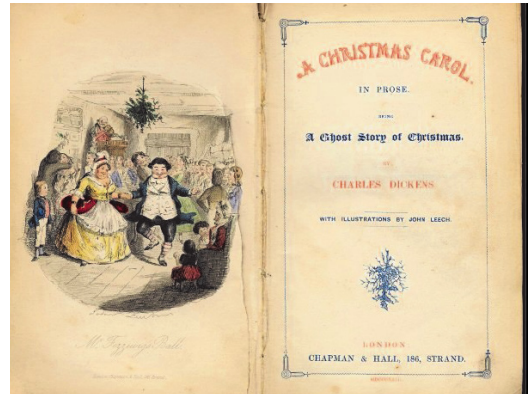


The making of a magical Christmas

Part of the magic of Christmas is the wonderful stories that have appeared over the years. We have selected a book and a film which epitomise the sentiment of the season, and where the stories have become part of the tradition of Christmas. Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* is a Victorian morality tale of an old and bitter miser, Ebenezer Scrooge, who undergoes a profound experience of redemption over the course of one evening. The book was first published on the 19th December 1843. The story was instantly successful selling over 6000 copies in one week and is believed to have played a major role in redefining the importance of Christmas and the sentiments associated with the season. English poet Thomas Hood said "If Christmas, with its ancient and hospitable customs, its social and charitable observances, were in danger of decay, this is the book that would give them a new lease."

The film *It's a Wonderful Life*, turns the theme of *A Christmas Carol* on its head. Its hero, George Bailey, is a businessman who sacrificed his dreams to help his community. On Christmas Eve, a guardian angel finds him in despair and prevents him from committing suicide by magically showing him how much he meant to the world around him.



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