

## Chapter 4

### News for Scrooge

'C- Can you sit down?' Scrooge asked the ghost. Scrooge was a little frightened now.

'Yes, I can,' replied the ghost, and it sat down opposite Scrooge.

'You don't believe I'm here, do you?' said the ghost.

Scrooge shook his head. 'No, I don't,' he said.

The ghost shouted loudly and clanked its chains. Then it untied the white cloth and its mouth fell wide open.

Scrooge was very frightened now. He fell onto his knees on the floor in front of Marley's ghost.

'W- W- Why have you come to see me? Why is a dead man here on earth?' Scrooge asked.

'When they are alive, people must go out into the world and help other people,' replied the ghost. 'But some people do not do this. They do not talk to other people or care about them. So, when they die, these people become ghosts. They must travel around the world for ever when they are dead

'These dead people see terrible things while they are travelling, but they can do nothing to help anyone,' the ghost went on. 'People can only help each other while they are alive.

The ghost clanked its chains- again, making a terrible noise, Scrooge was still on his knees. His voice shook with fear when he spoke. 'Why are those chains around your body?' he asked.

'I made these chains for myself when I was alive,' said Marley's ghost. 'I was cruel and unkind. So the chains grew longer. I would not give people money. So the chains grew heavier. You, too, have a long and heavy chain.'

Scrooge looked around quickly. He was worried. Was there a chain around his own body? But he could see nothing. Scrooge looked up at the ghost.

'Be kind to me, Jacob,' Scrooge said. 'Give me some comfort.'

'I can give you no comfort. There is no comfort for me,' said the ghost. 'I have been travelling for seven years. I wasn't kind or helpful when I was alive. Now I can do nothing to help anyone. I must travel all the time and see terrible things.'

'But you were a good businessman,' said Scrooge. 'You earned a lot of money.'

The ghost gave a loud cry. 'Oh, no! I was wrong to care about money. Wrong! I wasn't kind to people. I didn't help people.'

Then it spoke again. 'Now, Christmas is the worst time of year for me. Why didn't I help people at Christmas when I was alive?'

Scrooge was very worried. He was like Jacob Marley. He didn't help people. He didn't believe in Christmas. Was he going to be like Marley's ghost when he died?

'I must go soon,' said the ghost suddenly. 'Listen to me. I want to tell you why I am here.'

'Yes, yes, I'll listen to you,' replied Scrooge, 'but be kind to me, Jacob.'

'I can visit you only once, Ebenezer,' said Marley's ghost. 'I am going to; try to help you. Perhaps you will learn to be good and kind. Then you will not travel around the world for ever when you are dead. You will not see terrible things.'

'Thank you, Jacob. You were always a good friend,' said Scrooge.

'Three ghosts will come to see you,' said Marley's ghost

'Oh ho!' said Scrooge in a worried voice. 'Please tell them not to come. I don't want to see them.'

'You cannot be helped if they do not come,' replied Marley's ghost. 'The first ghost will come at one o'clock tomorrow morning. The second ghost will come at one o'clock the next night. The third ghost will come at midnight the following night. You will not see me again.'

The ghost wrapped the white cloth round its face and chin. Then it picked up its chains and walked towards the window

The window opened slowly as Marley's ghost walked towards it. Scrooge followed the ghost and stopped by the window. Then the ghost walked out of the window and disappeared.

Scrooge looked out of the window. The sky was full of ghosts. Many of them were ghosts of people Scrooge had known. They were all carrying heavy chains and they were crying and shouting.

Scrooge closed the window. Suddenly he felt very tired. It was two o'clock in the morning. He closed the curtains around his bed and lay down. He tried to say 'Hurribug!' but he was too tired. He said 'Hum ...' then fell asleep.



*Scrooge looked out of the window. The sky was full of ghosts.*