

SCROOGE: Nothing!

GENTLEMAN 1: You wish to remain anonymous?

SCROOGE: I wish to be left alone! Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned. They cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there.

GENTLEMAN 1: But many can't go there; and many would rather die.

SCROOGE: If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.  
(Both Gentlemen are stunned) Besides, excuse me, I don't know that.

GENTLEMAN 1: (Beginning to anger) But you might know it.

### 6. MUSIC: COVENTRY CAROL 1

SCROOGE: It's not my business. It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly.

GENTLEMAN 1: But, it's Christmas, Sir.

SCROOGE: Good afternoon, gentlemen!

*SCROOGE returns to work. GENTLEMAN 1 and GENTLEMAN 2 prepare to depart, defeated. As they near the door, BOB CRATCHIT quietly rises and shakes hands with GENTLEMAN 1 & 2.*

GENTLEMAN 2 (to BOB): Good afternoon, sir. A happy Christmas to you, sir.

*GENTLEMAN 1 and GENTLEMAN 2 pass FRED as he enters the office and they exit.*

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

SCROOGE: Bah! Humbug.

FRED: Christmas a humbug? Uncle! You don't mean that, I am 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 such as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon Merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you, but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer. 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. He should!

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 it has ever done you.

FRED: There are many things from which I might have derived good, but 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 of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. 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!

BOB: Oh, God bless it, indeed, Sir!!! (*FRED acknowledges him, and laughs.*)

SCROOGE: (*To BOB*) Let me hear another sound from *you*, Cratchit, 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?

SCROOGE: Why did you get married?

FRED: Because I fell in love.

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

*SCROOGE returns to his work.*

FRED: Nay, Uncle, but you never came to see me before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?

SCROOGE: (*Not looking up*) Good afternoon.

FRED: I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends?

SCROOGE: Good afternoon!

FRED: I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel to which I have been party. But, I have made the invitation in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So, a Merry Christmas, Uncle! (*He hugs Scrooge.*)

SCROOGE: Good afternoon!

FRED: And a Happy New Year! (*Laughing, he slaps SCROOGE on the back.*)

SCROOGE: Good afternoon!

*FRED retrieves his hat and scarf.*

FRED: Eager for Christmas, Bob?

BOB: Oh, yes, Sir; we are all of us in the best possible humor!