

Stave One: Marley

Marley symbolises **worldly greed and spiritual poverty**.



The repetition of same highlights how Marley's face has not changed. He appears the same to Scrooge. As such, Dickens is highlighting how Scrooge and Marley were once very similar since they both only cared about money and not helping the poor.

The description of Marley

The same face: the very same. Marley in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights and boots; the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pigtail, and his coat-skirts, and the hair upon his head. **The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses** wrought in steel. His body was transparent, so that Scrooge, observing him, and looking through his waistcoat, could see the two buttons on his coat behind.

Marley must drag a long and heavy chain. This is meant to highlight how he is being punished for his lack of compassion and care for the poor when he was alive. He goes on to describe his situation as "incessant torture".

Attached to Marley's chain are these items. These items are associated with Marley's work and so they symbolise how Marley was obsessed with money – just like Scrooge.

Timeline of the stave

1. Scrooge is at his counting house. He dismisses his nephew when he comes to wish him a merry Christmas and refuses to give money to two people collecting for the poor.

3. Scrooge is feeling anxious and worried. As he prepares for bed he is visited by the ghost of Marley. Marley explains that he wears a chain due to his selfishness when he was alive.

2. Scrooge returns home. He sees the face of his dead friend and business partner, Jacob Marley, in the knocker on the front door of where he lives.

4. Marley tells Scrooge to change his ways or he will suffer the same fate as him. Marley tells Scrooge that he will be visited by three ghosts before he leaves him.

Relationship with Scrooge

How does the spirit act towards Scrooge?

Marley reminds Scrooge of their friendship and how alike they were.

What changes do we see in Scrooge?

When Scrooge first sees Marley's face in the knocker he is scared; Scrooge is very sceptical meaning that he is not usually scared of anything. Scrooge starts to believe in spirits and begins to realise that his actions have consequences.

Key quotations from Stave One

Quotation	Explanation
“To say that he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from infancy, would be untrue.”	When Scrooge sees Marley’s face in the door knocker he feels scared. Dickens comments that fear is a feeling Scrooge has not experienced since he was a child. This highlights how Scrooge’s character is beginning to change. Also, Dickens is foreshadowing the visit of the ghosts.
“Quite satisfied, he closed his door, and locked himself in; double-locked himself in, which was not his custom.”	When Scrooge enters his room he locks the door twice, which he never usually does. This again is meant to highlight the fear that Scrooge feels. Dickens is creating tension.
“There’s more of gravy than grave about you, whatever you are!”	Here Scrooge is joking by suggesting that the ghost is more like gravy than something from beyond the grave. Scrooge is someone who never usually makes jokes. The reason he makes a joke is because he is scared and is he is trying to convince himself that Marley’s ghost is not real.
“It is doomed to wander through the world – oh, woe is me! – and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness.”	Marley comments that his spirit is “doomed to wander” the afterlife as punishment for his selfish behaviour when he was alive. He now regrets not helping the poor and not being able to make their lives happier. Arguably, Marley is tormented by the fact that, as a spirit, he wanders the earth unable to help those that he says suffering.
“I wear the chains I forged in life”	Marley’s greed is represented by the chains he wears. His worldly greed costs him spiritually.
“my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole”	Marley never knew life beyond the counting house and this traps him in the afterlife. Marley wants Scrooge to consider his spiritual life.
“part of my penance”	A penance is paying the price for a sin. Marley’s sins were based around greed so now he must wear chains and suffer.
“Why did I walk through the crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down”.	Again, Marley comments how he regrets his selfish ways. He wishes he had looked up and taken notice of the poor people that were all around him. He also wishes he had been more compassionate and caring.
“He tried to say, ‘Humbug!’ but stopped at the first syllable.”	Scrooge usually says “Humbug!” when he thinks something is ridiculous and nonsense. After Marley leaves, Scrooge was about to say “Humbug!” but then he stops. This again highlights how Scrooge is beginning to change – he now believes in spirits and what Marley has told him about the afterlife.