

SCROOGE. Bah! Humbug!

FRED. Don't be cross, Uncle!

SCROOGE. What else can I be in such a world of fools! Merry Christmas indeed! What is Christmas but a time for paying bills without money, for finding yourself a year older and not an hour richer? Every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled in his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart! Oh, that's good! "Stake of holly!" *(Laughs.)*

FRED *(mock surprise and shock)*. Uncle!

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

FRED. But you don't keep Christmas in any way.

SCROOGE. Let me leave it alone then! It is best left alone!

FRED. On the contrary, Christmas is a good time. A time when men and women open their hearts freely! A time of love and the spirit of giving! And though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it *has* done me good ...

SCROOGE. Humbug!

FRED. ... and will do me good ...

SCROOGE. Humbug!!

FRED. ... and I say God bless it!

CRATCHIT. God bless it!

SCROOGE. Another sound from you, Cratchit, and you'll spend your Christmas looking for another position!

CRATCHIT. Yes, sir. Sorry, sir.

FRED. Come, don't be angry, Uncle. Dine with us tomorrow!

SCROOGE. No.

FRED. My wife is preparing a Christmas dinner that a king would envy.

SCROOGE. I am not a king.

FRED. Mother thought you were.

SCROOGE. My sister is dead! And it ... it is a charity that she is ... so that she cannot see what a worthless rogue her son has become.

FRED. You know better than that.

SCROOGE. I tell you, Fan is dead! Every year you come storming into my office, trailing in bushels of snow ... disrupt my day and babble about Christmas and how wonderful it is ... and every year you invite me to Christmas dinner!

FRED. And every year you turn me down.

SCROOGE. Exactly!

FRED. And every year you say, (*Imitating SCROOGE.*) Humbug!

SCROOGE. And I say it again: Humbug! If you know what I will say before I say it, why do you bother to come here every year to hear me say it?

FRED. Because, Uncle, one of these times ... one of these Christmases ... you will accept my invitation.

SCROOGE. Humbug! Get out! Good afternoon!

FRED. Uncle, it's Christmas!

SCROOGE. Good afternoon!

FRED. I'm sorry for you. But, Merry Christmas all the same, Uncle!

SCROOGE. Good afternoon!

FRED. And a happy New Year!