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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## A Christmas Carol

### 1: Marley's Ghost



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*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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#### **Narrator**

This is the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a man who loved money and didn't like Christmas. There he was, on Christmas Eve, in his office. He was keeping an eye on his clerk Bob Cratchit. Scrooge wanted to get every little bit of work from Cratchit before allowing him to spend Christmas Day at home. Scrooge thought Christmas was a waste of time! Even his nephew couldn't convince him that it wasn't.

#### **IN SCROOGE'S OFFICE**

#### **Scrooge's Nephew**

A Merry Christmas, uncle!

#### **Scrooge**

Bah! Humbug!

#### **Scrooge's Nephew**

You don't mean that, I'm sure!

#### **Scrooge**

What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money? You find yourself a year older, but not an hour richer! What good has it ever done you?

#### **Scrooge's Nephew**

I've always thought of Christmas as a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time. A time when men and women seem to open their hearts freely. It's never put money in my pocket, but I believe that it's done me good!

#### **Scrooge**

Humbug!

#### **Scrooge's Nephew**

Come on, uncle, come and have dinner with us tomorrow.

#### **Narrator**

Scrooge's nephew was persistent but the old man wouldn't change his mind. He was in his

usual bad mood when two gentlemen came to his office to ask for a donation to offer Christmas dinner to the poor. Scrooge worked in the money-lending business. No donation from him...

**Scrooge**

Gentlemen, are there no prisons and workhouses, where the poor receive food and accommodation in return for some work?

**Gentleman**

We wish we could say there aren't any, Mr Scrooge. Many poor people would rather die than go to prison or the...

**Scrooge**

They should die and decrease the surplus population. And... well, it's none of my business anyway. They cost a lot of money, and the poor should go there. Goodbye, sir.

**Narrator**

Typical Scrooge! He feels sorry for no-one, helps no-one. With him, it's all about money. He thought of nothing else. His partner, Jacob Marley, had died seven years before, at Christmas. Marley was like Scrooge when he was alive. But now he was gone. Or was he?

**AT SCROOGE'S HOUSE**

**Scrooge**

Who's there? I'm finally home and I want some peace!

**Marley**

Scroooge... Scroooooooge...

**Scrooge**

What is this? A ghost?! It's not possible! I must be having indigestion and seeing things that aren't there!

**Marley**

Scrooge. In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

**Scrooge**

Marley, is it really you?! And what is this strange metal chain you are wearing? It's made of cash-boxes, keys, locks, heavy purses...

**Marley**

I wear the chain I made in life. Of my own free will I wore it when I was alive. Is its pattern strange to you? Or do you wish to know the weight and length of the heavy chain you are carrying yourself?

**Scrooge**

Don't say that, Jacob. And why is this happening to you? You were always a good man of business...

**Marley**

Business!? Mankind was my business. Charity, kindness - were all my business. Why did I walk through crowds of people with my eyes turned down? I'm here to warn you, that you still have a chance of escaping my fate. You'll be visited by three spirits. Expect the first spirit tomorrow at one o'clock in the morning. And remember what I've told you.

**Narrator**

Marley disappeared into the night, flying out of an open window with other ghosts which looked as miserable as him. Scrooge was shocked. I'll tell you about the visit of the first spirit next time.

**Vocabulary****keeping an eye**

watching closely

**clerk**

office worker

**humbug**

old expression meaning 'fake' which came to be closely associated with this story by Charles Dickens

**persistent**

someone who does not give up on things easily

**donation**

article or money that you give to somebody when you don't expect to get anything back

**workhouses (singular: workhouse)**

places where people got food and accommodation in return for some work

**surplus**

excess; too much of something

**indigestion**

discomfort in the stomach after eating too much food or bad food