The Cricket On The Hearth (Version 2)
Charles Dickens

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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.

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.
(Introduction by Ruth Golding)

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