

from A Christmas Carol dramatised by Kenelm Foss

**Jacob Marley:**

In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley. You don't believe me? Why do you doubt the evidence of your eyes? On your own head be it, oh Man of little faith! Man of the worldly mind, do you believe in me or not? I am a spirit and I walk the world. I come to you because it is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow men, and if that spirit goeth not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death - Oh, woe is me! - and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared, on earth, and turned to happiness.

I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link and yard by yard - of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel. Would you know the weight and length of the strong coil you wear *yourself*? It was fully as heavy and long as this one seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it since then. It is a ponderous chain.

I have no comfort to give. It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. A very little more is all that is permitted to me. I cannot rest, nor linger anywhere. In life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our counting-house - our money-changing hole - and weary journeys lie before me. No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse! O earthbound captive that thou art! Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere will find its life too short for its vast means of usefulness, that no sense of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused! Yet such was I!

Hear me! My time is nearly gone! I am here tonight to warn you, that you have yet a chance of escaping my fate. You will be haunted by the Spirit of Christmas. Without this Spirit's ghostly visits you cannot hope to escape the path I tread. Expect the apparition first tomorrow, when yon clock strikes One.

There is no other way ...

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