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opening extract from

A Christmas Carol: The Graphic Novel (Original Text)

written by

Charles Dickens

published by

Classical Comics

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Stave One: Marley's Ghost

MARLEY WAS DEAD: TO BEGIN WITH. THERE IS NO DOUBT WHATEVER ABOUT THAT. THE REGISTER OF HIS BURIAL WAS SIGNED BY THE CLERGYMAN, THE CLERK, THE UNDERTAKER, AND THE CHIEF MOURNER.

OLD MARLEY WAS AS DEAD AS A DOOR-NAIL.

MIND! I DON'T MEAN TO SAY THAT I KNOW, OF MY OWN KNOWLEDGE, WHAT THERE IS PARTICULARLY DEAD ABOUT A DOOR-NAIL. BUT THE WISDOM OF OUR ANCESTORS IS IN THE SIMILE; AND MY UNHALLOWED HANDS SHALL NOT DISTURB IT, OR THE COUNTRY'S DONE FOR.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT MARLEY WAS DEAD.

THIS MUST BE DISTINCTLY UNDERSTOOD, OR NOTHING WONDERFUL CAN COME OF THE STORY I AM GOING TO RELATE.

SCROOGE AND ME WERE PARTNERS FOR I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY YEARS.

SCROOGE WAS HIS SOLE EXECUTOR, HIS SOLE ADMINISTRATOR, HIS SOLE ASSIGN, HIS SOLE RESIDUARY LEGATEE, HIS SOLE FRIEND, AND SOLE MOURNER. AND EVEN SCROOGE WAS NOT SO DREADFULLY CUT UP BY THE SAD EVENT, BUT THAT HE SOLEMNISED IT WITH AN UNDOUBTED BARGAIN.



SCROOGE NEVER PAINTED OUT OLD MARLEY'S NAME.

THERE IT STOOD, YEARS AFTERWARDS, ABOVE THE WAREHOUSE DOOR:



OH! BUT HE WAS A TIGHT-FISTED HAND AT THE GRINDSTONE, SCROOGE!

A SQUEEZING, WRENCHING, GRASPING, SCRAPING, CLUTCHING, COVETOUS, OLD SINNER!



THE COLD WITHIN HIM FROZE HIS OLD FEATURES, NIPPED HIS POINTED NOSE, SHRIVELLED HIS CHEEK, STIFFENED HIS GAIT; MADE HIS EYES RED, HIS THIN LIPS BLUE: AND SPOKE OUT SHREWDLY IN HIS GRATING VOICE.



EXTERNAL HEAT AND COLD HAD LITTLE INFLUENCE ON SCROOGE.

NO WARMTH COULD WARM, NOR WINTRY WEATHER CHILL HIM.

NOBODY EVER STOPPED HIM IN THE STREET TO SAY, WITH GLADSOME LOOKS, "MY DEAR SCROOGE, HOW ARE YOU? WHEN WILL YOU COME TO SEE ME?" NO BEGGARS IMPLORED HIM TO BESTOW A TRIFLE, NO CHILDREN ASKED HIM WHAT IT WAS O'CLOCK, NO MAN OR WOMAN EVER ONCE IN ALL HIS LIFE INQUIRED THE WAY TO SUCH AND SUCH A PLACE, OF SCROOGE.



EVEN THE BLINDMEN'S DOGS APPEARED TO KNOW HIM; AND WHEN THEY SAW HIM COMING ON, WOULD TUG THEIR OWNERS INTO DOOR-WAYS AND UP COURTS; AND THEN WOULD WAG THEIR TAILS AS THOUGH THEY SAID, "NO EYE AT ALL IS BETTER THAN AN EVIL EYE, DARK MASTER!"



BUT WHAT DID SCROOGE CARE! IT WAS THE VERY THING HE LIKED.

TO EDGE HIS WAY ALONG THE CROWDED PATHS OF LIFE, WARNING ALL HUMAN SYMPATHY TO KEEP ITS DISTANCE.




ONCE UPON A TIME - OF ALL THE GOOD DAYS IN THE YEAR, ON CHRISTMAS EVE - OLD SCROOGE SAT BUSY IN HIS COUNTING-HOUSE.
IT WAS A COLD, BLEAK, BITING WEATHER: AND HE COULD HEAR THE PEOPLE IN THE COURT OUTSIDE BEATING THEIR HANDS UPON THEIR BREASTS.
THE CITY CLOCKS HAD STRUCK THREE; BUT IT WAS QUITE DARK ALREADY.
SCROOGE & MARLEY


THE DOOR OF SCROOGE'S COUNTING-HOUSE WAS OPEN THAT HE MIGHT KEEP AN EYE ON HIS CLERK, WHO IN A DISMAL LITTLE CELL BEYOND, WAS COPYING LETTERS.
SCROOGE HAD A VERY SMALL FIRE, BUT THE CLERK'S FIRE WAS SO VERY MUCH SMALLER THAT IT LOOKED LIKE ONE COAL. BUT HE COULDN'T REPLENISH IT, FOR SCROOGE KEPT THE COAL-BOX IN HIS OWN ROOM.
WHEREFORE THE CLERK TRIED TO WARM HIMSELF AT THE CANDLE;
IN WHICH EFFORT, NOT BEING A MAN OF STRONG IMAGINATION, HE FAILED.


A MERRY CHRISTMAS, UNCLE!
GOD SAVE YOU!
BAH! HUMBUG!
CHRISTMAS A HUMBUG, UNCLE!
YOU DON'T MEAN THAT, I AM SURE?
I DO.
MERRY CHRISTMAS!
WHAT RIGHT HAVE YOU TO BE MERRY? WHAT REASON HAVE YOU TO BE MERRY? YOU'RE POOR ENOUGH.
COME, THEN. WHAT RIGHT HAVE YOU TO BE DISMAL?
WHAT REASON HAVE YOU TO BE MOROSE?
YOU'RE RICH ENOUGH.