



The Portal–A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens.

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ELLIOT :

The Portal – A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens.

Christmas – a time for happiness and generosity? Or a time when fools spend too much money on gifts and food? What do you think?

ASTRID :

“Well, I think the most important things are, and... it might sound strange, but I absolutely prefer when people open presents that I gave them, than opening presents to myself. And I sort of, like how everyone no matter, sort of, when or where you are, everyone sort of comes together even if you haven't seen them for a long time, and it's just happy.”

ELLIOT:

This is Astrid. She lives in London with her brother and her parents. Her mother is Norwegian and her father is Swedish. She enjoys Christmas, especially giving gifts. She also likes doing Christmassy things in school.



TOVE & ASTRID:

“- When I was younger, well because we went to a younger school, you sort of did more Christmassy stuff, more Christmassy things...before. What I do now is, you do more work, and before the end of the term, and at school when I was younger, we used to, sort of, make Christmas cards and have...paint more Christmas things. But it's still mostly the same. You still get excited about Christmas now, and then, and still can't wait to open presents, and things like that.

- What would you say is a typical British Christmas?

- Well, I don't, because we have Swedish traditions. But most people they have, they don't celebrate very much on Christmas Eve, apart from them having a Christmas dinner. And they have turkey and, sort of, many...like...various vegetables, so that's mostly in most countries as well. But then they have a stocking, where they have small presents, and then they have all of the rest of the presents, that they open on Christmas Day, in the morning.

- Do you think sometimes that there is too much shopping, around Christmas?

- No, I like shopping quite a lot, so I like going, looking, finding odd things for people, friends and things. I don't so, I like it a lot, but I know my mum and dad find it a bit stressful.

- Why?

- Because there are so many people shopping everywhere, and it gets really hot in all the shops, and it's very crammed, and you have to wait long time in queues, so that part isn't so good, but the rest is fine.

- Is there anything you traditionally read during Christmas, stories or...?



- We don't really, I don't really have a traditional thing I read or...at Christmas. But we do sort of traditional things: like we might go ice-skating at Somerset House, which is a big icing that they put up in winter, in London; or we make *pepparkakor*; and *knäck*; and we sort of get a really big Christmas tree and we'll decorate it together; and things like that.

- Well, the best thing about Christmas is how everyone, sort of...obviously presents, but how everyone is sort of happy and sort of even if you are upset or it's bad weather, it's still Christmas, so, everyone sort of makes the scene happy and jolly and it's always warm, well not warm outside, but warm with all the, like, lights and decorations, it's really pretty as well.

ELLIOT :

Mr. Scrooge is the main character in the famous story, A Christmas Carol. Mr. Scrooges doesn't care about making people happy. He doesn't even like people, and he hates Christmas. Mr. Scrooge used to work with a partner, Jacob Marley. Marley is dead now, but Mr. Scrooge didn't bother to paint over Marley's name on the sign above the door of the company.

MICHAEL GARNER:

Marley was dead to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. 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. But Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the 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.

Heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say: "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?" No beggars asked him for a penny, 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. Cold was with him everywhere.

ELLIOT :

Christmas makes Mr. Scrooge angry. He thinks that Christmas is a stupid thing when people are happy, for absolutely no reason at all. His nephew does not agree.

MICHAEL GARNER:

"A merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew.

"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.

"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 happy? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough."



"What right have you to be sad? returned the nephew. "What reason have you to be gloomy? You're rich enough."

Scrooge, having no better answer ready, said "Bah!" again and followed it up with "Humbug!"

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

"What else can I be", returned the uncle, "when I live in this world of fools? Merry Christmas! What is 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?", said Scrooge, "Every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding. He should!"

"Uncle, please!" said the nephew.

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

"I have always thought of Christmas time", returned the nephew, "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 to open their hearts freely. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put 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!"

"Good afternoon", said Scrooge.

"Merry Christmas, uncle!"

"Good afternoon!" said Scrooge.

"And a happy New Year!"

"Good afternoon!" said Scrooge.



ELLIOT:

This is the famous beginning of the story, A Christmas Carol – a story where Charles Dickens tells us about dreadful things that can happen to people, who don't care about other people. You see, in this story, the dead can talk, the partners for example. One evening after dinner Mr. Scrooge hears a strange sound. It's not the fire in the fireplace, it is not the ice wind, it's the sound of an old chain.

MICHAEL GARNER:

It was Marley - dressed in his old clothes. The same face: the very same. There was a chain around him – with money on it and money bags. Though Scrooge looked the phantom through and through, and saw it standing before him; though he felt the chilling influence of its death-cold eyes; he still didn't really believe what he saw.

"How now!" said Scrooge, 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

"In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley. Don't you know me?"

"No", said Scrooge. "I don't". But he did.

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

"I can."

"Do it, then."



The spirit shook its chain with such a loud noise, that Scrooge held on tight to his chair. But how much greater was his horror, when the phantom taking off the bandage round its head, its lower jaw dropped down upon its breast!

Scrooge fell upon his knees.

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

"Now", 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 meant that every man", the Ghost returned, "should be with other people, his fellowmen, and be happy when they are happy and be sad when they are sad. But some people do not do this in life and they are condemned to do so after death. They are doomed to wander through the world —oh, woe is me! —and witness what they cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!"

"You've got a chain", said Scrooge. "Why?"

"I made this chain in my life", answered the ghost. "Now I have to wear it".

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

"I have none to give", the Ghost replied. "I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. Hear me!" cried the Ghost. "My time is nearly gone."

"I will", said Scrooge. "But don't be hard upon me!" "I am here tonight to warn you, said the Ghost, that you have yet a chance of escaping my fate."



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

"You will be haunted", resumed the Ghost, "by three spirits."

"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.

"You have to meet them all three", said the Ghost, "Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls one."

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

"Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night at midnight. You will see me no more; but you will remember my words."

ELLIOT

If you want to know what happens to Mr. Scrooge there are many different versions of the book, A Christmas Carol, and there are also several films. One of them is animated and can be seen on YouTube. Michael Garner read from the book, Tove Jonstoj met Astrid Wissén, and my name is Elliot Broadley. If you would like to check out our website go to ur.se and look for The Portal.