I have none,” said the ghost. “I cannot rest. My time here is short.”

“You were a good man of business.”

“Business!” cried the ghost. “People were my business! Kindness was my business! Mercy was my business! My shop was one small drop.”

It threw the chain on the floor.

“Hear me. My time is nearly gone. I come with a warning. You still have a chance. You can escape my fate.”

“Three spirits will visit you.”

Scrooge’s face fell.

“Is this my chance, Jacob?”

“It is. You cannot escape alone. Expect the first tomorrow. He comes at one o’clock.”

“Can I take them together?” said Scrooge.

“Expect the second the next night. Expect the third one night later. He comes at midnight. Remember my words forever.”

The ghost tied the bandage again. The window opened by itself. The ghost walked backwards. It waved Scrooge away.

He heard strange voices in the air. They were sad and full of regret. The ghost joined the sad song. It floated out into the night.

Scrooge ran to the window. The air was full of ghosts. They wore heavy chains. They moved in restless pain. Scrooge knew some of them. One ghost carried an iron safe. It cried over a poor woman below. It wanted to help her. It had lost its power forever.

The ghosts faded into the mist. The night became quiet again.

Scrooge closed the window. The locks and bolts had not moved. He opened his mouth for a last “Humbug”. No sound came out. He went straight to bed. He fell asleep at once.

Glossário — Fácil

humbug EXPRESSÃO

bobagem, enganação — é a palavra com que Scrooge joga fora o Natal inteiro

“Bah!” said Scrooge. “Humbug!”

clerk FALSO COGNATO

escriturário, funcionário de escritório — não é “clérigo”

He watched his clerk.

comforter FALSO COGNATO

cachecol de lã — não é “cobertor” nem “consolador”
The clerk put on his white comforter.

put on PHRASAL VERB

vestir, pôr no corpo → **vestir**
He put on his gown and slippers.

take off PHRASAL VERB

tirar do corpo → **tirar**
They took off their hats.

knocker VOCABULÁRIO

aldrava: a peça de metal na porta, para bater
He looked at the door knocker.

gruel VOCABULÁRIO

mingau ralo de aveia, comida de pobre
His gruel sat by the fire.

growl VOCABULÁRIO

rosnar; falar com a garganta, de mau humor
Scrooge walked out with a growl.

holly VOCABULÁRIO

azevinho: o ramo de folha pontuda e bola vermelha do Natal
The shops shone with holly and light.

workhouse VOCABULÁRIO

asilo onde o pobre trabalhava em troca de teto e comida
We have workhouses.

As armadilhas deste capítulo

> “Nobody ever stopped him in the street.” — em português a gente empilha negativas: “Ninguém nunca parou ele na rua”. Em inglês, não. Uma negativa por frase: depois de nobody, never vira ever. “Ninguém nunca me ajudou” é I have never helped — não. É Nobody has ever helped me. Dizer “nobody never” soa como inglês de filme antigo, e está errado.

> “A merry Christmas” e “a happy New Year” — em português é “feliz” nos dois. Em inglês as duas palavras não trocam de lugar: Natal é merry (ou happy, se for britânico moderno), mas Ano Novo é sempre happy. “Merry New Year” ninguém diz. Isso é colocação: não tem regra lógica, tem uso — e trocar denuncia o estrangeiro na hora.

> “Many thousands are in want of common necessaries.” — want aqui não é “querer”. É substantivo: falta, necessidade, miséria. O brasileiro lê “muitos milhares querem...” e o sentido inverte: quem está in want não quer, está precisando. O mesmo vale para Want com maiúscula no livro, que é a Miséria em pessoa.

NÍVEL 2

Médio

A2–B2 — O enredo com textura

I

Marley's Ghost

O Fantasma de Marley · Médio (A2–B2) · 23 min de leitura

Marley was dead. That is where this story has to start. He had died seven years before. Scrooge had signed the burial book himself. The two men had been partners for years. Scrooge was Marley's only friend, and the only person at his funeral.

You must be sure about this. Nothing strange can happen in this story unless you believe it first.

Scrooge never painted out the old name. Years later the sign still said Scrooge and Marley. New customers sometimes called him Scrooge and sometimes Marley. He answered to both names. It made no difference to him.

Scrooge was a hard, tight old man. He squeezed every coin and gave nothing back. The cold inside him froze his old face. It made his nose sharp and his lips thin. He carried his own low temperature everywhere. His office was cold in August. He did not warm it one degree at Christmas.

No weather could touch him. No wind was colder than Scrooge. Nobody ever stopped him in the street to ask how he was. No beggar asked him for a coin. No child asked him the time. Even the dogs of blind men pulled their owners away. Scrooge liked it exactly like that.

It was Christmas Eve, and Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. The weather was cold and grey, with a thick fog. Outside, people stamped their feet on the stones to keep warm. The clocks had just struck three, but it was dark already. Candles burned in the office windows across the narrow court.

Scrooge kept his door open so he could watch his clerk. The clerk sat in a tiny cold room and copied letters. Scrooge had a very small fire. The clerk's fire looked like a single coal. He could not add more. Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room. So the clerk put on his white comforter. He tried to warm his hands at the candle. It did not work.

"A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was Scrooge's nephew, Fred. He arrived so fast that Scrooge did not hear him coming.

"Bah!" said Scrooge. "Humbug!"

Fred had walked quickly through the fog and the frost. His face was red, his eyes were bright. His breath smoked in the cold air.

"Christmas a humbug, uncle!" he said. "You don't mean that."

"I do," said Scrooge. "What right have you to be merry? You are poor enough."

"Come, then," said Fred gaily. "What right have you to be miserable? You are rich enough."

Scrooge had no better answer ready. So he said "Bah!" again, and then "Humbug!"

"Don't be cross, uncle," said Fred.

"What else can I be," said Scrooge, "in a world of fools? Christmas is a time for paying bills without money. You find yourself a year older and not an hour richer."

“Uncle!” said Fred.

“Nephew,” said Scrooge sternly, “keep Christmas in your way. Let me keep it in mine.”

“But you don’t keep it,” said Fred.

“Then let me leave it alone,” said Scrooge.

Fred did not give up. “Christmas has always done me good,” he said. “It never put gold in my pocket. It is still the one time of the year when people open their hearts. It is the one time when men think of the poor as fellow travellers. And so, uncle, God bless it!”

The clerk clapped his hands from his cold little room. Then he remembered himself. He poked the fire and put out his last weak spark for ever.

“One more sound from you,” said Scrooge, “and you will lose your job.” He turned to his nephew. “You are quite a speaker, sir.”

“Don’t be angry, uncle. Come and dine with us tomorrow.”

Scrooge refused, and he refused rudely.

“But why?” cried Fred. “Why?”

“Why did you get married?” said Scrooge.

“Because I fell in love.”

“Because you fell in love!” growled Scrooge. “Good afternoon!”

“But uncle, you never came to see me before that. Why use it as a reason now?”

“Good afternoon,” said Scrooge.

“I want nothing from you. Why can’t we be friends?”

“Good afternoon,” said Scrooge.

“I am sorry to find you so hard,” said Fred. “We have never had a quarrel. I came here in honour of Christmas. I will keep my Christmas humour to the end. A merry Christmas, uncle!”

“Good afternoon!”

“And a happy New Year!”

“Good afternoon!”

Fred left without one angry word. He stopped at the outer door to greet the clerk. The clerk, cold as he was, answered him warmly.

“There’s another fool,” muttered Scrooge. “Fifteen shillings a week and a family. And he talks about a merry Christmas.”

Two other men came in as Fred went out. They were pleasant, heavy gentlemen. They stood in the office with their hats off. They carried books and papers, and they bowed to him.

“Scrooge and Marley’s, I believe,” said one of them, looking at his list.

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

“At this festive season we should think of the poor,” said the gentleman. He took up a pen. “Many thousands are in want of common necessaries, sir.”

“Are there no prisons?” asked Scrooge.

“Plenty of prisons,” said the gentleman. He laid the pen down again.

“And the workhouses? Are they still in operation?”

“They are, sir. I wish I could say they were not.”

“Good,” said Scrooge. “I was afraid something had stopped their useful work.”

“A few of us are raising a fund,” the gentleman went on. “We want to buy the poor some meat, some drink and some warmth. What shall I put you down for?”

“Nothing,” Scrooge replied.

“You wish to be anonymous?”

“I wish to be left alone,” said Scrooge. “I don’t make merry at Christmas. I can’t afford to make idle people merry. I help to pay for the prisons and the workhouses. Those who are badly off must go there.”

“Many can’t go there. Many would rather die.”

“If they would rather die,” said Scrooge, “they had better do it. It will reduce the surplus population.”

The gentlemen saw that it was useless, and they went away. Scrooge went back to work with a better opinion of himself.

Outside, the fog and the darkness grew thicker. Some workmen were repairing the gas-pipes at the corner. They had lit a great fire in an iron pot. A group of ragged men and boys stood around it. They warmed their hands and blinked happily at the flames. The shop windows shone with holly and berries.

One small boy stooped down at Scrooge’s keyhole to sing a carol. At the first line, Scrooge seized his ruler. The singer ran away in terror.

At last it was time to close the counting-house. Scrooge got down from his stool with an ill will. The clerk blew out his candle at once and put on his hat.

“You’ll want all day tomorrow, I suppose?” said Scrooge.

“If it is convenient, sir.”

“It is not convenient,” said Scrooge, “and it is not fair. I pay a day’s wages for no work.”

The clerk smiled faintly. He said that it was only once a year.

“A poor excuse for picking a man’s pocket,” said Scrooge. He buttoned his coat to the chin. “But take the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning.”

The clerk promised, and Scrooge walked out with a growl. The office was shut in a moment. The clerk ran down a slide on the ice with a line of boys. He did it twenty times, in honour of Christmas Eve. Then he ran home to Camden Town to play with his children.

Scrooge took his sad dinner in his usual sad tavern. He read all the newspapers and went home to bed. He lived in rooms that had once belonged to his dead partner. They were gloomy rooms in an old building. Nobody lived there but Scrooge. The yard was so dark that he had to feel his way.

Now, there was nothing special about the knocker on that door. It was only very large. Scrooge had seen it every day for years. And Scrooge had as little imagination as any man in London. Remember also that he had not thought about Marley once that day.

So explain this to me, if you can. Scrooge put his key in the lock. And he saw in the knocker — not a knocker, but Marley's face.

Marley's face. It was not in deep shadow like the rest of the yard. It had a dull light of its own. It was not angry or terrible. It looked at Scrooge the way Marley used to look. The hair moved strangely, as if in warm air. The eyes were wide open and perfectly still. That colour, and those eyes, made the whole thing horrible.

Scrooge looked hard at it. Then it was a knocker again.

He was startled, and it would be untrue to say anything else. But he put his hand on the key. He turned it firmly, walked in, and lit his candle.

He did pause before he shut the door. He did look carefully behind it first. But there was nothing there except screws and nuts. So he said "Pooh, pooh!" and closed the door with a bang.

The sound rolled through the house like thunder. Scrooge was not a man who feared echoes. He crossed the hall and went up the wide old stairs.

Before he shut his heavy door, he walked through his rooms. He remembered that face well enough to want to look.

Sitting-room, bedroom, lumber-room. All as they should be. Nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa. A small fire in the grate. His little pot of gruel was warming on the hob. Nobody under the bed, nobody in the closet.

Quite satisfied, he shut his door and locked himself in. Then he locked himself in a second time. That was not his habit. He took off his cravat and put on his dressing-gown and slippers. He sat down before the fire to take his gruel.

It was a very low fire for such a bitter night. He had to lean over it to feel any warmth. Old Dutch tiles ran round the fireplace, with pictures from the Bible. There were hundreds of small figures there. And yet Scrooge saw only one face on every tile. He saw Marley, seven years dead.

"Humbug!" said Scrooge, and walked across the room.

He sat down again. His eye fell on an old bell that hung in the room. Nobody used it any more. He watched with great surprise as the bell began to swing. It swung softly at first and hardly made a sound. Then it rang out loudly, and so did every bell in the house.

This lasted a minute, but it felt like an hour. The bells stopped together, as they had begun. Then came a clanking noise, deep below. It sounded like someone dragging a heavy chain over the casks. Scrooge remembered that ghosts were said to drag chains.

The cellar door flew open with a boom. He heard the noise on the floors below. Then it came up the stairs. Then it came straight towards his door.

"It's humbug still," said Scrooge. "I won't believe it."

But his colour changed. It came on through the heavy door and into the room. The dying flame leaped up, as if it cried "Marley's Ghost!" Then it fell again.

The same face. Marley in his pigtail, his usual waistcoat, his boots. The chain he dragged was fastened round his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail. Scrooge looked at it closely. It was made of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds and heavy purses. The ghost's body was transparent. Scrooge could look through his waistcoat and see the buttons behind.

"Well?" said Scrooge, cold and sharp as ever. "What do you want with me?"

"Much!" It was Marley's voice, without a doubt.

"Who are you?"

"Ask me who I was."

"Who were you, then?" said Scrooge, raising his voice.

"In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley."

"Can you — can you sit down?" asked Scrooge.

"I can. Do you doubt your senses?"

"I do," said Scrooge. "A little thing upsets them. A small problem in the stomach makes them liars. You may be a bit of undercooked beef, or a drop of mustard."

Scrooge was not in the habit of making jokes. He did not feel funny at all. He was trying to be clever in order to hold down his terror. The spectre's voice disturbed him to the bone.

At this the spirit raised a frightful cry. It shook its chain with a horrible noise. Scrooge held tight to his chair. Then the phantom took the bandage off its head. Its lower jaw dropped down on its chest.

Scrooge fell on his knees and covered his face.

"Mercy!" he said. "Dreadful thing, why do you trouble me?"

"Man of the worldly mind," replied the Ghost, "do you believe in me?"

"I do," said Scrooge. "I must. But why do spirits walk the earth?"

"The spirit inside every man must walk among his fellow men," the Ghost returned. "It must travel far and wide. If it does not go out in life, it must do it after death. It must wander and watch what it can no longer share."

The spectre cried again, and wrung its shadowy hands.

"You are in chains," said Scrooge, trembling. "Tell me why."

"I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost. "I made it link by link and yard by yard. I put it on of my own free will. Is the pattern strange to you?"

Scrooge trembled more and more.

“Would you like to know the weight of your own chain?” the Ghost went on. “It was as long as this one, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have worked on it since then. It is a heavy chain now.”

Scrooge looked around at the floor. He expected iron cable. He could see nothing.

“Jacob,” he said, begging. “Speak comfort to me, Jacob!”

“I have none to give,” the Ghost replied. “Comfort comes from other places, Ebenezer Scrooge. I cannot rest. I cannot stay. I cannot linger anywhere. In life my spirit never went beyond our counting-house. Mark me! And weary journeys lie in front of me now.”

“You were always a good man of business, Jacob,” said Scrooge. He was beginning to apply all this to himself.

“Business!” cried the Ghost, wringing its hands. “Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business. Charity, mercy and kindness were all my business. My trade was only a drop of water in that great ocean!”

It held up its chain at arm’s length. Then it threw the chain heavily on the ground.

“At this time of the year I suffer most,” said the spectre. “Why did I walk through crowds with my eyes turned down? Hear me! My time is nearly gone.”

“I will hear you,” said Scrooge. “But don’t be hard on me, Jacob!”

“I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day.”

It was not a pleasant idea. Scrooge shivered and wiped his forehead.

“I am here tonight to warn you,” the Ghost went on. “You still have a chance and a hope of escaping my fate. I obtained that chance for you, Ebenezer.”

“You were always a good friend to me,” said Scrooge. “Thank you!”

“Three Spirits will haunt you,” said the Ghost.

Scrooge’s face fell almost as low as the Ghost’s had done.

“Is that the chance and hope you mentioned?” he asked in a shaking voice.

“It is. Without their visits you cannot hope to shun my path. Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls One.”

“Couldn’t I take them all at once, and get it over?” said Scrooge.

“Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. Expect the third on the night after, after the last stroke of Twelve. You will not see me any more. Remember, for your own sake, what has passed between us.”

The spectre tied the wrapper round its head again. Scrooge knew this by the sharp sound of its teeth. He raised his eyes and found his visitor standing straight before him. The chain was wound over its arm.

The apparition walked backwards away from him. At every step, the window raised itself a little. The window was wide open when the spectre reached it.

It beckoned Scrooge to come closer, and he did. Marley's Ghost held up its hand and warned him to stop. Scrooge stopped in surprise and fear.

He heard confused noises in the air. They were sounds of sorrow and regret. The spectre listened for a moment and joined the mournful song. Then it floated out into the bleak, dark night.

Scrooge followed to the window and looked out.

The air was full of phantoms, moaning as they moved. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost. Some few were linked together. None of them were free. Scrooge had known many of them in life. One old ghost carried a monstrous iron safe on its ankle. It cried because it could not help a poor woman below. The misery of all of them was plain. They wanted to help in human matters, and they had lost the power for ever.

The phantoms and their voices faded into the mist together. The night became as it had been.

Scrooge closed the window and examined the door. It was double-locked, exactly as he had left it. The bolts had not moved. He tried to say "Humbug!" but stopped at the first syllable. He went straight to bed, without undressing, and fell asleep in an instant.

Glossário — Médio

humbug EXPRESSÃO

bobagem, enganação — é a palavra com que Scrooge joga fora o Natal inteiro
"Bah!" said Scrooge. "Humbug!"

clerk FALSO COGNATO

escriturário, funcionário de escritório — não é "clérigo"
Scrooge kept his door open so he could watch his clerk.

comforter FALSO COGNATO

cachecol de lã — não é "cobertor" nem "consolador"
So the clerk put on his white comforter.

want FALSO COGNATO

aqui é substantivo: falta, necessidade, miséria — não o verbo "querer"
Many thousands are in want of common necessaries.

counting-house VOCABULÁRIO

escritório de contabilidade de um comerciante; o negócio de Scrooge
Old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house.

put on PHRASAL VERB

vestir, pôr no corpo → **vestir**
He put on his dressing-gown and slippers.

take off PHRASAL VERB

tirar do corpo → **tirar**
He took off his cravat.

go on PHRASAL VERB

continuar (falando ou fazendo) → **continuar**

The Ghost went on.

give up PHRASAL VERB

desistir → **desistir**

Fred did not give up.

haunt VOCABULÁRIO

assombrar: o fantasma que volta ao mesmo lugar ou à mesma pessoa

Three Spirits will haunt you.

shun VOCABULÁRIO

evitar, fugir de

You cannot hope to shun the path I walk.

forge VOCABULÁRIO

forjar: bater o metal quente para fazer a peça — aqui, a corrente

I wear the chain I forged in life.

As armadilhas deste capítulo

> "Nobody ever stopped him in the street." — em português a gente empilha negativas: "Ninguém nunca parou ele na rua". Em inglês, não. Uma negativa por frase: depois de nobody, never vira ever. "Ninguém nunca me ajudou" é I have never helped — não. É Nobody has ever helped me. Dizer "nobody never" soa como inglês de filme antigo, e está errado.

> "A merry Christmas" e "a happy New Year" — em português é "feliz" nos dois. Em inglês as duas palavras não trocam de lugar: Natal é merry (ou happy, se for britânico moderno), mas Ano Novo é sempre happy. "Merry New Year" ninguém diz. Isso é colocação: não tem regra lógica, tem uso — e trocar denuncia o estrangeiro na hora.

> "Many thousands are in want of common necessaries." — want aqui não é "querer". É substantivo: falta, necessidade, miséria. O brasileiro lê "muitos milhares querem..." e o sentido inverte: quem está in want não quer, está precisando. O mesmo vale para Want com maiúscula no livro, que é a Miséria em pessoa.

NÍVEL 3

Original

Texto do autor — O livro como foi escrito

I

Marley's Ghost

O Fantasma de Marley · Original (Texto do autor) · 49 min de leitura

MARLEY was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it: and Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for. You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Scrooge knew he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, and sole mourner. And even Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the sad event, but that he was an excellent man of business on the very day of the funeral, and solemnised it with an undoubted bargain.

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 going to relate. If we were not perfectly convinced that Hamlet's Father died before the play began, there would be nothing more remarkable in his taking a stroll at night, in an easterly wind, upon his own ramparts, than there would be in any other middle-aged gentleman rashly turning out after dark in a breezy spot--say Saint Paul's Churchyard for instance-- literally to astonish his son's weak mind.

Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him.

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grind-stone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have

him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?" No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, "No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!"

But what did Scrooge care! It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call "nuts" to Scrooge.

Once upon a time--of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve--old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal: and he could hear the people in the court outside, go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already-- it had not been light all day--and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighbouring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring everything, one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale.

The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

"A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

"Bah!" said Scrooge, "Humbug!"

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again.

"Christmas a humbug, uncle!" said Scrooge's nephew. "You don't mean that, I am sure?"

"I do," said Scrooge. "Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough."

"Come, then," returned the nephew gaily. "What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough."

Scrooge having no better answer ready on the spur of the moment, said, "Bah!" again; and followed it up with "Humbug."

"Don't be cross, uncle!" said the nephew.

"What else can I be," returned the uncle, "when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will," said Scrooge indignantly, "every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!"

"Uncle!" pleaded the nephew.

"Nephew!" returned the uncle sternly, "keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine."

"Keep it!" repeated Scrooge's nephew. "But you don't keep it."

"Let me leave it alone, then," said Scrooge. "Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!"

"There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say," returned the nephew. "Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round--apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that--as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!"

The clerk in the Tank involuntarily applauded. Becoming immediately sensible of the impropriety, he poked the fire, and extinguished the last frail spark for ever.

"Let me hear another sound from you," said Scrooge, "and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation! You're quite a powerful speaker, sir," he added, turning to his nephew. "I wonder you don't go into Parliament."

"Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us to-morrow."

Scrooge said that he would see him--yes, indeed he did. He went the whole length of the expression, and said that he would see him in that extremity first.

"But why?" cried Scrooge's nephew. "Why?"

"Why did you get married?" said Scrooge.

"Because I fell in love."

"Because you fell in love!" growled Scrooge, as if that were the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas. "Good afternoon!"

"Nay, uncle, but you never came to see me before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?"

"Good afternoon," said Scrooge.

"I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends?"

"Good afternoon," said Scrooge.

"I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel, to which I have been a party. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humour to the last. So A Merry Christmas, uncle!"

"Good afternoon!" said Scrooge.

"And A Happy New Year!"

"Good afternoon!" said Scrooge.

His nephew left the room without an angry word, notwithstanding. He stopped at the outer door to bestow the greetings of the season on the clerk, who, cold as he was, was warmer than Scrooge; for he returned them cordially.

"There's another fellow," muttered Scrooge; who overheard him: "my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam."

This lunatic, in letting Scrooge's nephew out, had let two other people in. They were portly gentlemen, pleasant to behold, and 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, referring to his list. "Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?"

"Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years," Scrooge replied. "He died seven years ago, this very night."

"We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner," said the gentleman, presenting his credentials.

It certainly was; for they had been two kindred spirits. At the ominous word "liberality," Scrooge frowned, and shook his head, and handed the credentials back.

"At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge," said the gentleman, taking up a pen, "it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessaries; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir."

"Are there no prisons?" asked Scrooge.

"Plenty of prisons," said the gentleman, laying down the pen again.

"And the Union workhouses?" demanded Scrooge. "Are they still in operation?"

"They are. Still," returned the gentleman, "I wish I could say they were not."

"The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?" said Scrooge.

"Both very busy, sir."

"Oh! I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course," said Scrooge. "I'm very glad to hear it."

"Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude," returned the gentleman, "a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?"

"Nothing!" Scrooge replied.

"You wish to be anonymous?"

"I wish to be left alone," said Scrooge. "Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned--they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there."

"Many can't go there; and many would rather die."

"If they would rather die," said Scrooge, "they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides--excuse me--I don't know that."

"But you might know it," observed the gentleman.

"It's not my business," Scrooge returned. "It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!"

Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen withdrew. Scrooge resumed his labours with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more facetious temper than was usual with him.

Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened so, that people ran about with flaring links, proffering their services to go before horses in carriages, and conduct them on their way. The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping slily down at Scrooge out of a Gothic window in the wall, became invisible, and struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there. The cold became intense. In the main street, at the corner of the court, some labourers were repairing the gas-pipes, and had lighted a great fire in a brazier, round which a party of ragged men and boys were gathered: warming their hands and winking their eyes before the blaze in rapture. The water-plug being left in solitude, its overflowings sullenly congealed, and turned to misanthropic ice. The brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackled in the lamp heat of the windows, made pale faces ruddy as they passed. Poulterers' and grocers' trades became a splendid joke: a glorious pageant, with which it was next to impossible to believe that such dull principles as bargain and sale had anything to do. The Lord Mayor, in the stronghold of the mighty Mansion House, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord Mayor's household should; and even the little tailor, whom he had fined five shillings on the previous Monday for being drunk and bloodthirsty in the streets, stirred up to-morrow's pudding in his garret, while his lean wife and the baby sallied out to buy the beef.

Foggier yet, and colder. Piercing, searching, biting cold. If the good Saint Dunstan had but nipped the Evil Spirit's nose with a touch of such weather as that, instead of using his familiar weapons, then indeed he would have roared to lusty purpose. The owner of one scant young nose, gnawed and mumbled by the hungry cold as bones are gnawed by dogs, stooped down at Scrooge's keyhole to regale him with a Christmas carol: but at the first sound of

"God bless you, merry gentleman! May nothing you dismay!"

Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action, that the singer fled in terror, leaving the keyhole to the fog and even more congenial frost.

At length the hour of shutting up the counting-house arrived. With an ill-will Scrooge dismounted from his stool, and tacitly admitted the fact to the expectant clerk in the Tank, who instantly snuffed his candle out, and put on his hat.

"You'll want all day to-morrow, I suppose?" said Scrooge.

"If quite convenient, sir."

"It's not convenient," said Scrooge, "and it's not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you'd think yourself ill-used, I'll be bound?"

The clerk smiled faintly.

"And yet," said Scrooge, "you don't think me ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work."

The clerk observed that it was only once a year.

"A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December!" said Scrooge, buttoning his great-coat to the chin. "But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning."

The clerk promised that he would; and Scrooge walked out with a growl. The office was closed in a twinkling, and the clerk, with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no great-coat), went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times, in honour of its being Christmas Eve, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could pelt, to play at blindman's-buff.

Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's-book, went home to bed. He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of building up a yard, where it had so little business to be, that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there when it was a young house, playing at hide-and-seek with other houses, and forgotten the way out again. It was old enough now, and dreary enough, for nobody lived in it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices. The yard was so dark that even Scrooge, who knew its every stone, was fain to grope with his hands. The fog and frost so hung about the black old gateway of the house, that it seemed as if the Genius of the Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold.

Now, it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very large. It is also a fact, that Scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place; also that Scrooge had as little of what is called fancy

about him as any man in the city of London, even including--which is a bold word--the corporation, aldermen, and livery. Let it also be borne in mind that Scrooge had not bestowed one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his seven years' dead partner that afternoon. And then let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change--not a knocker, but Marley's face.

Marley's face. It was not in impenetrable shadow as the other objects in the yard were, but had a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar. It was not angry or ferocious, but looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look: with ghostly spectacles turned up on its ghostly forehead. The hair was curiously stirred, as if by breath or hot air; and, though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly motionless. That, and its livid colour, made it horrible; but its horror seemed to be in spite of the face and beyond its control, rather than a part of its own expression.

As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was a knocker again.

To say that he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from infancy, would be untrue. But he put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, turned it sturdily, walked in, and lighted his candle.

He did pause, with a moment's irresolution, before he shut the door; and he did look cautiously behind it first, as if he half expected to be terrified with the sight of Marley's pigtail sticking out into the hall. But there was nothing on the back of the door, except the screws and nuts that held the knocker on, so he said "Pooh, pooh!" and closed it with a bang.

The sound resounded through the house like thunder. Every room above, and every cask in the wine-merchant's cellars below, appeared to have a separate peal of echoes of its own. Scrooge was not a man to be frightened by echoes. He fastened the door, and walked across the hall, and up the stairs; slowly too: trimming his candle as he went.

You may talk vaguely about driving a coach-and-six up a good old flight of stairs, or through a bad young Act of Parliament; but I mean to say you might have got a hearse up that staircase, and taken it broadwise, with the splinter-bar towards the wall and the door towards the balustrades: and done it easy. There was plenty of width for that, and room to spare; which is perhaps the reason why Scrooge thought he saw a locomotive hearse going on before him in the gloom. Half-a-dozen gas-lamps out of the street wouldn't have lighted the entry too well, so you may suppose that it was pretty dark with Scrooge's dip.

Up Scrooge went, not caring a button for that. Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it. But before he shut his heavy door, he walked through his rooms to see that all was right. He had just enough recollection of the face to desire to do that.

Sitting-room, bedroom, lumber-room. All as they should be. Nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa; a small fire in the grate; spoon and basin ready; and the little saucepan of gruel (Scrooge had a cold in his head) upon the hob. Nobody under the bed; nobody in the closet; nobody in his dressing-gown, which was hanging up in a suspicious attitude against the

wall. Lumber-room as usual. Old fire-guard, old shoes, two fish-baskets, washing-stand on three legs, and a poker.

Quite satisfied, he closed his door, and locked himself in; double-locked himself in, which was not his custom. Thus secured against surprise, he took off his cravat; put on his dressing-gown and slippers, and his nightcap; and sat down before the fire to take his gruel.

It was a very low fire indeed; nothing on such a bitter night. He was obliged to sit close to it, and brood over it, before he could extract the least sensation of warmth from such a handful of fuel. The fireplace was an old one, built by some Dutch merchant long ago, and paved all round with quaint Dutch tiles, designed to illustrate the Scriptures. There were Cains and Abels, Pharaoh's daughters; Queens of Sheba, Angelic messengers descending through the air on clouds like feather-beds, Abrahams, Belshazzars, Apostles putting off to sea in butter-boats, hundreds of figures to attract his thoughts; and yet that face of Marley, seven years dead, came like the ancient Prophet's rod, and swallowed up the whole. If each smooth tile had been a blank at first, with power to shape some picture on its surface from the disjointed fragments of his thoughts, there would have been a copy of old Marley's head on every one.

"Humbug!" said Scrooge; and walked across the room.

After several turns, he sat down again. As he threw his head back in the chair, his glance happened to rest upon a bell, a disused bell, that hung in the room, and communicated for some purpose now forgotten with a chamber in the highest story of the building. It was with great astonishment, and with a strange, inexplicable dread, that as he looked, he saw this bell begin to swing. It swung so softly in the outset that it scarcely made a sound; but soon it rang out loudly, and so did every bell in the house.

This might have lasted half a minute, or a minute, but it seemed an hour. The bells ceased as they had begun, together. They were succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below; as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casks in the wine-merchant's cellar. Scrooge then remembered to have heard that ghosts in haunted houses were described as dragging chains.

The cellar-door flew open with a booming sound, and then he heard the noise much louder, on the floors below; then coming up the stairs; then coming straight towards his door.

"It's humbug still!" said Scrooge. "I won't believe it."

His colour changed though, when, without a pause, it came on through the heavy door, and passed into the room before his eyes. Upon its coming in, the dying flame leaped up, as though it cried, "I know him; Marley's Ghost!" and fell again.

The same face: the very same. Marley in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights and boots; the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pigtail, and his coat-skirts, and the hair upon his head. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel. His body was transparent; so that Scrooge, observing him, and looking through his waistcoat, could see the two buttons on his coat behind.

Scrooge had often heard it said that Marley had no bowels, but he had never believed it until now.

No, nor did he believe it even now. Though he looked the phantom through and through, and saw it standing before him; though he felt the chilling influence of its death-cold eyes; and marked the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about its head and chin, which wrapper he had not observed before; he was still incredulous, and fought against his senses.

"How now!" said Scrooge, caustic and cold as ever. "What do you want with me?"

"Much!"--Marley's voice, no doubt about it.

"Who are you?"

"Ask me who I was."

"Who were you then?" said Scrooge, raising his voice. "You're particular, for a shade." He was going to say "to a shade," but substituted this, as more appropriate.

"In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley."

"Can you--can you sit down?" asked Scrooge, looking doubtfully at him.

"I can."

"Do it, then."

Scrooge asked the question, because he didn't know whether a ghost so transparent might find himself in a condition to take a chair; and felt that in the event of its being impossible, it might involve the necessity of an embarrassing explanation. But the ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, as if he were quite used to it.

"You don't believe in me," observed the Ghost.

"I don't," said Scrooge.

"What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your senses?"

"I don't know," said Scrooge.

"Why do you doubt your senses?"

"Because," said Scrooge, "a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!"

Scrooge was not much in the habit of cracking jokes, nor did he feel, in his heart, by any means waggish then. The truth is, that he tried to be smart, as a means of distracting his own attention, and keeping down his terror; for the spectre's voice disturbed the very marrow in his bones.

To sit, staring at those fixed glazed eyes, in silence for a moment, would play, Scrooge felt, the very deuce with him. There was something very awful, too, in the spectre's being provided with an infernal atmosphere of its own. Scrooge could not feel it himself, but this was clearly the case; for though the Ghost sat perfectly motionless, its hair, and skirts, and tassels, were still agitated as by the hot vapour from an oven.

"You see this toothpick?" said Scrooge, returning quickly to the charge, for the reason just assigned; and wishing, though it were only for a second, to divert the vision's stony gaze from himself.

"I do," replied the Ghost.

"You are not looking at it," said Scrooge.

"But I see it," said the Ghost, "notwithstanding."

"Well!" returned Scrooge, "I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you! humbug!"

At this the spirit raised a frightful cry, and shook its chain with such a dismal and appalling noise, that Scrooge held on tight to his chair, to save himself from falling in a swoon. But how much greater was his horror, when the phantom taking off the bandage round its head, as if it were too warm to wear indoors, its lower jaw dropped down upon its breast!

Scrooge fell upon his knees, and clasped his hands before his face.

"Mercy!" he said. "Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?"

"Man of the worldly mind!" replied the Ghost, "do you believe in me or not?"

"I do," said Scrooge. "I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?"

"It is required of every man," the Ghost returned, "that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellowmen, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world--oh, woe is me!--and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!"

Again the spectre raised a cry, and shook its chain and wrung its shadowy hands.

"You are fettered," said Scrooge, trembling. "Tell me why?"

"I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost. "I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?"

Scrooge trembled more and more.

"Or would you know," pursued the Ghost, "the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!"

Scrooge glanced about him on the floor, in the expectation of finding himself surrounded by some fifty or sixty fathoms of iron cable: but he could see nothing.

"Jacob," he said, imploringly. "Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob!"

"I have none to give," the Ghost replied. "It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would. A very little more is all permitted to me. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house--mark me!--in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me!"

It was a habit with Scrooge, whenever he became thoughtful, to put his hands in his breeches pockets. Pondering on what the Ghost had said, he did so now, but without lifting up his eyes, or getting off his knees.

"You must have been very slow about it, Jacob," Scrooge observed, in a business-like manner, though with humility and deference.

"Slow!" the Ghost repeated.

"Seven years dead," mused Scrooge. "And travelling all the time!"

"The whole time," said the Ghost. "No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse."

"You travel fast?" said Scrooge.

"On the wings of the wind," replied the Ghost.

"You might have got over a great quantity of ground in seven years," said Scrooge.

The Ghost, on hearing this, set up another cry, and clanked its chain so hideously in the dead silence of the night, that the Ward would have been justified in indicting it for a nuisance.

"Oh! captive, bound, and double-ironed," cried the phantom, "not to know, that ages of incessant labour by immortal creatures, for this earth must pass into eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed. Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!"

"But you were always a good man of business, Jacob," faltered Scrooge, who now began to apply this to himself.

"Business!" cried the Ghost, wringing its hands again. "Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!"

It held up its chain at arm's length, as if that were the cause of all its unavailing grief, and flung it heavily upon the ground again.

"At this time of the rolling year," the spectre said, "I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode! Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me!"

Scrooge was very much dismayed to hear the spectre going on at this rate, and began to quake exceedingly.

"Hear me!" cried the Ghost. "My time is nearly gone."

"I will," said Scrooge. "But don't be hard upon me! Don't be flowery, Jacob! Pray!"

"How it is that I appear before you in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day."

It was not an agreeable idea. Scrooge shivered, and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"That is no light part of my penance," pursued the Ghost. "I am here to-night to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer."

"You were always a good friend to me," said Scrooge. "Thank'ee!"

"You will be haunted," resumed the Ghost, "by Three Spirits."

Scrooge's countenance fell almost as low as the Ghost's had done.

"Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?" he demanded, in a faltering voice.

"It is."

"I--I think I'd rather not," said Scrooge.

"Without their visits," said the Ghost, "you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls One."

"Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?" hinted Scrooge.

"Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us!"

When it had said these words, the spectre took its wrapper from the table, and bound it round its head, as before. Scrooge knew this, by the smart sound its teeth made, when the jaws were brought together by the bandage. He ventured to raise his eyes again, and found his supernatural visitor confronting him in an erect attitude, with its chain wound over and about its arm.

The apparition walked backward from him; and at every step it took, the window raised itself a little, so that when the spectre reached it, it was wide open.

It beckoned Scrooge to approach, which he did. When they were within two paces of each other, Marley's Ghost held up its hand, warning him to come no nearer. Scrooge stopped.

Not so much in obedience, as in surprise and fear: for on the raising of the hand, he became sensible of confused noises in the air; incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret; wailings inexpressibly sorrowful and self-accusatory. The spectre, after listening for a moment, joined in the mournful dirge; and floated out upon the bleak, dark night.

Scrooge followed to the window: desperate in his curiosity. He looked out.

The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost; some few (they might be guilty governments) were linked together; none were free. Many had been personally known to Scrooge in their lives. He had been quite familiar with one old ghost, in a white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron safe attached to its ankle, who cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below, upon a door-step. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever.

Whether these creatures faded into mist, or mist enshrouded them, he could not tell. But they and their spirit voices faded together; and the night became as it had been when he

walked home.

Scrooge closed the window, and examined the door by which the Ghost had entered. It was double-locked, as he had locked it with his own hands, and the bolts were undisturbed. He tried to say "Humbug!" but stopped at the first syllable. And being, from the emotion he had undergone, or the fatigues of the day, or his glimpse of the Invisible World, or the dull conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the hour, much in need of repose; went straight to bed, without undressing, and fell asleep upon the instant.

As armadilhas deste capítulo

> “Nobody ever stopped him in the street.” — em português a gente empilha negativas: “Ninguém nunca parou ele na rua”. Em inglês, não. Uma negativa por frase: depois de nobody, never vira ever. “Ninguém nunca me ajudou” é I have never helped — não. É Nobody has ever helped me. Dizer “nobody never” soa como inglês de filme antigo, e está errado.

> “A merry Christmas” e “a happy New Year” — em português é “feliz” nos dois. Em inglês as duas palavras não trocam de lugar: Natal é merry (ou happy, se for britânico moderno), mas Ano Novo é sempre happy. “Merry New Year” ninguém diz. Isso é colocação: não tem regra lógica, tem uso — e trocar denuncia o estrangeiro na hora.

> “Many thousands are in want of common necessaries.” — want aqui não é “querer”. É substantivo: falta, necessidade, miséria. O brasileiro lê “muitos milhares querem...” e o sentido inverte: quem está in want não quer, está precisando. O mesmo vale para Want com maiúscula no livro, que é a Miséria em pessoa.

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