

**SCENE 2: OFFICES OF SCROOGE & MARLEY** (Scrooge & Cratchet)

**SCROOGE:** No more coal! Too near time to leave.

*(laughter, door opens - Fred enters)*

**FRED:** A merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you!

**SCROOGE:** Bah! Humbug!

**FRED:** Christmas a humbug, Uncle? You don't mean that I'm sure.

**SCROOGE:** I do. Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough.

**FRED:** Come, then. What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough.

**SCROOGE:** Bah! Humbug!

**FRED:** Don't be cross, Uncle.

**SCROOGE:** What else can I be, when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon a Merry Christmas. What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for balancing your books, and having every item in them through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will, 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.

**FRED:** Uncle!

**SCROOGE:** Nephew! Keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.

**FRED:** Keep it?! But you don't keep it.

**SCROOGE:** Let me leave it alone, then; much good may it do you. Much good has it every done you.

**FRED:** There are many things from which I might have derived good by which I have not profited, I dare say. Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas-time as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of in the long calendar year, when men and women seem, by one consent, to open up their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people less fortunate as if they really were fellow passengers to the grave. And therefore, Uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!

*(reaction from Cratchit)*

**SCROOGE:** *(to Cratchit)* Let me hear another sound from you and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation. *(to Fred)* You're quite a powerful speaker, sir, I wonder you don't go into Parliament.

**FRED:** Don't be angry Uncle. Come! Dine with us tomorrow.

**SCROOGE:** I'll see you in hell first.

**FRED:** But why? Why, Uncle?

**SCROOGE:** Why did you get married?

**FRED:** Because I fell in love, Uncle Ebenezer.

**SCROOGE:** Because you fell in love! . . . the only thing in the world more ridiculous than a Merry Christmas. Good afternoon.

**FRED:** But you never came to see me before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?

**SCROOGE:** Good afternoon.

**FRED:** I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why can we not be friends?

**SCROOGE:** Good afternoon!

**FRED:** I am sorry, with all my heart to find you so resolute. But I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So, Merry Christmas, Uncle!

**SCROOGE:** Good Afternoon!