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A Christmas Carol Model Answers



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Model Answers

In this extract, Scrooge's time with the Ghost of Christmas Present is coming to an end. Discuss how Dickens presents the theme of poverty in this extract and the novella as a whole.

"Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask," said Scrooge, looking intently at the Spirit's robe, "but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw?"

"It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it," was the Spirit's sorrowful reply. "Look here."

From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment.

"Oh, Man, look here! Look, look, down here!" exclaimed the Ghost.

They were a boy and a girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread.

Scrooge started back, appalled. Having them shown to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine children, but the words choked themselves, rather than be parties to a lie of such enormous magnitude.

"Spirit, are they yours?" Scrooge could say no more.

"They are Man's," said the Spirit, looking down upon them. "And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it!" cried the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. "Slander those who tell it ye. Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse. And abide the end."

"Have they no refuge or resource?" cried Scrooge.

"Are there no prisons?" said the Spirit, turning on him for the last time with his own words. "Are there no workhouses?"

The bell struck twelve.

Scrooge looked about him for the Ghost, and saw it not. As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, he remembered the prediction of old Jacob Marley, and lifting up his eyes, beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present the theme of poverty in A Christmas Carol?

should have a family that they belong to. Hence family is shown to be a source of comfort, strength and joy for people – including Scrooge who felt joy and support upon seeing his sister visit him when he was alone in boarding school.

Later on in the novella, the importance of family is shown through Belle's husband's remark about Scrooge and his isolation. Belle's husband remarks that Scrooge was "quite alone in the world, I do believe." As Scrooge focused more and more on making money, he stopped seeing the virtue in family life. This led him to become rich, at the expense of having a family. Indeed Scrooge became lonely and isolated as he cared more about the money that he was making than his family and friends around him. Belle, who used to love him when he was much younger, left him because he was too consumed with "idols" - a religious reference to his worshipping of money. Hence Scrooge witnessing Belle's family shows that family is portrayed as more important than wealth and status as ironically the wealthiest character is the most lonely one, bereft of family. The loneliness of Scrooge could suggest when someone becomes too obsessed with money, this can lead to loneliness as it can ruin one's relationship with their family.

Finally, in Stave Five, family is presented as forgiving and loving. At the end of the novella, Scrooge repents and wishes to atone for his sins. He goes to visit his nephew, Fred, whom he had initially refused to spend Christmas with at the beginning of the novella. We see a huge change in Scrooge when he speaks to Fred at the end of the novella: "It's I. Your uncle Scrooge. I have come to dinner. Will you let me in, Fred?" We find that Fred is extremely forgiving of his uncle who had initially shunned him. This shows that families should be forgiving and it is important that we nurture our family relationships rather than neglect them like Scrooge did, otherwise we can become extremely isolated and lonely. Hence at the end of the novella, Scrooge becomes part of two families – as he rebuilds his relationship with his estranged nephew Fred, as they spend Christmas together – but Scrooge also becomes a "second father" to Tiny Tim and a benefactor of the Cratchit family. This thus presents building family life as an important virtue – and part of building a strong family bond includes forgiving those in our family who may have wronged us.

In conclusion, the importance of family is presented throughout the novella. Family is presented as one of the most important things in life and it is a source of comfort, strength and joy for people. The shift in Scrooge's mentality from being a miserly and isolated individual, to being a supportive family man – both to his biological family, as well as the Cratchit family – shows how fulfilling family life is for people and Dickens presents family as more important than wealth.

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THE SIGN OF THE FOUR



- CONTEXT & THEMES
- CHARACTERS
- MODEL ANSWERS

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JANE EYRE



- FIVE MODEL ANSWERS
- CHARACTERS & THEMES
- CONTEXT NOTES

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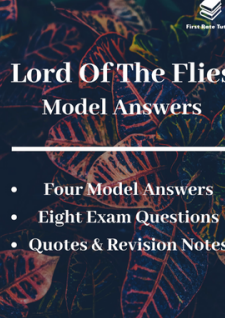
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