

Charles Dickens: *A Christmas Carol*

Read the following extract from Chapter 2 of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, the Ghost of Christmas Past shows Scrooge the Christmas party he attended at Mr Fezziwig's warehouse when he was a young man.

But if they had been twice as many—ah, four times—old Fezziwig would have been a match for them, and so would Mrs. Fezziwig. As to her, she was worthy to be his partner in every sense of the term. If that's not high praise, tell me higher, and I'll use it. A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves.

5 They shone in every part of the dance like moons. You couldn't have predicted, at any given time, what would have become of them next. And when old Fezziwig and Mrs. Fezziwig had gone all through the dance; advance and retire, both hands to your partner, bow and curtsy, corkscrew, thread-the-needle, and back again to your place; Fezziwig "cut"—cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink

10 with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger. When the clock struck eleven, this domestic ball broke up. Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig took their stations, one on either side of the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas. When everybody had retired but the two 'prentices, they did the

15 same to them; and thus the cheerful voices died away, and the lads were left to their beds; which were under a counter in the back-shop. During the whole of this time, Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, enjoyed everything, and underwent the

20 strangest agitation. It was not until now, when the bright faces of his former self and Dick were turned from them, that he remembered the Ghost, and became conscious that it was looking full upon him, while the light upon its head burnt very clear.

"A small matter," said the Ghost, "to make these silly folks so full of gratitude."

25 "Small!" echoed Scrooge. The Spirit signed to him to listen to the two apprentices, who were pouring out their hearts in praise of Fezziwig; and when he had done so, said, "Why! Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?"

30 "It isn't that," said Scrooge, heated by the remark, and speaking unconsciously like his former, not his latter, self. "It isn't that, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count 'em up: what then? The

35 happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune."

Starting with this extract, explore how Dickens presents ideas about joy and happiness in *A Christmas Carol*.

Write about:

- how Dickens presents joy and happiness in this extract
- how Dickens presents ideas about joy and happiness in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

