

## **SCROOGE, FRED**

FRED: A Merry Christmas, Uncle. God save you!

SCROOGE: (STARTLED, SCATTERS HIS GOLD PIECES.) Bah! (STARTS TO PICK THEM UP.) Humbug!

FRED: (SMILES.) Christmas a humbug, Uncle? You don't mean that, I'm sure!

SCROOGE: I do! (SCORNFULLY.) Merry Christmas! What right have you to be so merry? You're poor enough.

FRED: Come then. What right have you to be so gloomy? You're rich enough. (HOLDS OUT A GOLD PIECE HE FOUND ON THE FLOOR.)

SCROOGE: Bah! Give me that! (SNATCHES THE GOLD PIECE FROM FRED'S HAND AND PICKS UP THE LAST OF THE OTHERS.) Humbug! Merry Christmas, indeed! If I had my way, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips would be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart!

FRED: (SHOCKED.) Uncle!

SCROOGE: (MOCKING.) 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. Christmas! Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!

FRED: But, Uncle, I've always thought of Christmas as a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time. Christmas is the only time I know when people open their hearts freely. (HE'S GETTING CARRIED AWAY.) And, therefore, Uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!

SCROOGE: (SARCASTICALLY TO FRED.) You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. I wonder you don't go into politics.

FRED: Now, don't be angry, Uncle. Come and have dinner with us tomorrow!

SCROOGE: Bah! You'll see me dead first!

FRED: But why? Why?

SCROOGE: (TURNS ON HIM SUDDENLY.) And why did you get married?

FRED: (STARTLED.) Why, because I was in love.

SCROOGE: (MOCKING.) Oh, you were in love! Bah! Good afternoon!

FRED: But, Uncle, you never came to see me before I was married, so why give it as a reason for not coming now?

SCROOGE: Bah! Good afternoon!

FRED: I want nothing from you. I ask nothing of you. Why can't we be friends?

SCROOGE: Good afternoon!

FRED: I'm sorry to find you so stubborn, Uncle, but I'll keep my good humor to the last. Merry Christmas, Uncle!

SCROOGE: Humbug to you and good afternoon! (HE PUSHES FRED TO THE DOOR.)

FRED: And a happy New Year!

SCROOGE: Good afternoon! (HE OPENS THE DOOR.)

FRED: Very well, Uncle. Good afternoon. Merry Christmas, Bob!