



The Cricket On The Hearth: "We forge the chains we wear in life."

Charles Dickens

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Although the most celebrated of Charles Dickens's Christmas books is today considered to be Christmas Carol, *The Cricket on the Hearth: A Fairy Tale of Home* was more popular by the time of its publication in the 1840s. Its theatrical version toured numerous international stages and helped introduce Charles Dickens to the world. The narrative is divided into chapters that the author calls "chirps" and follows the story of John Peerybingle's rather ideal family who live in love and harmony. As they gather daily in front of the house's hearth, a cricket keeps on visiting them as if to share with them the cozy and romantic atmosphere. On the other hand, a subplot centers around a poor father, Caleb Plummer, who had lost his only son and who lives with his blind daughter. They both work for one Mr. Tackleton as toymakers. Mr. Tackleton causes a lot of troubles to the two families of the book. Not only does he treat Bertha and her father in a mean way, but he also tries to ruin Mr. Peerybingle's marriage by telling him that his wife has cheated on him. The story ends happily when Mr. Peerybingle's wife proves her innocence while Mr. Plummer's lost son reappears and decides to marry. The closing scene depicts an atmosphere of celebration where Bertha plays the harp and everybody dances.

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