

Lady Solicitor: Merry Christmas! Mr. Marley, I presume.

Scrooge: *(Irritated, continues working)* Your presumptions are wrong, Madame!
(Solicitors look at each other, embarrassed) Marley has been dead these past seven years. I'm Ebenezer Scrooge. Who are you that you should barge into my shop like this?

Man Solicitor: Sorry to intrude, Mr. Scrooge, but our business is of the up most pressing.

Scrooge: And what might that be?

Lady Solicitor: At this festive season of the year, sir, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some light provision for the poor and destitute who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities. Hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

Scrooge: Are there no prisons?

Man Solicitor: Plenty of prisons.

Scrooge: And the union workhouses? Are they still in operation?

Man Solicitor: They are. I wish I could say they were not!

Scrooge: Oh good! I was afraid from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course. I'm very glad to hear it! Good day! *Lady solicitor pushes the Man Solicitor up the stairs...the man struggles with her...*

Man Solicitor: Knowing that "they" hardly furnish Christian joy or cheer to the multitude, a few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the poor some food and drink and means of warmth.

Cratchit: Very good...very good. *(clapping)*

Scrooge: Another word from you, Cratchit, and you will spend your Christmas with me.

Cratchit: Quite sorry, sir.

Man Solicitor: We chose this time because it is a time above all others, when wants abound and abundance, Mr. Scrooge, rejoices. What shall I put you down for?

Scrooge: Nothing!

Lady Solicitor: You wish to remain anonymous!

Scrooge: *(bold and proud)* No! I wish to be left alone! I don't make claims to being Christian or making merry at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. My taxes support the prisons and they cost enough! Those who are badly off must go there!

Lady Solicitor: *(Assertive)* Many can't go there and many would rather die.

Scrooge: Well then, they best be on with it and decrease the surplus population.

Lady Solicitor: But, surely you understand their plight?

Scrooge: It is enough for a man to understand his own business, let alone that of others. Mine occupies me constantly. Good day. *(Solicitors looking puzzled)* GOOD DAY!!!! *Solicitors leave hurriedly.*