**Click on the audio files to listen as you read chapter 2 of *A Christmas Carol.***

## Marley's Ghost

Scrooge walked home to the rooms where he lived. Years ago his partner Marley lived there. They were very old and dark and silent. The knocker on the door was large but it was like hundreds of other door knockers. Scrooge never looked at it. And he wasn't thinking about Marley when he put his key in the door. So how did he see Marley's face in the knocker? Yes, Marley's face! There was a strange light around it. It looked at Scrooge with its glasses up in its hair, like Marley when he was alive. The hair was moving slowly, the eyes were wide open, and the face was very white. Scrooge looked at it for a moment, and then it was a knocker again. He was surprised, but he went in and lit his candle. Then he looked at the knocker again.



'Pooh, pooh!' he said, and closed the door.

The sound echoed around the house, but Scrooge wasn't frightened of echoes and he went slowly up the dark stairs. He liked darkness; it was cheap. He looked around his room: nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa, nobody under the bed, nobody in the cupboards. He locked the door and put on his dressing-gown, slippers and nightcap. Then he sat in front of an old fireplace with a very small fire in it. For a moment he thought he saw Marley's face in the fire.

'Humbug!' he said.

Then he looked at the old bell above him on the wall. He was very surprised when this bell began to move. At first it moved slowly and quietly, but soon it made a very loud sound and all the bells in the house began to ring too. Suddenly they stopped. Scrooge heard a strange noise far away in the house - a noise of metal, like chains. It was coming up the stairs. Something was coming towards his door.

'It's humbug!' he said. 'I don't believe it.'

But the thing came into the room and stopped in front of him.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

He couldn't believe his eyes! The same face: Marley's face! Scrooge recognized his dead partner's clothes and boots, and he saw a long chain round his transparent body. The chain had heavy cash-boxes, keys, locks, and account books on it. Marley was looking at him with cold, dead eyes. There was a handkerchief round his head and chin.

'Well?' Scrooge said. 'What do you want with me?'

'Much!' It was certainly Marley's voice.

'Who are you?'

'Ask me who I was?'

'Who were you then?'

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

'Sit down - if you can.'

The Ghost sat in a chair on the other side of the fireplace.



'You don't believe in me, do you?' it said.

'No, I don't.'

'Why not?'

'Because perhaps I ate a piece of meat or cheese and my stomach didn't digest it, so you are only the consequence of a bad stomach.'

Scrooge said this because he didn't want to show his terror. But the Ghost's cold eyes frightened him very much.

'If I eat this candle,' Scrooge continued, 'I'll see hundreds of ghosts like you, but they'll only be in my head.'

Then the Spirit gave a terrible cry, and it shook its chain with a tremendous noise. Scrooge trembled. And then he fell out of his chair with horror when the Ghost took off the handkerchief and its chin dropped on its chest.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

'Help!' he cried with his hands on his face. 'Oh, why are you here, terrible Spirit?'

'Do you believe in me or not?'

'Yes, I do - I must!' Scrooge replied. 'But why do you come to me?'

'If a man's spirit stays away from other people while he is alive, it must walk through the world after he is dead, but it cannot share the happiness of living people.' And again the Ghost shook its chain with a sad cry.

'Why are you wearing that chain?' Scrooge asked, trembling.

'Because I made it when I was alive. I stayed away from other people. I didn't try to help them. I never loved anybody; I loved only money. So I made this chain for myself and now I must wear it. I lived like you, Scrooge! Seven years ago your chain was long and heavy. Now it is very long and very heavy!'

Again Scrooge trembled in terror. 'Tell me more, old Jacob Marley. Help me!'

'I cannot help you, Ebenezer Scrooge,' answered the Ghost. 'I cannot rest, I cannot stay here. When I was alive, my spirit never walked out of our office. It was locked in there while I made all my money. So now I must travel and never stop.'

'Have you travelled all this time - for seven years?'

'Yes. No rest. No peace. Always travelling.'

'Do you travel fast?'

'Very fast. Like the wind.'

'Well, in seven years you have been to a lot of places then.'

'Oh but I am a prisoner!' cried the phantom, and it shook the chain again, a terrible sound in the silence of the night. 'I was also a prisoner in my life because I didn't try to help others.'

'But you were a good man of business, Jacob.' Scrooge was thinking of himself too.

'Business! What was my business? My business was people, my business was charity, my business was love, my business was goodness! But I didn't do anything good. I lived with my eyes closed. I didn't see the poor and hungry people in the streets. But now I must go. Listen!'

LIVEWORKSHEETS

'I'm listening, Jacob,' Scrooge said.

'I am here tonight to tell you something. There is still hope for you, Ebenezer. You still have a chance.'

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

'You will see three Ghosts.'

Scrooge looked frightened. 'Are they the hope and the chance you spoke about, Jacob?'

'Yes.'

'Well - I don't want to see them...'

'You must! If you don't want to be like me, you must! The first Spirit will come at one o'clock tomorrow morning.'

'Can't they all come at one o'clock and finish it quickly, Jacob?'

'The second will come on the next night at the same time. The third will come on the night after that when the church bell strikes twelve midnight. You will not see me again. Remember my words!'

Then the Ghost put the handkerchief round its head and began to walk towards the window. It asked Scrooge to follow. But when the window opened, Scrooge stopped. He was very frightened because he could hear a great noise of crying outside. The air was full of ghosts. They were moving quickly here and there, and they all wore chains like Marley's Ghost. Their cries were very sad. There was one old ghost with a big metal box of money on a chain. It was unhappy because it couldn't help a poor woman and her baby out in the cold, foggy night without a home.

Marley's Ghost went out into the night. In a moment it was with the other ghosts, and all of them disappeared. Scrooge closed the window and went to the door. It was locked. Did Marley's Ghost really come through a locked door?

'Bah!' he said. And he began to say 'Humbug!' but stopped. He didn't want to say it now.

It was late and he was tired. So he went to bed and fell asleep immediately.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

**Answer the following questions.**

What did Scrooge see on the knocker of his door?

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Why did Scrooge like the darkness?

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What did Scrooge think he saw in the fire?

_____

What loud noise is suddenly heard?

_____

Who was the ghost that appeared?

_____

Why was the ghost chained?

_____

Why is he doomed to travel the world?

_____

For how long has Marley travelled the world?

_____

Why is Marley a prisoner in his own life?

_____

What has Marley come to warn Scrooge about?

_____

When will the first ghost appear?

_____

What does Scrooge see when he looks out the window?

_____

Why was the ghost with the metal box unhappy?

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LIVEWORKSHEETS