

Worksheet 10 – Stave Three: The Cratchits

Review: Lecture 9

In Lecture 9, Prof. McRae explored Scrooge's memories of his past Christmases, including those when he was a neglected child, as a young man at the Fezziwigs, and in love with Belle.

- ✓ Put a cross next to the three adjectives you think best describe Scrooge's character so far in the novella. Then write a couple of sentences justifying why you chose each one.

evil humorless faithless petty hard-hearted
 brave observant cowardly honest sympathetic
 rational immature hot-headed lonely businesslike
 cynical persistent shy unemotional conflicted

Recall: Lecture 10

Answer these questions after watching the lecture, to see how much you remember.

- How much does Bob Cratchit get paid working for Scrooge?
a) £15 an hour c) 15 shillings a day
b) £15 a week d) 15 shillings a week
- Which phrase best describes the Spirit of Christmas Present?
a) A child-like figure c) Shrouded in a cloak
b) An old man d) A jolly giant

Analysis

- In his lecture, Prof. McRae discusses the importance of Scrooge falling asleep at the end of each stanza:

Awaking in the middle of a prodigiously tough snore, and sitting up in bed to get his thoughts together, Scrooge had no occasion to be told that the bell was again upon the stroke of One.

What are the possible connections between dreaming and ghosts in *A Christmas Carol*?

- Read the description of the Ghost of Christmas Present below. Explain the symbolism of the three highlighted quotations.

It was clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that **its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice**. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, were also bare; and **on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath**, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free; free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air. **Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust.**

Evaluation

5. Dickens is known for using long lists in his writing, which in the scenes describing Christmas creates a sense of plenty and excitement. Read the extract below and then try writing two sentences of your own, using listing to describe an exciting Christmas celebration.

Then up rose Mrs Cratchit, Cratchit's wife, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence; **and** she laid the cloth, assisted by Belinda Cratchit, second of her daughters, also brave in ribbons; **while** Master Peter Cratchit plunged a fork into the saucepan of potatoes, and getting the corners of his monstrous shirt collar (Bob's private property, conferred upon his son and heir in honour of the day) into his mouth, rejoiced to find himself so gallantly attired, and yearned to show his linen in the fashionable Parks. **And now** two smaller Cratchits, boy and girl, came tearing in, screaming that outside the baker's they had smelt the goose, and known it for their own; **and** basking in luxurious thoughts of sage and onion, these young Cratchits danced about the table, and exalted Master Peter Cratchit to the skies, while he (not proud, although his collars nearly choked him) blew the fire, **until** the slow potatoes bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan-lid to be let out and peeled.

Sentence starters:

Then...; and...; while... .

And now...; and...; until... .

6. **Extension:** Critic Valerie Purton (2012) has argued that 'sentimental scenes and characters [are] crucial to the overall power' of Dickens's novel. To what extent do you agree?
Consider: Dickens's descriptions of Christmas celebrations; the role of Tiny Tim in the novella.

Glossary

- **Shilling** – a coin, worth approximately 5p in today's money. There were 20 shillings in a pound.
- **Bob** – slang for a shilling coin.
- **Sentimental** – expressive of or appealing to sentiment, especially the tender emotions and feelings, as love, pity, or nostalgia; weakly emotional; overly susceptible or tender.
- **Symbolism** – the use of symbols to represent ideas or abstract qualities.