



The Cricket on the Hearth

by Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

This is the tale of John Peerybingle, the good-hearted carrier, and his young wife Mary ('Dot'), interwoven with the story of poor toymaker Caleb Plummer, his beloved blind daughter Bertha, and the harsh old toy merchant Tackleton, who is due to marry May Fielding, a childhood friend of Dot. Comic relief is provided by Tilly Slowboy, the disaster-prone nursemaid of John and Dot's baby, and Boxer, the family dog.



Charles Dickens

The cricket who chirps on the family hearth assumes fairy form to save the day when disaster looms in the form of a mysterious stranger. Sentimental? Certainly - but this, the third (1845) of Dickens' short Christmas books, is as charming and irresistible as its predecessors *A Christmas Carol* (1843) and *The Chimes* (1844). The novella is subdivided into chapters called 'Chirps', similar to the 'Quarters' of *The Chimes* or the 'Staves' of *A Christmas Carol*.



Total running time: 3:54:11

Read by Ruth Golding

Cover design: Kathryn Delaney
Cover illustration: John Leech, 1845

THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH

Charles Dickens

THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH