

Worksheet 11 – Stave Three: Christmas on Land and Sea

Review: Lecture 10

In Lecture 10, Prof. McRae explored the description of the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the Cratchit family Christmas.

- ✓ What exclamation does Tiny Tim make at the end of the Cratchits' Christmas dinner?

Recall: Lecture 11

Answer this question after watching the lecture, to see how much you remember.

1. Which settings does Scrooge visit with the Ghost of Christmas Present? *Find the odd one out.*
 - a) A prison
 - b) A lighthouse
 - c) A family of miners
 - d) A ship

Analysis

2. Prof. McRae argues that in *A Christmas Carol* 'the fire is very much a symbol of the family warmth'. Find three quotations from the novella to support Prof. McRae's argument.
3. 'Family and absence of family are really important in Dickens' (Prof. McRae). Using online research, find two other novels by Dickens where family and absence of family is a central theme. For each one, note their titles and write a short comparison to *A Christmas Carol*.

Evaluation

4. Prof. McRae discusses how Dickens takes Scrooge in Stave Three to 'the edge of the abyss' as 'Scrooge has to realise that there is nothing unless we are human with each other; unless humanity looks after each other'. In the 19th century a German philosopher called Friedrich Nietzsche explored the idea of the 'abyss' in his writing:

"Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And if you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you."

-Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886)

- a) What do you think Nietzsche means in this quotation?
 - b) How does it connect to what Prof. McRae talks about in this lecture?
5. What similarities and/or differences can you find between what Nietzsche is proposing and what Dickens explores in this section of Stave Three?

It was a great surprise to Scrooge, while listening to the moaning of the wind, and thinking what a solemn thing it was to move on through the lonely darkness over an unknown abyss, whose depths were secrets as profound as Death: it was a great surprise to Scrooge, while thus engaged, to hear a hearty laugh.

-- Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (1843)

Glossary

- **Penitence** – the action of feeling or showing sorrow and regret for having done wrong; repentance.
- **Grog** – rum mixed with water.
- **Abyss** – a deep or seemingly bottomless chasm.