

# Ebenezer Scrooge

**T**here was no doubt about it: Jacob Marley had passed on to a better place. The documents had been **signed** by the doctor, his assistant, the funeral director, and by Ebenezer Scrooge.

When Scrooge signed something, that made it **official**. Scrooge had been Marley's business partner, the executor of his will, and the mouse's only heir.



Now, you might be thinking Scrooge was feeling **sad** about the loss of his business partner. But Marley had been quite old, and he had been sick. So, while Scrooge certainly wasn't happy to be attending a funeral, he had more important things on his mind, such as his business.

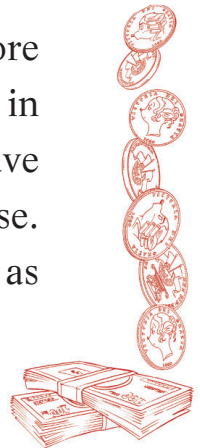
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You might be surprised by this **coldness**, but for Ebenezer Scrooge, business came before everything and everymouse.

The first business decision Scrooge made after Marley's death related to the sign outside his office. It read, **Scrooge & Marley**, and Scrooge decided it would stay that way.

But it wasn't out of respect for the memory of his lost **FRIEND**. No, it was because the business was known by that name. Scrooge might lose money if he changed the company's name and his clients didn't recognize the business.

The one thing Scrooge **LOVED** more than anything else was **money**. No one in London knew more about scrimping to save a penny than that old cheapskate mouse. His heart was as hard as steel, and he was as



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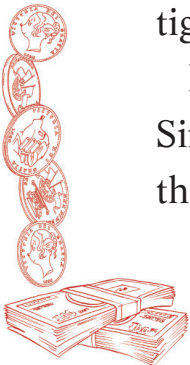
miserly, crabby, and closed-up as an oyster trying to keep its precious pearl to itself.

The chill inside Scrooge **froze** his snout into a scowl, made his lips pucker into a pout, and sharpened his already-pointy nose. His head and eyebrows were covered in hairs as white as a layer of **frost**, and his whiskers and beard were as prickly as a row of icicles.



Scrooge managed to spread a chill everywhere he went, even in a room **warmed** by a crackling fire. Everyone who approached him felt it and took a step back, **shivering** and pulling their sweaters tightly around them.

Inside Scrooge's office, it was the **WORST**. Since Scrooge spent every hour of every day there (even holidays), it was practically a





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**FREEZER!** That's because Scrooge was too cheap to spend any of his money on heating coals to **warm** the room.

Out on the street, it was the same — no one stopped Scrooge to say **HELLO**, not even so much as to wave his way. Beggars never asked him for a single cent. They seemed to know he would never, ever part with a single dime! Even dogs tugged at their leashes and **dragged** their owners away when they saw Scrooge coming.

But did Ebenezer Scrooge care? No, not at all! He was perfectly content to be left alone in his office, where he spent hours **COUNTING** and **DOUBLE-COUNTING** his gold. In fact, he preferred it this way.

Seven years passed after the death of Scrooge's business partner, Jacob Marley. They were seven lonely years, but Scrooge



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didn't mind as long as his piles of gold continued to **grow**.

Life for Scrooge was very simple, until one cold December, when something very **UNEXPECTED** happened . . .

