

Scrooge Nephew

SCROOGE AND MARLEY. (*Scrooge stares down at the grave, impassive.*) Sometimes people called Scrooge Scrooge and sometimes they called him Marley, but he answered to both names; it was all the same to him. And seven years passed. (*Wind. Lights change. Music: The sign moves away. Scrooge takes a deep breath and moves away. The grave slides off in the other direction. Wind. Snow. Scrooge, head down in the wind, clutching his hat and his cane in the cold, begins a journey through the years to his office. The sign: SCROOGE & MARLEY goes with him, and ends up above the warehouse door.*) These seven years did not change him. Oh! He was a tightfisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! (*Streets of London appear, backed by cut outs of London buildings, grey and dismal. People go by, rushing about in the cold, blowing on hands and stamping their feet. Tiny Tim, a crippled boy who must struggle to walk, gets in Scrooge's way. Scrooge stares at him angrily, pushes him aside with his cane, and goes on. Tim watches him, then struggles on his way. Scrooge finally arrives at his office, and enters, under the sign, SCROOGE & MARLEY, which glows with a slightly sinister light. Bob Cratchit, his clerk, works at a small desk, facing a larger one, which is Scrooge's.*)

CRATCHIT. Sir.

SCROOGE. (*Lee.*) Humph. (*Scrooge hangs up his coat, sits at his larger desk, and begins to work. Outside the office, people pass by.*) Rent! Interest! Dividend! Penalty! (*Pause, work.*) Penalty! Dividend! Interest! Rent! (*Scrooge's Nephew moves toward the office. People go by him, stamping their feet and beating their chests in the cold. Enter Nephew.*)

NEPHEW. Merry Christmas, Uncle! (*Scrooge looks up, shakes his head, looks back at his work.*) I'm delighted to see you! On such a beautiful day!

SCROOGE. It's freezing.

NEPHEW. Aren't you glad to see me? I am very fond of you.

SCROOGE. Because your mother was my sister does not mean I have to be fond of you!

NEPHEW. But you are! I know you are!

SCROOGE. Bah!

NEPHEW. And I say, Merry Christmas!

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SCROOGE. Humbug!

NEPHEW. Christmas a humbug, Uncle? You don't mean that, I am sure.

SCROOGE. I do! (*Scrooge examines his Nephew.*) What right have you to be merry?

NEPHEW. What right have you to be dismal?

SCROOGE. What reason have you to be cheerful?

NEPHEW. What reason have you to be morose?

SCROOGE. You're poor enough!

NEPHEW. You're rich enough!

SCROOGE. Bah! Humbug!!

NEPHEW. Don't be cross, Uncle!

SCROOGE. What else can I be, when I live in such a world of fools as this! Merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills — without money; a time for finding yourself a year older and not an hour richer. If I had my way, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart.

NEPHEW. Uncle!

SCROOGE. Nephew! You keep Christmas in your way and let me keep it in mine!

NEPHEW. But you don't keep it!

SCROOGE. Let me leave it alone then! Much good it does you.

NEPHEW. I have always thought of Christmas as a good time: a kind, charitable, time, when men and women open their hearts, think of others as fellow passengers to the grave, and not another race of other creatures bound on other journeys. The way, Fan, my mother and your sister, thought of it. And therefore, Uncle, though Christmas has never put a scrap of gold in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good and will do me good and I say God bless it! (*Cratchit applauds gently.*)

CRATCHIT. Bravo. (*Scrooge whirls around, glares at him.*)

SCROOGE. Another sound from YOU, and you will keep your Christmas by losing your job! (*To Nephew.*) That was a fine speech. Go into Parliament!

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