

~~DICK All right, then it's humbug, whatever that may mean. But just get one thing straight, Ebenezer - I'm through after this. Do you understand. I've tried and I've tried and I've tried - God alone knows how I've tried - well I'm not trying any more. It's up to you now. Understand?~~

~~SCROOGE Please yourself.~~

~~DICK I said d'you understand.~~

~~SCROOGE Oh, do as you like, only leave me alone.~~

Start

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DICK *(Controlling himself for a long pause.)* All right. I will leave you alone. *(To his GIRL.)* Come on.

*As they reach the door, he turns to BELLE.*

Belle?

**BELLE** I'll come in a moment.

DICK We'll wait for you. *(Pause.)* I'm sorry, Belle.

*He waits only long enough for BELLE to smile her reassurance and then goes, followed by HIS GIRL. There is silence between SCROOGE and BELLE. BELLE breaks it.*

**BELLE** Ebenezer, dear...don't you think...don't you feel that...that...

SCROOGE That he's right? Is that what you're going to say? That Dick's right? *(BELLE tries to interrupt but SCROOGE takes no notice.)* If you think he's right Belle, then you must do what you think's best. I won't interfere. Only don't expect me to give up everything I've worked for just for the sake of some damn-fool skating party that you know as well as I do will be as boring as the last one, and doesn't do anything for any of us.

**BELLE** I wasn't going to say that.

SCROOGE If that's the kind of life you want then you're welcome to it, only you'd better find someone else to give it to you, 'cos I wont.

**BELLE** You don't really care about us at all, do you?

SCROOGE Oh, don't be petty?

**BELLE** You don't, do you? Oh, you did once, I know. Four years ago when we became engaged, but its gradually dwindled away until now it hardly exists at all.

**SCROOGE** For heavens sake Belle, don't start all that...

**BELLE** The only thing you really care about now is money. Money, money, money.

**SCROOGE** Business is a man's life. There's no place for women.

**BELLE** Exactly, and there's no place for women in such a life. Very well, Ebenezer. You have your world of business and I hope you enjoy it. And I hope your money will bring you all the comfort you need right through your old age.

**SCROOGE** Can't you begin to understand that...

**BELLE** Yes, I understand completely. I understand that I'm in your way and that the only thing that will ever matter to you is making money. Well, there - take it. I'll never stand in the way of your ambition.

Stop

*And she throws her ring - the engagement ring he gave her - on the ground and leaves him. He looks at it. Turns it over with his foot, then moves angrily away from it.*

**SCROOGE** Humbug. Parties and Christmas and the whole wretched lot of it. Nothing but humbug.

*And as the YOUNG SCROOGE goes on muttering humbug, light fades from the scene and back to the SPIRIT and SCROOGE.*

**SPIRIT** That was the turning point, wasn't it? Nothing but humbug.

**SCROOGE** Please, Spirit, take me away from here.

**SPIRIT** No. You shall see again each Christmas that followed. The whole miserable growth of that terrible world of humbug.

*And there follows a fast-moving almost nightmare sequence of Christmas upon Christmas of the world of SCROOGE and business. The world in which everything that was not strictly business was nothing but humbug.*

*The sequence is fast moving. With many people coming and going. All in a rather brittle and stylised manner. A real nightmare.*