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A CHRISTMAS CAROL 圣诞颂歌

查尔斯·狄更斯 著
保琳·弗兰西斯 改编



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作者 查尔斯·狄更斯

改编 保琳·弗兰西斯

译者 王德峰 岳玉庆

主编 刘启萍



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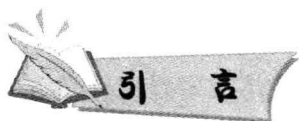
Introduction

Charles Dickens was born in 1812, the second of eight children. When he was twelve years old, his father went to prison because he owed money. Charles went out to work to help his family. He never forgot this terrible time when he was poor, and later used his experiences in some of his stories.

In his twenties, Charles found work writing about London life for newspapers and magazines. Some of these articles were published as a book called *Pickwick Papers*. This is how Charles Dickens became famous at the age of twenty-four.

A *Christmas Carol*, published in 1843, was the first of his Christmas stories. It tells the story of a ghost called Marley who comes to haunt his old friend Scrooge on Christmas Eve. He does this to teach him a lesson — not to be so mean. The word “scrooge” is still used by some people today to describe a mean person.

Charles Dickens wrote many famous novels, including *Nicholas Nickleby*, *David Copperfield*, *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*. He died in 1870 at the age of fifty-eight and is buried in Westminster Abbey, London.



查尔斯·狄更斯生于1812年，在8个孩子中排行第二。12岁那年，父亲因欠债入狱，查尔斯外出工作贴补家用。他从未忘记受穷的这段悲惨经历，后来把这些经历写进了自己的一些小说里。

20几岁时，查尔斯谋到了一份为报纸和杂志撰写有关伦敦生活的工作，其中一些文章集结成书得以出版，即《匹克威克外传》。凭借这本书，查尔斯·狄更斯24岁时一举成名。

《圣诞颂歌》于1843年出版，是他圣诞小说系列的第一部。它讲的是一个叫马利的鬼魂在圣诞夜缠上了他的老朋友斯克鲁奇的故事。他这样做是为了给他一个教训——为人不要太刻薄。今天，“斯克鲁奇”一词仍被一些人用来描述刻薄之人。

查尔斯·狄更斯写了很多有名的小说，包括《尼古拉斯·尼科尔贝》、《大卫·科波菲尔》、《雾都孤儿》和《远大前程》。他于1870年58岁时去世，葬于伦敦威斯敏斯特教堂。

CHAPTER ONE

Humbug!

Marley was dead — to begin with. And when Marley died, Ebenezer Scrooge was the only friend at his funeral.

Scrooge was a mean man — a greedy, tight-fisted man. He was as hard and as sharp as flint and secretive and solitary. The cold inside him froze his old face, nipped his pointed nose and shrivelled his cheeks. It made his eyes red and his thin lips blue. Frost seemed to shine on his head and his eyebrows. He was as bitter as the coldest wind.

Nobody ever stopped Scrooge in the street to say a friendly word. No beggar ever begged from him. No child ever asked him what time it was. Did Scrooge care? No! He liked more than anything else to keep people at a distance. And at Christmas he did not thaw out, not even by one degree.

Once upon a time, on Christmas Eve, old Scrooge was busy counting money. It was cold, bleak, foggy weather. It was only just after three o'clock in the afternoon but it was dark already. The door of Scrooge's office was open so that he could keep an eye on his clerk, Bob Cratchit. He was in a cold dark room copying letters by hand. His fire was so small that it looked like a single coal, but he could not make it larger because Scrooge kept the coal in his room. The clerk tried to warm himself in front of his candle.

"A Merry Christmas, uncle!" a cheerful voice cried. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, Fred.



“Bah!” Scrooge replied. “Humbug!”

His nephew was so hot from walking in the fog and frost that his face glowed red and his eyes sparkled.

“I’m sure you don’t mean that, uncle!” he replied.

“I do,” Scrooge replied. “Merry Christmas, indeed! What right do *you* have to be merry? You’re poor. Bah! Humbug!”

“Don’t be cross, uncle!”

“What else do you expect me to be,” Scrooge said, “when I live in a world full of fools? Merry Christmas! Christmas is just a time for paying bills when you haven’t got enough money. If I had my way,

every idiot who says 'Merry Christmas' would be boiled in his own pudding. You celebrate Christmas in your own way and let me celebrate it in mine. "

"But you don't celebrate Christmas!" his nephew replied. "It is a good time. It is the only time in a long year when men and women think of other people. "

Bob Cratchit clapped loudly. Then he poked his fire again, putting out the last little spark.

"If I hear another sound from *you*," Scrooge shouted, "you will lose your job. "

"Come and eat Christmas dinner with us tomorrow," his nephew begged.

"No," Scrooge replied. "Good afternoon to you. "

"A Merry Christmas, uncle," his nephew said kindly. "And also to you, Bob Cratchit. "

As he went out, two plump gentlemen came in. "Have I the pleasure of speaking to Mr Scrooge or Mr Marley?" one of them asked.

"Both names are written on the door. "

"Mr Marley has been dead for seven years," Scrooge told him.

"He died seven years ago tonight. "

"At this festive time of the year, Mr Scrooge," the gentleman continued, "we must all think of the poor who suffer greatly. "

"Are there no prisons or workhouses for them?" Scrooge asked.

"There are," the gentleman replied. "But they hardly give cheer to the mind or body. That is why a few of us are starting a fund to buy meat and drink and something to keep the poor warm this Christmas. How much can you give, Mr Scrooge?"

"Nothing!" Scrooge replied. "I wish to be left alone. I do not

make merry at Christmas. I help to support the prisons and the workhouses and those who are badly off must go there. ”

“Many would rather die than do that, ” the man replied.

“Then they must die, ” Scrooge said. “There are already too many people on this earth. Good afternoon, gentlemen! ”

As soon as they had left, Scrooge went back to his work. Meanwhile, the fog and the darkness thickened and the cold grew worse. At last it was time to close the office.

“You’ll want tomorrow off, I suppose?” Scrooge asked Bob Cratchit.



“If that is convenient, sir,” his clerk replied.

“It’s not convenient,” Scrooge replied, “and it’s not fair. Why should I pay you a day’s wages for no work?”

“Christmas is only once a year, sir.”

“A poor excuse!” Scrooge said. “But I suppose you must have the whole day. But you must start earlier the day after.”

Scrooge left and ate alone at his usual inn. Then he went home to bed. He lived in rooms which had once belonged to Marley. They were very gloomy, hidden away in a house where nobody lived except Scrooge. All the other rooms were let as offices.

It was so dark that even Scrooge had to grope his way to his front door. And as he put his key in the lock, he stared in amazement. The shape of the doorknocker had changed — into Marley’s face.



第一章

骗人的玩意儿！

马利死了——故事就是从这里开始的。马利死的时候，埃比尼泽·斯克鲁奇是他葬礼上唯一的朋友。

斯克鲁奇为人小气，生性贪婪吝啬。他长着一副铁石心肠，寸利不让，而且神秘，离群索居。发自内心的冰冷，冻僵了他那张老脸，冻伤了他那尖鼻子。他脸颊干瘪萎缩，两眼发红，嘴唇又薄又紫。冷霜好像在他的脑袋和眼眉上闪着寒光。他冷酷得如同凛冽刺骨的寒风。

没人能在大街上叫住斯克鲁奇说上一句客套话。没有哪个乞丐向他乞讨过，也没有小孩向他打听时间。斯克鲁奇在乎吗？不！他最在乎的恰恰是让人跟他保持距离。就是圣诞节也不会让他多些温情，一点也不会。

有一次圣诞前夕，老斯克鲁奇在忙着数钱。那天寒冷凄凉，雾气弥

漫。下午3点刚过，可是天已经黑了。斯克鲁奇的办公室敞着门，这样他就可以监视他的雇员鲍勃·克拉奇特。他在一间冰冷黑暗的屋里抄信件。他取暖的炉火太小了，看起来好像只有一块炭，可他却不能把火生大，因为斯克鲁奇把煤存放在他自己的房间里。雇员只好靠眼前的蜡烛取暖。

“圣诞快乐，舅舅！”一个欢快的声音喊道。这是斯克鲁奇的外甥弗雷德的声音。

“呸！”斯克鲁奇答道，“骗人的玩意儿！”

他的外甥刚刚冒着雾气冷霜走来，浑身发热，脸色泛红，眼睛闪闪发亮。

“你肯定不是那个意思，舅舅！”他回答。

“是那个意思。”斯克鲁奇说，“圣诞快乐，真的吗！你有什么权力快乐？你这个穷小子。呸！骗人的玩意儿！”

“别发火，舅舅！”

“我周围都是些傻子，”斯克鲁奇说，“你还想指望我怎样？圣诞快乐！圣诞就是该付账你却没钱的时候。要是依着我，每个喊‘圣诞快乐’的白痴都应该在自己的布丁里给炖了。你用你的方式过圣诞节，我用我的过。”

“可你并不过圣诞节！”他外甥回答，“圣诞是个好时候。一年到头也只有这个时候男人女人才会想到别人。”

鲍勃·克拉奇特大声鼓掌。接着他又捅了捅炉火，结果把最后一点火星也弄灭了。

“要是我听到你再弄点动静出来，”斯克鲁奇吆喝道，“你的工作就保不住了。”

“明天过来和我们一起吃圣诞饭吧。”他的外甥求他。

“不去。”斯克鲁奇回答，“再见了。”

“圣诞快乐，舅舅！”外甥亲切地说，“也祝你快乐，鲍勃·克拉奇特！”

他出去时，两个胖胖的绅士走了进来。“请问我可以跟斯克鲁奇先生或者马利先生讲话吗？”其中一个问道，“这两个名字都写在门上。”

“马利先生死了7年了。”斯克鲁奇告诉他，“他是7年前的今夜死的。”

“在一年中这个欢庆的日子，斯克鲁奇先生，”那位绅士继续说道，“我们都必须想想那些穷人，他们都忍受着煎熬呢。”

“不是为他们准备了监狱或者救济院吗？”斯克鲁奇问。

“有倒是有的。”绅士回答，“不过很难让他们身心都得到快乐。因此，我们几个人正在设立一个基金，用来帮穷人买些肉和喝的，让他们暖暖和和地过一个圣诞节。你能出多少，斯克鲁奇先生？”

“一个子也不出！”斯克鲁奇回答，“别烦我了。我自己圣诞节也不寻求快乐。我出钱赞助监狱和救济院，那些穷鬼们该去那儿。”

“可很多人死活不去那儿。”那人回答。

“那他们就该死了。”斯克鲁奇说，“地球上已经人满为患了。再见，先生们！”

他们刚走，斯克鲁奇就又埋头干活了。此时，雾更大了，天更黑了，也更冷了。关门下班的时间终于到了。

“我想你明天想休班儿？”斯克鲁奇问鲍勃·克拉奇特。

“如果这样合适的话，先生。”雇员回答。

“不合适，”斯克鲁奇回答，“再说也不公平。为什么不干活我还要付你一天的工资呢？”

“圣诞节一年只有一次，先生。”

“拙劣的借口！”斯克鲁奇说，“但是我想你肯定是非休息一整天不可了。那后天你必须早来上班。”

斯克鲁奇走了，独自在他常去的小饭馆里吃了饭。然后，他回家上床睡觉。他住的房间以前是属于马利的。房间阴沉沉的，位于房子偏一点儿的角落里，除了斯克鲁奇没人住。所有其他的房间都租赁出去办公用了。

天太黑了，连斯克鲁奇都要摸索着才走到前门。他把钥匙插进门锁，顿时瞪着眼呆住了。门环变了形——变成了马利的脸。

CHAPTER TWO

Marley's Ghost

The face was not angry. It looked at Scrooge as it used to look seven years ago, its ghostly spectacles sitting on its ghostly forehead. Its eyes were wide open, but they did not move. Its hair stood on end.

Scrooge stared at it. Then it became a doorknocker again. Scrooge was surprised, but he turned his key, walked inside and lit his candle. He looked carefully behind him as if he expected to see Marley's hair sticking out in the hall. There was nothing there.

Scrooge walked slowly up the stairs with his candle. But before he shut his heavy door, he walked through his rooms to make sure that everything was all right. There was nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa and nobody under the bed. Satisfied, he closed his door and locked himself in. Then he put on his dressing gown and slippers and sat down before the fire. It was a very small fire for such a cold night and he was forced to sit very close to it. And in the tiles around it, he saw Marley's face again.

"Humbug!" Scrooge said, getting up to walk around his room. Then he sat down again. As he put his head back in his chair, he glanced at a bell that hung in the room, one that had been used to call the servants. To his great astonishment, it began to swing. At first, it swung so softly that it hardly made a sound. But soon it rang out loudly. And so did every bell in the house.



The sound lasted for about a minute, but it felt like an hour. Suddenly, the bells stopped ringing. Another sound filled the air — a clanking noise deep down below as if somebody was dragging a heavy chain.

“They say that is the noise ghosts make in haunted houses!” Scrooge whispered to himself.

The noise grew louder. He heard it on the floor below his. Then it came up the stairs and straight towards his door.

“It’s humbug!” Scrooge said. “I don’t believe it.”

Scrooge’s face turned pale as the sound came through the heavy door and into his room. It was Marley. And he pulled a long chain made of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks and heavy purses.

Scrooge looked at his old partner. He looked straight through his waistcoat at the two buttons on the back of his coat. He did not believe his eyes, although the ghost was standing in front of him. And its paleness chilled him to the bone.



第二章 马利的鬼魂

那张脸没有发怒。它看着斯克鲁奇，就像7年前一样。一副幽灵般虚幻的眼镜架在幽灵般虚幻的脑门上。眼睛瞪得大大的，一动也不动。头发直竖着。

斯克鲁奇盯着它看。接着它又变回了门环。斯克鲁奇非常惊讶，可他还是扭动钥匙，走了进去，点上蜡烛。他小心地查看身后，仿佛觉得马利的头发会在大厅里冒出来。可那儿什么也没有。

斯克鲁奇擎着蜡烛，缓缓地走上楼。可是在关上那扇厚重的房门前，