

Jacob marley was dead

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Arleigh was dead: for starters. There is no doubt about that. The registry of his burial was signed by a clergyman, a clerk, an undertaker and the main mourner. Scrooge signed it: and Scrooge's name was good on Change, for all he decided to put his hand up. Old Marley was dead like a door nail. It's a sight to be seen I don't want to say that I know from my own knowledge that there's a particularly dead door nail. I might be inclined, myself, to view the coffin-nail as a dead piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors at the same time; and my hands will not bother him, or the country has done for. So you'll let me resolutely reiterate that Marley was dead like a doorknob. Did Scrooge know he was dead? Of course I did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners because I don't know how old. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his only appointment, his only legal resident, his only friend and only grieving. And even Scrooge wasn't so horribly cut by the sad event, but that he was a great business man on the same day of the funeral, and solemnized him with an undoubted deal. The mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the point at which I started. There's no doubt that Marley was dead. This needs to be clearly understood, or nothing remarkable can come from the story I'm about to relate to. If we were not entirely convinced that Hamlet's father had died before the play began, there would have been nothing more remarkable about walking at night, in the east wind, in his own shafts, than in any other middle-aged gentleman, recklessly turned out after dark in a fresh place - say, St. Paul's Cemetery, for example - literally to surprise his son's faint mind. Scrooge never painted Old Marley's name. There he stood, years later, above the door of the warehouse: Scrooge and Marley. The company was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge and sometimes Marley, but he answered both names: it was all the same for him. About! But he was tight-ly punched by the grind of the stone, Scrooge! squeezing, excruciating, grabbing, scraping, squeezing, avid, old sinner! Solid and sharp as flint, from which no steel has ever struck out a generous fire: secret, and autonomous, and solitary, like oysters. The cold inside him froze his old features, cut off his pointed nose, wrinkled his cheek, froze his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue and spoke shrewdly in his grating voice. The frosty edge was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his cunning chin. He carried his low temperature always about with him; he iced his office on dog days; and don't defrost it by one degree at Christmas. The external heat and cold had little impact on Scrooge. No heat can warm, no winter weather cools it. No wind that blew was bitterer than he was, no falling snow was more intent on his without throwing rain less open to entreaty. Bad weather didn't know where to see him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast an advantage over it only in one respect. They often went down nicely, and Scrooge never did. No one ever stopped him in the street to say, with a joyful appearance: My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to me? No beggar begged him to give a change, nor did the children ask him what it was in an hour, no man or woman in his life ever asked for a way to such a place, scrooge. Even the dogs of the blind men seemed to know him; and when they saw him coming on, there would be a tug of their owners in the doorways and courts; and then they wagged their tails, as if they were saying, No eyes at all better than the evil eye, dark master! But what was the case for Scrooge? It was something he liked. To edge his way through the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathies to keep his distance, was what the knowledgeable call nuts for Scrooge. Once upon a time - of all the good days of the year, on Christmas Eve - old Scrooge sat busy in his counting room. It was cold, gloomy, biting weather: foggy withal: and he heard people in court outside go wheezing up and down, banging their hands on their chests, and punching his feet on the pavement stones to warm them up. The city clock had just passed three, but it was already quite dark - all day it was not light: and candles were burning in the windows of neighboring offices, like ruddy smears on a palpable brown air. The mist came pouring in every slit and keyhole, and was so dense without that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were just phantoms. To see the dark clouds come drooping down, obscuring everything, one would think that nature lived hard, and brewing on a large scale. The door of Scrooge's counting chamber was open that he could keep an eye on his clerk, who, in a gloomy little cell outside, a sort of tank, copied the letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so small that it looked like one charcoal. But he could not replenish it, because Scrooge kept a coal box in his room; and so true as the clerk came with a shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Before that, the clerk put on a white comforter, and tried to warm up at the candle; in which effort, without being a man of strong imagination, he failed. Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you! A cheerful voice exclaimed. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came across him so quickly that it was the first hint of his approach. Bach! Said Scrooge, Humbug! He so warned himself up with a quick walk in the mist and frost, this nephew of Scrooge, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and beautiful; eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again. Christmas is a hoax, uncle! Scrooge's nephew said. You means that, I'm sure. I know, Scrooge said. Merry Christmas! What right do you have to have fun? Why are you having fun? You're poor enough. Then go, the nephew returned cheerfully. What right should you be gloomy? Why are you sullen? You're rich enough. Scrooge, having no better answer ready for the spur moment, said: Bach! Again; and followed him with Humbug. Not a cross, uncle! My nephew said. Who else can I be, my uncle returned, when I live in a world of fools like this? Merry Christmas! Happy Christmas! What Christmas is for you, but time to pay bills without money; time to find yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; time to balance your books and with each item in them through the round tens of months presented dead against you? If I could work with my will, - Scrooge indignantly - every idiot who walks with Merry Christmas on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with Holly's stake through his heart. He has to! Uncle! I begged my nephew. Nephew! The uncle returned, Strictly, to keep Christmas in his own way, and let me keep it in mine. Hold him! Scrooge's nephew repeats himself. But you don't hold it. Let me leave him alone then, Scrooge said. A lot of good, let it make you! A lot of good he's ever done to you! There are many things from which I could get good, through which I did not make a profit, I dare say returned nephew. Christmas among the rest. But I'm sure I always thought of Christmas when he came to his senses - apart from reverence because of his sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to him could be, other than that - as a good time: kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know in a long calendar of the year is when men and women seem to have one agreement to open their closed hearts freely , and think of the people beneath them as if they really were fellow travelers to the grave, rather than another race of creatures bound in other journeys. And so, uncle, though he never put a piece of gold or silver in his pocket, I believe that he has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless him! The clerk in the tank involuntarily applauded: becoming at once sane from misconduct, he poked the fire, and put out the last fragile spark forever. Let me hear another sound from you, said Scrooge, and you'll keep Christmas losing your situation. You are quite an influential speaker, sir, he added, referring to his nephew. I wonder if you're not going to parliament. Don't get mad, uncle. Come! Dinner with us tomorrow. Scrooge said he'd see it -- yes, indeed, he did. He went the entire length of the expression, and said he would see it in that limb first. But why? Scrooge's nephew exclaimed. Why? Why did you get married? Scrooge said. Because I'm in love. Because you're in love! Scrooge taught, as if was the only thing that the world is funnier than a fun Christmas. Good afternoon! No, uncle, but you never came to see me before it happened. Why give it as a reason not to come now? Good afternoon, Scrooge said. I don't want anything from you; I'm not asking for anything about you: why can't we be friends? Good afternoon, Scrooge said. I am sorry, from the bottom of my heart, to find you so determined. We never had a fight to which I was a participant. But I did a trial in honor of Christmas and I will keep my Christmas humor to the last. So Merry Christmas, uncle! Good afternoon, Scrooge said. And Happy New Year! Good afternoon! Scrooge said. His nephew left the room without angry words, noting. He stopped at the outside door to bestow the greetings of the season on the clerk, who, as cold as he was, was warmer than Scrooge; for he returned them cordially. There's another guy muttered to Scrooge, and he's who overheard him: My clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I'm going to Bedlam. This lunatic, having let Scrooge's nephew go, let two other people in. They were tailors gentlemen, pleasant to contemplate, and now stood, with hats, in Scrooge's office. They had books and papers in their hands, and they bowed to him. Scrooge and Marley, I believe, said one of the gentlemen, referring to his list. Do I have the pleasure of turning to Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley? Mr. Marley had been dead these seven years, Scrooge replied. He died seven years ago, the same night. We have no doubt that his liberalism is well represented by his surviving partner, said the gentleman, presenting his credentials. It certainly was; for they were two kindred spirits. On the ominous word liberalism, Scrooge frowned, and shook his head, and handed the powers back. This holiday season of the year, Mr. Scrooge, said the gentleman, taking in the handle, it is more than usual desirable that we should make some minor provisions for the poor and disadvantaged who are suffering greatly now. Many thousands of people do not want the common necessities; hundreds of thousands of people don't want common comfort, sir. Are there prisons? Scrooge asked. Plenty of prisons, said the gentleman, putting the pen again. And the workers' union? Scrooge demanded it. Are they still in operation? They are. However, the gentleman returned: I would say that they were not. The treadmill and the poor law is in full force, then? Scrooge said. Both are very busy, sir. About! I was afraid from what you said at first that something had happened to stop them in their useful course, Scrooge said. I'm very happy to hear that. Under the impression that they barely provide a Christian greeting of mind or body for the set, returned gentleman, some of us are trying to raise a fund to buy poor meat and drink and means heat. We choose this time because it's time, everyone else, when you want felt, and exuberance rejoiced. What will I put you down for? No problem! Scrooge replied. Do you want to be anonymous? I want to be left alone, Scrooge said. Since you ask me what I want, gentlemen, that's my answer. I'm not having fun at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people happy. I help support the institutions I've mentioned - they cost enough; and those who are bad off should go there. Many can't go there; and many would rather die. If they would rather die, Scrooge said, they should do so and reduce the population's surplus. Also -- excuse me -- I don't know what. But you may know that, the gentleman said. It's none of my business, Scrooge said. It is enough for a person to understand his business, not to interfere with other people. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen! Seeing clearly that it would be futile to continue their point of view, the gentlemen withdrew. Scrooge returned his work with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more playful mood than was usual with him. Meanwhile, fog and darkness thickened so that people ran with burning links, offering their services to go in front of horses in carriages, and carry them on their way. The ancient tower of the church, whose coarse old bell always peeked freely into Scrooge from the Gothic window in the wall, became invisible and struck the clock and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards, as if her teeth were chattering in her frozen head there. The cold became intense. On the main street on the corner of the court, some workers repaired gas pipes and lit a large fire in the roaster, around which a batch of dangling men and boys gathered: warmed hands and winked eyes before the flames in delight. Water shut, left alone, its overcrowded sullenly frozen, and turned into misanthropic ice. The brightness of the shops, where Holly's twigs and berries popped in the lamp heat of the windows, made pale faces rosy as they passed. Poulterers and grocery store trades became a great joke; glorious contest with which it was almost impossible to believe that such boring principles as bargaining and selling was anything to do. The Lord Mayor, in the bastion of the mighty mansion, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to save Christmas as the Lord Mayor's family must; and even a small tailor, whom he had fined five shillings the previous Monday for being drunk and bloodthirsty on the streets, stirred up pudding tomorrow in his attic, while his lean wife and child sallied to buy beef. Foggier still, and colder! Piercing, searching, biting cold. Had the good Saint Dunstan but cut off the nose of the Evil Spirit with a touch of weather such as that, instead of using his familiar weapon, he would in fact roar to a lustful purpose. The owner of one meager young nose, gnawed and muttered in the hungry cold bones gnaw on dogs, leaning towards Scrooge's keyhole to treat him with a carol: but at the first sound - God bless you, cheerful gentleman! Let you embarrass you! Scrooge captured the ruler with such energy of action that the singer fled in horror, leaving the keyhole in the fog and even more favorable frosts. Finally the hour of the closing of the counting chamber arrived. With wicked will, Scrooge came down from his chair and tacitly confessed to the wait-and-see clerk in the tank, who instantly put out the candle and put on his hat. You want all day tomorrow, I suppose? Scrooge said. If that's convenient, Scrooge said, and it's not fair. If I were to stop half the crown for it, do you think that self is misused, I would be bound? The clerk smiled faintly. And yet, Scrooge said, you don't think I'm used badly when I pay a day's pay without a job. The clerk noticed that it was only once a year. A bad excuse for choosing a man's pocket every twenty-five December!, said Scrooge, buttoning his coat to his chin. But I suppose you should have all day. Be here earlier the next morning. The clerk promised that he would; and Scrooge came out with a growl. The office was closed in the blink of an eye, and the clerk, with long ends of his white comforter dangling below the waist (because he boasted no coat), went down a slide at Cornhill, at the end of the boys' strip, twenty times, in honor of his Christmas Eve time, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could to skin to play the blind buff. Scrooge took his melancholy dinner at his usual tavern of melancholy, and he, having read all the newspapers, and seduced the rest of the evening with his banker's book, went home to sleep. He lived in rooms that once belonged to his deceased partner. They had a grim set of rooms, in a dipping pile of making up the yard, where he had so little business to be, that one could hardly help imagining he had to work there when he was a young house, playing hide-and-seek with other houses, and forgetting to go out again. He was old enough now, and dreary enough, because no one lived in it, but Scrooge, the other rooms all released as offices. The yard was so dark that even Scrooge, who knew every stone, was fain groping with his hands. Fog and frost so hung around the black old gates of the house that it seemed that the genius of the weather was sitting in mournful meditation on the doorstep. Now, it's a fact that there was nothing special about knocking on the door, except that it was very big. It is also a fact that Scrooge saw him, at night and in the morning, throughout his residence in this place; Except that Scrooge had as little of what is called fantasies about him as any man in the city of London, even including - which is a bold word - corporation, aldermen, and livery. Let it also bear in mind that Scrooge did not bestow one thought of since his last mention of his seven-year-old dead partner that day. And then let any man explain to me, if he can, as it happened, that Scrooge, having a key in the door lock, saw a knock, without him passing any intermediate process of change - not a knock, but Marley's face. Marley's face. It wasn't in impenetrable shade as other objects in the yard were, but there was a gloomy light about it like a bad lobster in a dark basement. He was not angry or ferocious, but looked at Scrooge as Marley looked: with ghostly glasses appeared on his ghostly forehead. The hair was curiously stirred, as if breathing or hot air; and though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly still. This, and his fury of color, made him dreadful; but his horror seemed to be in spite of the face and beyond his control, not the part or his own

expression. As Scrooge looked fixed on this phenomenon, it was a thud again. To say that he was not struck, or that his blood did not realize the terrible feeling to which he had been a stranger since infancy, would be untrue. But he put his hand on the key, which he refused, turned it tightly, went in, and lit a candle. He paused, with indecision a moment before he closed the door; and he looked cautiously behind him at first, as if he half-expected to be terrified of the kind of marley pigtails sticking out in the hall. But there was nothing on the back door except the screws and nuts that kept knocking, so he said: Pooh, fluff! And closed it with a bang. The sound sounded through the house like thunder. Each room above, and each barrel in the merchant's wine cellars below, seemed to have a separate ringing echo of its own. Scrooge was not a man who could be frightened by the echo. He fastened the door, and went down the hall, and up the stairs, and slowly too: pruning the candle as he went. You can talk vaguely about the driving coach and the six up the good old flight of stairs, or through the bad young law of Parliament; but I mean, you may have got the hearse up the stairs, and took it wide, with a shard bar to the wall and a door to the balustrades: and made it easy. There was a lot of width for this, and a place to spare; which is perhaps the reason why Scrooge thought he saw a locomotive hearse going before him in the gloom. Half a dozen gas lamps from the street wouldn't light up the entrance too well, so you can assume it was pretty dark with Scrooge's fall. Up the scrooge went without caring the button for it. Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it. But before he closed his heavy door, he went through his rooms to see that everything was fine. He had enough memories of his face to desire to do so. Living room, bedroom, lumbering. It's the way it's supposed to be. No one under the table, no one under the sofa; Small fire in the grate; Spoon and pool ready; and a small pan of porridge (Scrooge was in his head) on the stove. No one under the bed; No one in the closet; no one in the robe, which hung suspiciously against the wall. The lumber room, as usual. Old firefighters, old shoes, two fish baskets, washing stand on three legs, and poker. Completely satisfied, he closed the door, and locked himself in; twice locked himself in, which was not his custom. Thus secured with surprise, he took off his tie; put on his robe and slippers, and his nightcap, and he sat down before the fire to take his porridge. It was a very low fire indeed; nothing on such a bitter night. He was forced to sit beside him and brood over him before he could extract the least heat sensation from such a handful of fuel. The fireplace was old, built by some Dutch merchants long ago, and paved all around with quirky Dutch tiles designed to illustrate Scripture. There were Cain and Abels, daughters of the pharaohs; The queen of Sheba, the angelic messengers descending through the air on clouds such as feathers, Abrahams, Belshazzars, Apostles, laying in the sea on oil boats, hundreds of figures to attract his thoughts - and yet this face of Marley, seven years dead, came as the rod of the ancient Prophet, and swallowed everything. If each smooth tile at first was empty, with the ability to form some picture on its surface from disparate fragments of his thoughts, each of them would have a copy of the head of old Marley. Humbug!, said Scrooge, and he was and walked around the room. After a few turns, he sat down again. When he threw his head back into the chair, his gaze casually rested on the bell, the abandoned bell that hung in the room, and communicated with some purpose now forgotten with the camera in the building's highest history. It was with great surprise, and with a strange, inexplicable fear that, as he looked, he saw this bell begin to sway. He swung so quietly at the beginning that he scarcely made a sound; but soon it rang out loudly, and so did every call in the house. It may have lasted half a minute, or a minute, but it seemed an hour. The bells stopped as they began, together. They gave way to a clang of noise, deep down, and they were as if some man was dragging a heavy chain through barrels in the wine merchant's basement. Scrooge then recalled hearing that ghosts in haunted houses were described as dragging chains. The cellar-door opened with a booming sound, and then he heard a much louder noise on the floors below; then went up to the stairs; then goes straight to his door. It's a hoax ye! Scrooge said. I won't believe it. His color changed, though, when, without pause, he came through a heavy door, and walked into the room before his eyes. When the dying flame came, he sprang up, as if he had exclaimed: I know him; The ghost of Marley! and fell again. Same face: the same. Marley in pigtails, a regular vest, tights and boots; brushes on the last like his pigtail, and his coat-skirt, and his hair on his head. The chain he drew was folded in the middle. It was long, and the wound about it was like a tail; and it was done (for Scrooge watched it closely) from cash drawers, keys, locks, books, cases, and heavy purses wrought in steel. His body was transparent, so Scrooge, watching him, and looking through the vest, could see two buttons on the coat behind. Scrooge often heard that Marley didn't have a bowel, but he never believed it until now. No, and he didn't believe it even now. Though he looked the ghost throughout and to the end, and saw him standing before him, and though he felt the chilling effect of his death cold eyes, and he noted the very texture of the folded handkerchief tied around his head and chin, the wrappers of which he had not seen before: he was still incredulous and struggled against his feelings. As now!, said Scrooge, caustic and cold as ever. What do you want with me? A lot! Marley's voice, no doubt. Who are you? Ask me who I am. Scrooge said, raising his voice. You're particular for the shadows. He was going to speak in the shadows, but replaced it as more appropriate. I've been your partner in my life, Jacob Marley. Can you - can you sit down? Scrooge asked, looking doubtful in him. I can. Do it then. Scrooge asked this question because he did not know whether a ghost so transparent could be able to occupy a chair; and felt that in the event of his impossible, it might entail the need for an awkward explanation. But the ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, as if he were quite used to it. You don't believe in me, Ghost remarked. I don't. Scrooge said. What evidence would you have of my reality beyond your senses? I don't know, Scrooge said. Why do you doubt your feelings? Because, Scrooge said, a little thing affects them. A slight upset stomach makes them cheats. You can be undigested with a little beef, a slick of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a piece of unfinished potatoes. There's more sauce than graves about you, whatever you are! Scrooge wasn't much into the habit of cracking jokes, and he didn't feel in his heart by any means of wagging back then. The truth is that he tried to be clever as a means to divert his attention, and to keep down his horror; for the voice of the ghost is disturbed by a very bone marrow in his bones. Sitting, looking at those fixed glazed eyes, in silence for a moment, would play, Scrooge felt very deuce with him. There was something very awful, too, in the ghost afforded a hellish atmosphere of its own. Scrooge could not feel it himself, but it was clear, but it was so; for though the Ghost sat perfectly still, his hair, and skirts, and brushes, still agitated as the hot steam from the oven. Do you see this toothpick? Said Scrooge, returning quickly to the charge, for Just appointed; and wishing, though it was only for a second to divert the stoned look of vision from himself. I know, Ghost replied. You don't look at it, Scrooge said. But I can see it. Said The Ghost, despite it. Well! Scrooge returned, I have, but swallow it, and be for the rest of my days haunted by a legion of goblins, all my own creation. Humbug, I'm telling you! Cheating! At the same time, the spirit raised a terrible cry, and shook the chain with such a gloomy and terrible noise that Scrooge held fast to the chair to save himself from fainting. But how much more was his horror, when the phantom swiped the bandage around his head, as if it was too warm to wear indoors, his lower jaw dropped on his chest? Scrooge fell to his knees and folded his hands in front of his face. Mercy! He said. Terrible phenomenon, why do you bother me? Man is a worldly mind! Answered Ghost, do you believe in me or not? I know. Scrooge said. I have to. But why do spirits walk on the ground, and why do they come to me? Every man, the Ghost returned, was required that the spirit within him could go abroad among his fellow men and travel in any case; and that if spirit does not go ahead in life, it is doomed to do so after death. He's doomed to roam the world -- oh, woe to me! - and witness what he can not share, but may share on the ground, and turned to happiness! Again the ghost raised a cry, and shook the chain and broke his dark hands. Why're shackled, Scrooge said, trembling. Tell me why? I wear a chain that I forged in my life, Ghost said. I made this link by link, and yard by yard; I belted it out of my own will, and at will I wore it. Is his picture strange to you? Scrooge trembled more and more. Or do you know, the Ghost pursued, the weight and length of the strong coil you make yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as it was, seven Christmas Eves back. You've been working on it ever since. It's a heavy chain! Scrooge glanced about him on the floor, hoping to find himself surrounded by about fifty or sixty fathoms of iron cable, but he saw nothing. Jacob, he said, pleading. Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Say comfort to me, Jacob! I have no one to give, Ghost replied. This comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is passed on by other ministers to other types of men. I also can't tell you what I would like. Just a little bit more, everything is allowed for me. I can't rest, I can't stay, I can't linger anywhere. My spirit has never gone beyond our counting house - to diseven me! - in life my spirit has never roved beyond the narrow confines of our changing money hole, and and tired journeys lie before me! It was a habit with Scrooge when he became thoughtful to put his hands in the pockets of breeches. Reflecting on what the Ghost said, he did so now, but without raising his eyes or getting up from his knees. You must have very slowly about it, Jacob - Scrooge remarked, in a businesslike manner, albeit with humility and respect. Slowly! The ghost repeated. Seven years dead, pondered Scrooge. And travel all the time! All this time, Ghost said. There is no peace, no peace. The incessant torture of remorse. Do you travel fast? Scrooge said. There's wind on the wings, Ghost said. You may have gotten over a large amount of land in seven years. Scrooge said. The ghost, hearing this, created another cry, and slapped his chains so hideously in the dead silence of the night that Ward would have been acquitted of blaming him for the nuisance. About! prisoner, bound and stroked twice, - exclaimed the phantom, not knowing that the age of incessant work of immortal beings, for this earth must pass into eternity, before the good it is receptive will be developed. Not knowing that any Christian spirit working kindly in its small sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Do not know that no place of regret can make amends for the possibility of one life being abused! However, that was me! About! That was me! But you've always been a good person in business, Jacob, faltered Scrooge, who has now begun to apply it to himself. Business! The Ghost exclaimed, wringing his hands again. Humanity was my business. General well-being was my business; mercy, mercy, patience and benevolence were, all, my business. The deals of my trade were just a drop of water in the all-encompassing ocean of my business! She kept her chain at arm's length as if it were the cause of all her unbreakable grief, and threw it the ground again. At this time of rolling of the year, the ghost said: I suffer the most. Why have I gone through a crowd of fellow creatures with my eyes off, and never raise them to this blessed Star that brought the wise men to the poor abode! If there were no poor houses to which his light would lead me! Scrooge was very dismayed to hear the ghost going at such a speed, and began the earthquake tremendously. Hear me! The Ghost exclaimed. My time is almost over. I will, Scrooge said. But don't be tough on me! Don't be floral, Jacob! Pray! How is it that I appear before you in a form that you can see, I can not say. I sat invisible beside you many and many in a day. It wasn't a good idea. Scrooge trembled, and wiped the sweat from his forehead. It's not an easy part of my repentance, Ghost pursued. I'm here tonight to warn you that you still have a chance and hope to escape my fate. The chance and hope of my acquisition, Ebenezer. You've always been a good friend to me, Scrooge said. Thank you 'ee! You will be persecuted, the Ghost summed up, with three Spirits. Scrooge's face fell almost as low as the ghost did. Is this a chance and I hope you mentioned it, Jacob? He demanded, in an intermittent voice. That's true. I -- I think I'd rather not, Scrooge. Without their visits, visits, Ghost, you can't hope to escape the way I tread. Expect the first tomorrow when the bell rings alone. Can't I take them all at once, and it's over, Jacob? Scrooge hinted. Expect a second one the following night at the same hour. The third was the next night, when the last blow of the twelve stopped vibrating. Look to see me no more than I do and see that, for your own sake, you remember what passed between us! When he said these words, the ghost took the wrapper off the table and tied it around his head as before. Scrooge knew this, by the clever sound his teeth made when his jaws were carried by a bandage. He ventured to raise his eyes again, and found his supernatural visitor confronting him in a straight-forward relationship, with his chain wound over and over on his arm. The phenomenon went backwards from it; and at every turn he took, the window went up a little, so that when the ghost reached him, it was wide open. He beckoned Scrooge to approach, which he did. When they were a stone's throw away, Marley's ghost held his hand, warning him not to approach. Scrooge stopped. Not so much in obedience as in surprise and fear: for when he raised his hands he became prudent to confuse the noises in the air; rambling sounds of weeping and regret, crying unspcakably sad and self-accused. The ghost, after listening for a moment, entered into a mournful dirge; and swam out on a gloomy, dark night. Scrooge followed to the window: desperate in his curiosity. He looked out. The air was filled with phantoms, wandering here and washing in a restless hurry, and moaning as they went. Each of them wore chains like Marley's ghost; some of them (they may be guilty by governments) were related to each other; none of them was free. Many of them were personally known to Scrooge in their lives. He was well acquainted with an old ghost, in a white vest, with a monstrous iron safe attached to his ankle, who cried pitifully, unable to help the unfortunate woman with the baby he saw below on the door step. The misfortune with all of them was clear that they sought to interfere, forever, in human affairs, and lost power forever. Whether these creatures disappeared into the mist, or the mist dipped them, he could not say. But they and their spirit of voice disappeared together; and the night became as it was when he walked home. Scrooge closed the window and inspected the door through which the Ghost entered. He was blocked twice as he locked it with his hands and the bolts were intact. He tried to say: Humbug!, but stopped at the first syllable. And be, from the emotions he has undergone, or the fatigue of the day, or his glimpse of the invisible World, or the dull ghost talk, or the lateness of an hour, very needing to rest; went straight to bed without undressing, and fell asleep for a moment. Please read our Legal Notice and our Privacy Statement. Copyright STORMFAX Page 2 es! and the bed was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. The best and happiest of all, the time before him was his own to make amends! I will live in the past, present and future! Scrooge repeated how he scrambled out of bed. The spirits of all three will strive in me. Oh Jacob Marley! Heaven, and Christmas is praised for it. I say this on my knees, old Jacob, on his knees! He was so fluttering and so glowing with his good intentions that his broken voice could hardly answer his call. He sobbed heavily in his conflict with the Spirit, and his face was wet with tears. They're not torn down! Scrooge exclaimed, folding one of his bed curtains on his hands, they are not torn down, rings and all. They are here -- I'm here -- shadows of things that could be dispelled. They will I know they will. His hands were busy with his clothes all the time; turning them on the inside out, putting them on the upside, tearing them up, misbehaving them, making them sides for any kind of extravagance. I don't know what to do! Scrooge exclaimed. laughing and weeping in one breath; and make the perfect Laocoon yourself with stockings. I'm as light as a feather, I'm happy as an angel, I'm hilarious as a schoolboy, I'm as giddy as a drunk person. Merry Christmas for all! Happy New Year to the world! Hallo's here! Whoop! Hallo! He searched the living room, and now he was standing there: completely windward. There's a pot that the porridge was in! Scrooge exclaimed, starting again, and frolicking around the fireplace. There's a door through which Jacob Marley's ghost entered. There is a corner where the Ghost of the Christmas Gift sat. There's a window where I saw the wandering Spirits. It's all right, it's all true, it all happened. Ha ha ha! Indeed, for a man who has been out of practice for years, it was a magnificent laugh, the most glorified laughter. The father is a long, long line of brilliant laughs. I don't know what day of the month it is, Scrooge said, I don't know how long I've been among the spirits. I don't know anything. I'm just a kid. No problem. I don't care. I'd rather be a kid. Hello! Whoop! Hallo's here! He was checked into his church transports ringing out the lustiest peals he had ever heard. Collision, clang, hammer; Dean, don, bell! Bell, dong, ding; hammer, clang, collision! Oh, nice, nice! When he reached the window, he opened it and took out his head. No fog, no fog; clear, bright, cheerful, stirring, cold; cold, piping for blood to dance to; Golden sunlight; Heavenly sun; Sweet fresh air; merry bells. Oh, that's nice. Glorious! What is a day? Scrooge exclaimed, calling down to a boy in Sunday clothes who might have loitered to look at him. The boy returned, with all his might of surprise. What a day, my lovely boyfriend? Scrooge said. The other day? The boy answered. Why, Christmas. Christmas!, said Scrooge to himself. I didn't miss it. The spirits did it all overnight. They can do whatever they like. Of course they can. Of course they can. Hallo, my lovely boyfriend! Hallo! The boy came back. Do you know Poulterers', on the next street, but one on the corner? Scrooge asked. I have to hope I did, the guy replied. Smart boy! Scrooge said. Wonderful boy! Do you know if they sold the prize to Turkey that hung there - Not Turkey's small prize: big? What, one as big as me? The boy came back. What a delightful boy! Scrooge said. It's nice to talk to him. Yes, my dollar. It's hanging in there now, the boy replied. This is? Scrooge said. Go and buy it. Walk-er! The boy exclaimed. No, no, Scrooge said, I'm serious. Go and buy it, and tell them to bring it here, that I can give them a direction where to take it. Come back with this man, and I'll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes, and I'll give you half the crown. The boy was off like a shot. He must have had a steady hand on the trigger that could have gotten a shot from the half so fast. I'll send it to Bon Cratchit! Scrooge whispered, rubbing his hands, and spitting with laughter. He won't know who's sending it. That's twice the size of Tiny Tim. Joe Miller has never made such a joke as sending it to Bob will! The hand in which he wrote the address was not steady, but to write it he did anyway, and went down the stairs to open the door of the street, ready for the arrival of the man poulterer. As he stood there, waiting for his arrival, the snitor caught his eye. I will love it as long as I live! Scrooge exclaimed, patting his hand. I've hardly ever looked at him before. What an honest expression on his face. It's a great knock. Here's Turkey. Hello! Whoop! How are you? Merry Christmas! It was Turkey! He would never get back on his feet, this bird. He would cut them short in a minute like sticks sealing the wax. Why, it's impossible to carry that to Camden Town, Scrooge said. You have to have a taxi. The laughter with which he said this, and the laughter with which he paid for Turkey, and the laughter with which he compensated the boy, were only to be exceeded by the chuckle with which he sat gasping in the chair again, and chuckled until he cried. Shaving was not an easy task because his hand continued to shake very much; and shaving requires attention, even if you don't dance while you're at it. But if he had cut off the end of his nose, he would have put a piece of sticking plates over him, and was quite satisfied. He dressed in all his best, and finally took to the streets. People were by this time pouring forward as he saw them with the ghost of a Christmas present; and walking with his hands behind him, Scrooge considered everyone with delight in short, he looked so irresistibly pleased that three or four good-natured guys said, Good morning, sir. Merry Christmas for you. And Scrooge often said afterwards that of all the careless sounds he had ever heard, it was the most hilarious in his ears. He did not go far when he went to him, he saw a dovetail gentleman who had gone into his account-house the day before, and said: Scrooge and Marley, I believe. He sent pain through his heart to think how this old gentleman would look at him when they met; but he knew which way lay right in front of him, and he took it. My dear, sir, said Scrooge, consoling the pace, and taking the old gentleman with both hands. How do you do. I hope you did it yesterday. That was very kind of me. Merry Christmas for you, sir! Mr. Scrooge? Yes, Scrooge said. That's my name, and I'm afraid it may not be pleasant to you. Let me ask for your forgiveness. And whether you'd have good - here Scrooge whispered in his ear. God bless me! The gentleman exclaimed as if his breath had been taken away. My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you serious? Please, Scrooge said. Not an apron less. A lot of back payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you favor me that? My dear, sir, said another, shaking his hand. I don't know what to say to such munificence. Don't say anything, please, Scrooge retorted. Come to me. Will you come and see me? I will be! The old man exclaimed. And it was clear that he wanted to do it. Thank you, Scrooge said. I owe it to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you! He went to church, walked the streets, and watched people rush back and forth, and patted the children on the head, and interrogated the beggars, and looked down at the kitchens of the houses, and up to the windows, and found that everything could please him. He never dreamed that any walk - anything - could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon he turned his steps to his nephew's house. He walked past the door a dozen times before he had the courage to come up and knock. But he made a dash, and did it: Your master of the house, my dear? Scrooge told the girl. Pretty girl. Very much. Yes sir. Where is he, my love? Scrooge said. He's in the dining room, sir, with his mistress. I'll show you up the stairs if you like. Thank you. He knows me, said Scrooge, already in the dining room. I'll go here, my darling. He turned it gently, and sidled his face, around the door. They looked at the table (which was spread in a large array); for these young housekeepers are always nervous about such moments, and I would like to see that everything is right. Fred! Scrooge said. Dear heart alive, as began his niece on marriage. Scrooge forgot, for now, about her, sitting in the corner with the foot, or he wouldn't have done it, on any account. Why bless my soul? Fred exclaimed, who is it? It's me. I'm here to have dinner. Would you let me, Fred? Get in it! It is mercy that he did not shake hands. He was home five minutes later. Nothing could be more heartfelt. His niece looked exactly the same. Like Topper when he came. Like the chubby sister when she came. Just like everyone when they came. Wonderful party, wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, won-der-ful happiness! But he was early in the office the next morning. Oh, he was there early. If he could only be there first, and catch Bob Cratchit coming late! It was what he put his heart on. And he did it; Yes, it did. The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter of the past. No Bob. He was full of eighteen minutes and a half behind his time. Scrooge sat with a wide open door that he could see him come into the tank. His hat was off before he opened the door; his comforter too. He was on a chair in one migo; leave with a pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine hours. Hallo, grumbled Scrooge, in his accustomed voice, as close as he could to feign it. What do you mean when you come here at this time of day? I'm sorry, sir, Bob said. I'm behind my time. You? Scrooge repeats. Yes, I think that's true. Step here, if you like. Only once a year, sir, Bob pleaded, emerging from the tank. This should not be repeated. I was doing pretty hilarious yesterday, sir. I'll tell you what, my friend, Scrooge said, I can't take it anymore. And so, he continued, jumping from his chair and letting Bob dig so hard in his vest that he staggered back into the tank again; and that's why I'm going to raise your salary. Bob trembled, and got a little closer to the ruler. He had the immediate idea of knocking Scrooge down with him, holding him, and urging people in court for help and a humbling vest. Merry Christmas, Bob, told Scrooge, seriously, that he could not be wrong as he slapped him on the back. Better Christmas, Bob, my good guy for years. I'm going to lower your paycheck and try to help your family, and we're going to discuss your case this afternoon over the Christmas cup of the bishop smoking. Bob. Make up fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before pointing another me, Bob Cratchit! Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and tiny Tim, who didn't die, was the second father. He became as good a friend as a good master, and as good a man as a good old town knew, or any other good old town, city, or neighborhood, in the good old world. Some people laughed to see the change in him, but he allowed them to laugh, and had little to do with them; for he was wise enough to know that nothing had happened at this globe, forever, on which some people did not have them fill with laughter at the outset; and knowing that such as they would be blind anyway, he thought it was just as good that they should wrinkle their eyes in a smirk, as well in less attractive forms. His own heart laughed; and it was enough for him. He had no further communion with the Spirits, but he lived on the Principle of Total Abstinence, ever after that; and he was always said that he knew how to save Christmas well if any living person possessed knowledge. Let it really be said about us and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless us, everyone! Please read our Legal Notice and our Privacy Statement. Image copyright ©1996-2020 STORMFAX Page 3 arley was dead: for starters. There is no doubt about that. The registry of his burial was signed by a clergyman, a clerk, an undertaker and the main mourner. Scrooge signed it: and Scrooge's name was good on Change, for all he decided to put his hand up. Old Marley was dead like a door nail. It's a sight to be seen I don't want to say that I know from my own knowledge that there's a particularly dead door nail. I might be inclined, myself, to view the coffin-nail as a dead piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors at the same time; and my hands will not bother him, or the country has done for. So you'll let me resolutely reiterate that Marley was dead like a doorknob. Did Scrooge know he was dead? Of course I did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners because I don't know how old. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his only appointment, his only legal resident, his only friend and only grieving. And even Scrooge wasn't so horribly cut by the sad event, but that he was a great business man on the same day of the funeral, and solemnized him with an undoubted debt. The mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the point at which I started. There's no doubt that Marley was dead. This needs to be clearly understood, or nothing remarkable can come from the story I'm about to relate to. If we were not entirely convinced that Hamlet's father had died before the play began, there would have been nothing more remarkable about walking at night, in the east wind, in his own shafts, than in any other middle-aged gentleman, recklessly turned out after dark in a fresh place - say, St. Paul's Cemetery, for example - literally to surprise his son's faint mind. Scrooge never painted Old Marley's name. There he stood, years later, above the door of the warehouse: Scrooge and Marley. The company was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge and sometimes Marley, but he answered both names: it was all the same for him. About! But he was tight-ly punched by the grind of the stone. Scrooge! squeezing, excruciating, grabbing, scraping, squeezing, avid, old sinner! Solid and sharp as flint, from which no steel has ever struck out a generous fire; secret, and autonomous, and solitary, like oysters. The cold in him froze his old features, his sharpened nose, his wrinkled cheek, his cheek, his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue and spoke shrewdly in his grating voice. The frosty edge was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his cunning chin. He carried his low temperature always about with him; he iced his office on dog days; and don't defrost it by one degree at Christmas. The external heat and cold had little impact on Scrooge. No heat can warm, no winter weather cools it. No wind that blew was bitter than it was, no falling snow was more intent on its goal, without throwing rain less open to entreaty. Bad weather didn't know where to see him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast an advantage over it only in one respect. They often went down nicely, and Scrooge never did. No one ever stopped him in the street to say, with a joyful appearance: My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to me? No beggar begged him to give a change, nor did the children ask him what it was in an hour, no man or woman in his life ever asked for a way to such a place, scrooge. Even the dogs of the blind men seemed to know him; and when they saw him coming on, there would be a tug of their owners in the doorways and courts; and then they wagged their tails, as if they were saying, No eyes at all better than the evil eye, dark master! But what was the case for Scrooge? It was something he liked. To edge his way through the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathies to keep his distance, was what the knowledgeable call nuts for Scrooge. Once upon a time - of all the good days of the year, on Christmas Eve - old Scrooge sat busy in his counting room. It was cold, gloomy, biting weather: foggy withal: and he heard people in court outside go wheezing up and down, banging their hands on their chests, and punching his feet on the pavement stones to warm them up. The city clock had just passed three, but it was already quite dark - all day it was not light: and candles were burning in the windows of neighboring offices, like ruddy smears on a palpable brown air. The mist came pouring in every slit and keyhole, and was so dense without that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were just phantoms. To see the dark clouds come drooping down, obscuring everything, one would think that nature lived hard, and brewing on a large scale. The door of Scrooge's counting chamber was open that he could keep an eye on his clerk, who, in a gloomy little cell outside, a sort of tank, copied the letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so small that it looked like one charcoal. But he could not replenish it, because Scrooge kept a coal box in his room; and so true as the clerk came with a shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Before that, the clerk put on a white comforter, and tried to warm up at the candle; in which effort without being a man of strong it failed. Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you! A cheerful voice exclaimed. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came across him so quickly that it was the first hint of his approach. Bach! Said Scrooge, Humbug! He so warmed himself up with a quick walk in the mist and frost, this nephew of Scrooge, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and beautiful; eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again. Christmas is a hoax, uncle! Scrooge's nephew said. You don't mean that, I'm sure. I know, Scrooge said. Merry Christmas! What right do you have to have fun? Why are you having fun? You're poor enough. Then go, the nephew returned cheerfully. What right should you be gloomy? Why are you sullen? You're rich enough. Scrooge, having no better answer ready for the spur moment, said: Bach! Again; and followed him with Humbug. Not a cross, uncle! My nephew said. Who else can I be, my uncle returned, when I live in a world of fools like this? Merry Christmas! Happy Christmas! What Christmas is for you, but time to pay bills without money; time to find yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; time to balance your books and with each item in them through the round tens of months presented dead against you? If I could work with my will, - Scrooge indignantly - every idiot who walks with Merry Christmas on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with Holly's stake through his heart. He has to! Uncle! I begged my nephew. Nephew! The uncle returned, Strictly, to keep Christmas in his own way, and let me keep it in mine. Hold him! Scrooge's nephew repeats himself. But you don't hold it. Let me leave him alone then, Scrooge said. A lot of good, let it make you! A lot of good he's ever done to you! There are many things from which I could get good, through which I did not make a profit, I dare say returned nephew. Christmas among the rest. But I'm sure I always thought of Christmas when he came to his senses - apart from reverence because of his sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to him could be, other than that - as a good time: kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know in a long calendar of the year is when men and women seem to have one agreement to open their closed hearts freely , and think of the people beneath them as if they really were fellow travelers to the grave, rather than another race of creatures bound in other journeys. And so, uncle, though he never put a piece of gold or silver in his pocket, I believe that he has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless him! The clerk in the tank involuntarily applauded: becoming at once sane from misconduct, he poked the fire, and put out the last fragile spark forever. Let me hear another sound from you, said Scrooge, and you'll keep Christmas losing your situation. You've had enough. orator, sir, he added, addressing his nephew. I wonder if you're not going to parliament. Don't get mad, uncle. Come! Dinner with us tomorrow. Scrooge said he'd see it - yes, indeed, he did. He went the entire length of the expression, and said he would see it in that limb first. But why? Scrooge's nephew exclaimed. Why? Why did you get married? Scrooge said. Because I'm in love. Because you're in love! Scrooge taught, as if it were the only thing in the world more funny than a merry Christmas. Good afternoon! No, uncle, but you never came to see me before it happened. Why give it as a reason not to come now? Good afternoon, Scrooge said. I don't want anything from you; I'm not asking for anything about you; why can't we be friends? Good afternoon, Scrooge said. I am sorry, from the bottom of my heart, to find you so determined. We never had a fight to which I was a participant. But I did a trial in honor of Christmas and I will keep my Christmas humor to the last. So Merry Christmas, uncle! Good afternoon, Scrooge said. And Happy New Year! Good afternoon! Scrooge said. His nephew left the room without angry words, noting. He stopped at the outside door to bestow the greetings of the season on the clerk, who, as cold as he was, was warmer than Scrooge; for he returned them cordially. There's another guy muttered to Scrooge, and he's who overheard him: My clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I'm going to Bedlam. This lunatic, having let Scrooge's nephew go, let two other people in. They were tailors gentlemen, pleasant to contemplate, and now stood, with hats, in Scrooge's office. They had books and papers in their hands, and they bowed to him. Scrooge and Marley, I believe, said one of the gentlemen, referring to his list. Do I have the pleasure of turning to Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley? Mr. Marley had been dead these seven years, Scrooge replied. He died seven years ago, the same night. We have no doubt that his liberalism is well represented by his surviving partner, said the gentleman, presenting his credentials. It certainly was; for they were two kindred spirits. On the ominous word liberalism, Scrooge frowned, and shook his head, and handed the powers back. This holiday season of the year, Mr. Scrooge, said the gentleman, taking in the handle, it is more than usual desirable that we should make some minor provisions for the poor and disadvantaged who are suffering greatly now. Many thousands of people do not want the common necessities; hundreds of thousands of people don't want common comfort, sir. Are there prisons? Scrooge asked. Plenty of prisons, said the gentleman, putting the pen again. And the workers' union? Scrooge demanded it. Are they still in operation? They are. However, the gentleman returned: I would say that they were not. The treadmill and the poor law are in full force, Scrooge said. Both are very busy, sir. About! I was afraid from what you said at first that something had happened to stop them in their useful course, Scrooge said. I'm very happy to hear that. Under the impression that they barely provide a Christian greeting of mind or body for the set, returned gentleman, some of us are trying to raise a fund to buy poor meat and drink and means heat. We choose this time because it is the time, everyone else, when you want to be acutely felt, and abundance rejoices. What will I put you down for? No problem! Scrooge replied. Do you want to be anonymous? I want to be left alone, Scrooge said. Since you ask me what I want, gentlemen, that's my answer. I'm not having fun at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people happy. I help support the institutions I've mentioned - they cost enough; and those who are bad off should go there. Many can't go there; and many would rather die, Scrooge said, they should do so and reduce the population's surplus. Also - excuse me -- I don't know what. But you may know that, the gentleman said. It's none of my business, Scrooge said. It is enough for a person to understand his business, not to interfere with other people. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen! Seeing clearly that it would be futile to continue their point of view, the gentlemen withdrew. Scrooge returned his work with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more playful mood than was usual with him. Meanwhile, fog and darkness thickened so that people ran with burning lights, offering their services to go in front of horses in carriages, and carry them on their way. The ancient tower of the church, whose coarse old bell always peeked freely into Scrooge from the Gothic window in the wall, became invisible and struck the clock and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards, as if her teeth were chattering in her frozen head there. The cold became intense. On the main street on the corner of the court, some workers repaired gas pipes and lit a large fire in the roaster, around which a batch of dangling men and boys gathered: warmed hands and winked eyes before the flames in delight. Water shut, left alone, its overcrowded sullenly frozen, and turned into misanthropic ice. The brightness of the shops, where Holly's twigs and berries popped in the lamp heat of the windows, made pale faces rosy as they passed. Poulterers and grocery store trades became a great joke: glorious contest with which it was almost impossible to believe that such boring principles as bargaining and selling was anything to do. The Lord Mayor, in the bastion of the mighty mansion, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to save Christmas as the Lord Mayor's family must; and even a small tailor whom he fined five shillings on Monday for being drunk and bloodthirsty in the streets, stirred up pudding tomorrow in the attic, while his skinny wife and child sallied to buy beef. Foggier still, and colder! Piercing, searching, biting cold. Had the good Saint Dunstan but cut off the nose of the Evil Spirit with a touch of weather such as that, instead of using his familiar weapon, he would in fact roar to a lustful purpose. The owner of one meager young nose, gnawing and muttering in the hungry cold like the bones gnawing at a dog, leaned into Scrooge's keyhole to treat him to the Christmas carol: but at the first sound -- God bless you, cheerful gentleman! Let you embarrass you! Scrooge captured the ruler with such energy of action that the singer fled in horror, leaving the keyhole in the fog and even more favorable frosts. Finally the hour of the closing of the counting chamber arrived. With wicked will, Scrooge came down from his chair and tacitly confessed to the wait-and-see clerk in the tank, who instantly put out the candle and put on his hat. You want all day tomorrow, I suppose? Scrooge said. If that's convenient, sir. It's not convenient, Scrooge said, and it's not fair. If I were to stop half the crown for it, do you think that self is misused, I would be bound? The clerk smiled faintly. And yet, Scrooge said, you don't think I'm used badly when I pay a day's pay without a job. The clerk noticed that it was only once a year. A bad excuse for choosing a man's pocket every twenty-five December!, said Scrooge, buttoning his coat to his chin. But I suppose you should have all day. Be here early the next morning. The clerk promised that he would; and Scrooge came out with a growl. The office was closed in the blink of an eye, and the clerk, with long ends of his white comforter dangling below the waist (because he boasted no coat), went down a slide at Cornhill, at the end of the boys' strip, twenty times, in honor of his Christmas Eve time, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could to skin to play the blind buff. Scrooge took his melancholy dinner at his usual tavern of melancholy, and he, having read all the newspapers, and seduced the rest of the evening with his banker's book, went home to sleep. He lived in rooms that once belonged to his deceased partner. They had a grim set of rooms, in a dipping pile of making up the yard, where he had so little business to be, that one could hardly help imagining he had to work there when he was a young house, playing hide-and-seek with other houses, and forgetting to go out again. He was old enough now, and dreary enough, because no one lived in it, but Scrooge, the other rooms all released as offices. The yard was so dark that even Scrooge, who knew every stone, was faint groping with his hands. The mist and frost so hung about the black old gates of the house that it seemed that the genius of the weather was sitting in mournful meditation on the Now, it's a fact that there was nothing special about knocking on the door, except that it was very big. It is also a fact that Scrooge saw him, at night and in the morning, throughout his residence in this place; except that Scrooge had as little of what is called fantasies about him as any man in the city of London, even including - which is a bold word - corporation, aldermen, and livery. Let it also bear in mind that Scrooge has not given one thought to Marley since his last mention of his seven-year-old dead partner that day. And then let any man explain to me, if he can, as it happened, that Scrooge, having a key in the door lock, saw a knock, without him passing any intermediate process of change - not a knock, but Marley's face. Marley's face. It wasn't in impenetrable shade as other objects in the yard were, but there was a gloomy light about it like a bad lobster in a dark basement. He was not angry or ferocious, but looked at Scrooge as Marley looked: with ghostly glasses appeared on his ghostly forehead. The hair was curiously stirred, as if by breathing or hot air; and though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly still. This, and his fury of color, made him dreadful; but his horror seemed to be in spite of the face and beyond his control, not the part or his own expression. As Scrooge looked fixed on this phenomenon, it was a thud again. To say that he was not struck, or that his blood did not realize the terrible feeling to which he had been a stranger since infancy, would be untrue. But he put his hand on the key, which he refused, turned it tightly, went in, and lit a candle. He paused, with indecision a moment before he closed the door; and he looked cautiously behind him at first, as if he half-expected to be terrified of the kind of marley pigtails sticking out in the hall. But there was nothing on the back door except the screws and nuts that kept knocking, so he said: Pooh, fluff! And closed it with a bang. The sound sounded through the house like thunder. Each room above, and each barrel in the merchant's wine cellars below, seemed to have a separate ringing echo of its own. Scrooge was not a man who could be frightened by the echo. He fastened the door, and went down the hall, and up the stairs, and slowly too: pruning the candle as he went. You can talk vaguely about the driving coach and the six up the good old flight of stairs, or through the bad young law of Parliament; but I mean, you may have got the hearse up the stairs, and took it wide, with a shard bar to the wall and a door to the balustrades: and made it easy. There was a lot of width for this, and a place to spare; which is perhaps the reason why Scrooge thought he saw a locomotive hearse going before him in the gloom. Half a dozen gas lamps from the street don't light up the entrance too well, so you can assume it was pretty dark with Scrooge's fall. Up the scrooge went without caring the button for it. Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it. But before he closed his heavy door, he went through his rooms to see that everything was fine. He had enough memories of his face to desire to do so. Living room, bedroom, lumbering. It's the way it's supposed to be. No one under the table, no one under the sofa; Small fire in the grate; Spoon and pool ready; and a small pan of porridge (Scrooge had a chill in his head) on the stove. No one under the bed; No one in the closet; no one in the robe, which hung suspiciously against the wall. The lumber room, as usual. Old firefighters, old shoes, two fish baskets, washing stand

on three legs, and poker. Completely satisfied, he closed the door, and locked himself in; twice locked himself in, which was not his custom. Thus secured with surprise, he took off his tie; put on his robe and slippers, and his nightcap, and he sat down before the fire to take his porridge. It was a very low fire indeed; nothing on such a bitter night. He was forced to sit beside him and brood over him before he could extract the least heat sensation from such a handful of fuel. The fireplace was old, built by some Dutch merchants long ago, and paved all around with quirky Dutch tiles designed to illustrate Scripture. There were Cain and Abels, daughters of the pharaohs; The queen of Sheba, the angelic messengers descending through the air on clouds such as feathers, Abrahams, Belshazzars, Apostles, laying in the sea on oil boats, hundreds of figures to attract his thoughts - and yet this face of Marley, seven years dead, came as the rod of the ancient Prophet, and swallowed everything. If each smooth tile at first was empty, with the ability to form some picture on its surface from disparate fragments of his thoughts, each of them would have a copy of the head of old Marley. Humberg! said Scrooge, and he was and walked around the room. After a few turns, he sat down again. When he threw his head back into the chair, his gaze casually rested on the bell, the abandoned bell that hung in the room, and communicated with some purpose now forgotten with the camera in the building's highest history. It was with great surprise, and with a strange, inexplicable fear that, as he looked, he saw this bell begin to sway. He swung so quietly at the beginning that he scarcely made a sound; but soon it rang out loudly, and so did every call in the house. It may have lasted half a minute, or a minute, but it seemed an hour. The bells stopped as they began, together. They gave way to a clang of noise, deep down, and they were as if some man was dragging a heavy chain through barrels in the wine merchant's basement. Scrooge then recalled hearing that ghosts in haunted houses were described as dragging chains. The cellar-door swung open with a booming sound, and then he heard a much louder noise on the Below. then went up to the stairs; then goes straight to his door. It's a hoax yet! Scrooge said. I won't believe it. His color changed, though, when, without pause, he came through a heavy door, and walked into the room before his eyes. When the dying flame came, he sprang up, as if he had exclaimed: I know him; The ghost of Marley! and fell again. Same face: the same. Marley in pigtails, a regular vest, tights and boots; tassles on the last bristling, like his pigtail, and his coat-skirt, and hair on his head. The chain he drew was folded in the middle. It was long, and the wound about it was like a tail; and it was done (for Scrooge watched it closely) from cash drawers, keys, locks, books, cases, and heavy purses wrought in steel. His body was transparent, so Scrooge, watching him, and looking through the vest, could see two buttons on the coat behind. Scrooge often heard that Marley didn't have a bowel, but he never believed it until now. No, and he didn't believe it even now. Though he looked the ghost throughout and to the end, and saw him standing before him, and though he felt the chilling effect of his death cold eyes, and he noted the very texture of the folded handkerchief tied around his head and chin, the wrappers of which he had not seen before: he was still incredulous and struggled against his feelings. As now!, said Scrooge, caustic and cold as ever. What do you want with me? A lot! Marley's voice, no doubt. Who are you? Ask me who I am. Scrooge said, raising his voice. You're particular for the shadows. He was going to speak in the shadows, but replaced it as more appropriate. I've been your partner in my life, Jacob Marley. Can you - can you sit down? Scrooge asked, looking doubtful at him. I can. Do it then. Scrooge asked this question because he did not know whether a ghost so transparent could be able to occupy a chair; and felt that in the event of his impossible, it might entail the need for an awkward explanation. But the ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, as if he were quite used to it. You don't believe in me, Ghost remarked. I don't. Scrooge said. What evidence would you have of my reality beyond your senses? I don't know, Scrooge said. Why do you doubt your feelings? Because, Scrooge said, a little thing affects them. A slight upset stomach makes them cheats. You can be undigested with a little beef, a slick of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a piece of unfinished potatoes. There's more sauce than graves about you, whatever you are! Scrooge wasn't much into the habit of cracking jokes, and he didn't feel in his heart by any means of wagging back then. The truth is that he tried to be clever as a means to divert his attention, and to keep down his horror; for the voice of the ghost is disturbed by a very bone marrow in his bones. Sit, stare fixed glazed eyes, in silence for a moment, would play, Scrooge felt very deuce with him. There was something very awful, too, in the ghost afforded a hellish atmosphere of its own. Scrooge could not feel it himself, but it was clear, but it was so; for though the Ghost sat perfectly still, his hair, and skirts, and brushes, still agitated as the hot steam from the oven. Do you see this toothpick? Scrooge said, quickly returning to the charge, for a reason just appointed; and wishing, though it was only for a second to divert the stoned look of vision from himself. I know, Ghost replied. You don't look at it, Scrooge said. But I can see it, Said The Ghost, despite it. Well! Scrooge returned, I have, but swallow it, and be for the rest of my days haunted by a legion of goblins, all my own creation. Humberg, I'm telling you! Cheating! At the same time, the spirit raised a terrible cry, and shook the chain with such a gloomy and terrible noise that Scrooge held fast to the chair to save himself from fainting. But how much more was his horror, when the phantom swiped the bandage around his head, as if it was too warm to wear indoors, his lower jaw dropped on his chest! Scrooge fell to his knees and folded his hands in front of his face. Mercy! He said. Terrible phenomenon, why do you bother me? Man is a worldly mind! Answered Ghost, do you believe in me or not? I know, Scrooge said. I have to. But why do spirits walk on the ground, and why do they come to me? Every man, the Ghost returned, was required that the spirit within him could go abroad among his fellow men and travel in any case; and if that spirit does not go ahead in life, it is doomed to do so after death. He's doomed to roam the world -- oh, woe to me! - and witness what he can not share, but may share on the ground, and turned to happiness! Again the ghost raised a cry, and shook the chain and broke his dark hands. You're shackled, Scrooge said, trembling. Tell me why? I wear a chain that I forged in my life, Ghost said. I made this link by link, and yard by yard; I belted it out of my own will, and at will I wore it. Is his picture strange to you? Scrooge trembled more and more. Or do you know, the Ghost pursued, the weight and length of the strong coil you make yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as it was, seven Christmas Eves back. You've been working on it ever since. It's a heavy chain! Scrooge glanced about him on the floor, hoping to find himself surrounded by about fifty or sixty fathoms of iron cable, but he saw nothing. Jacob, he said, pleading. Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Say comfort to me, Jacob! I have no one to give, Ghost replied. This comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is passed on by other ministers to other types of men. I also can't tell you what I would like. Very little everything is allowed for me. I can't rest, I can't stay, I can't linger anywhere. My spirit has never gone beyond our counting house - to diseven me! - in life my spirit has never roved beyond the narrow confines of our changing money hole, and and tired journeys lie before me! It was a habit with Scrooge when he became thoughtful to put his hands in the pockets of breeches. Reflecting on what the Ghost said, he did so now, but without raising his eyes or getting up from his knees. You must have been very slow to do this. Jacob, Scrooge said, in a businesslike manner, albeit with humility and reverence. Slowly! The ghost repeated. Seven years dead, pondered Scrooge. And travel all the time! All this time, Ghost said. There is no peace, no peace. The incessant torture of remorse. Do you travel fast? Scrooge said. There's wind on the wings, Ghost said. You may have gotten over a large amount of land in seven years, Scrooge said. The ghost, hearing this, created another cry, and slapped his chains so hideously in the dead silence of the night that Ward would have been acquitted of blaming him for the nuisance. About! prisoner, bound and stroked twice, - exclaimed the phantom, not knowing that the age of incessant work of immortal beings, for this earth must pass into eternity, before the good it is receptive will be developed. Not knowing that any Christian spirit working kindly in its small sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Do not know that no place of regret can make amends for the possibility of one life being abused! However, that was me! About! That was me! But you've always been a good person in business, Jacob, faltered Scrooge, who has now begun to apply it to himself. Business! The Ghost exclaimed, wringing his hands again. Humanity was my business. General well-being was my business; mercy, mercy, patience and benevolence were, all, my business. The deals of my trade were just a drop of water in the all-encompassing ocean of my business! She kept her chain at arm's length as if it were the cause of all her unbreakable grief, and threw it the ground again. At this time of rolling of the year, the ghost said: I suffer the most. Why have I gone through a crowd of fellow creatures with my eyes off, and never raise them to this blessed Star that brought the wise men to the poor abode! If there were no poor houses to which his light would lead me! Scrooge was very dismayed to hear the ghost going at such a speed, and began the earthquake tremendously. Hear me! The Ghost exclaimed. My time is almost over. I will, Scrooge said. But don't be tough on me! Don't be floral, Jacob! Pray! How is it that I appear before you in a form that you can see, I can not say. I sat invisible beside you many and many in a day. It wasn't a good idea. Scrooge trembled, and wiped the sweat from his forehead. It's not part of my repentance, the Ghost pursued. Ghost. I am here tonight to warn you that you still have a chance and hope to escape my fate. The chance and hope of my acquisition, Ebenezer. You've always been a good friend to me. Scrooge said. Thank you 'ee! You will be persecuted, the Ghost summed up, with three Spirits. Scrooge's face fell almost as low as the ghost did. Is this a chance and I hope you mentioned it, Jacob? He demanded, in an intermittent voice. That's true. I -- I think I'd rather not, Scrooge said. Without their visits, Said the Ghost, you cannot hope that I will follow the path I am on. Expect the first tomorrow when the bell rings alone. Can't I take them all at once, and it's over, Jacob? Scrooge hinted. Expect a second one the following night at the same hour. The third was the next night, when the last blow of the twelve stopped vibrating. Look to see me no more than I do and see that, for your own sake, you remember what passed between us! When he said these words, the ghost took the wrapper off the table and tied it around his head as before. Scrooge knew this, by the clever sound his teeth made when his jaws were carried by a bandage. He ventured to raise his eyes again, and found his supernatural visitor confronting him in a straight-forward relationship, with his chain wound over and over on his arm. The phenomenon went backwards from it; and at every turn he took, the window went up a little, so that when the ghost reached him, it was wide open. He beckoned Scrooge to approach, which he did. When they were a stone's throw away, Marley's ghost held his hand, warning him not to approach. Scrooge stopped. Not so much in obedience as in surprise and fear: for when he raised his hands he became prudent to confuse the noises in the air; rambling sounds of weeping and regret; crying unspeakably sad and self-accused. The ghost, after listening for a moment, entered into a mournful dirge; and swam out on a gloomy, dark night. Scrooge followed to the window: desperate in his curiosity. He looked out. The air was filled with phantoms, wandering here and washing in a restless hurry, and moaning as they went. Each of them wore chains like Marley's ghost; some of them (they may be guilty by governments) were related to each other; none of them was free. Many of them were personally known to Scrooge in their lives. He was well acquainted with an old ghost, in a white vest, with a monstrous iron safe attached to his ankle, who cried pitifully, unable to help the unfortunate woman with the baby he saw below on the door step. The misfortune with all of them was clear that they sought to interfere, forever, in human affairs, and lost power forever. Whether these creatures disappeared into the mist, or the mist dipped them, he could not say. But they and their spirit of voice disappeared together; and the night became as it was when he walked home. Scrooge closed the window and inspected the door through which the Ghost entered. It was as he locked it with his own hands, and the bolts were calm. He tried to say: Humberg!, but stopped at the first syllable. And be, from the emotions he has undergone, or the fatigue of the day, or his glimpse of the Invisible World, or the dull ghost talk, or the lateness of an hour, very needing to rest; went straight to bed without undressing, and fell asleep for a moment. Please read our Legal Notice and our Privacy Statement. Copyright ©1996-2020 STORMFAX STORMFAX jacob marley was dead to begin with. how long was jacob marley dead

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