

The Ghost of Christmas Present has taken Scrooge to see his nephew Fred and Fred's wife hosting a Christmas dinner party.

Your job is to create an 'internal dialogue' with the text. Write comments in the margins. Underline words you don't know and look them up. Make connections, predictions, ask questions about parts you don't understand, and tell your reactions to the events you read. You should read this at least **twice**. You should make at least 8 marks on this packet. This will be graded.

There is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor. When Scrooge's nephew laughed in this way, holding his sides, rolling his head, and twisting his face into the most extravagant contortions, Scrooge's niece, by marriage, laughed as heartily as he. And their assembled friends, being not a bit behindhand, roared out lustily.

"Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"He said that Christmas was a humbug, as I live!" cried Scrooge's nephew. "He believed it, too!"

"More shame for him, Fred!" said Scrooge's niece indignantly...

"He's a comical old fellow," said Scrooge's nephew, "that's the truth; and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offenses carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him."

"I'm sure he is very rich, Fred," hinted Scrooge's niece. "At least you always tell *me* so."

"What of that, my dear?" said Scrooge's nephew. "His wealth is no use to him. He doesn't do any good with it. He doesn't make himself comfortable with it. He hasn't the satisfaction—ha, ha ha!—that he is ever going to benefit us with it."

"I have no patience with him," observed Scrooge's niece. Scrooge's niece's sisters, and all the other ladies, expressed the same opinion.

“Oh I have!” said Scrooge’s nephew. “I am sorry for him: I couldn’t be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always. Here he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won’t come and dine with us. What’s the consequence? He doesn’t lose much of a dinner.”

“Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner,” interrupted Scrooge’s niece. Everybody else said the same...

“I was only going to say,” said Scrooge’s nephew, “that the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his moldy old office or his dusty chambers. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can’t help thinking better of it—I defy him—if he finds me going there, in good temper, year after year, and saying, ‘Uncle Scrooge, how are you?’ If it puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds, *that’s* something, and I think I shook him yesterday.”

...After tea they had some music. For they were a musical family, and knew what they were about, when they sung a glee or a catch, I can assure you...Scrooge’s niece played well on the harp and played among other tunes, a simple little air (a mere nothing: you might learn to whistle it in two minutes) which had been familiar to the child who fetched Scrooge from the boarding-school, as he had been reminded by the Ghost of Christmas Past. When this strain of music sounded, all the things that Ghost had shown him came upon his mind; he softened more and more and thought that if he could have listened to it often, years ago, he might have cultivated the kindness of life for his own happiness with his own hands, without resorting to the sexton’s spade that buried Jacob Marley.

But they didn’t devote the whole evening to music. After a while they played at forfeits, for it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas when its mighty Founder was a child himself. Stop! There was first a game at blindman’s buff...Scrooge’s niece was not one of the blindman’s buff party, but was made comfortable with a large chair and a footstool, in a snug corner where the Ghost and Scrooge were close behind her. But she joined in the forfeits, and loved her love to admiration with all the letters of the alphabet. Likewise at the game of How, When, and Where, she was very great, and, to the secret joy of Scrooge’s nephew, beat her sisters hollow, though they were sharp girls, too...

There might have been twenty people there, young and old, but they all played, and so did Scrooge for, wholly forgetting, in the interest he had in what was going on, that his voice made no sound in their ears, he sometimes came out with his guess quite loud, and very often guessed right, too...

The Ghost was greatly pleased to find him in this mood, and looked upon him with such favor, that he begged like a boy to be allowed to stay until the guests departed. But this the Spirit said could not be done.

“Here is a new game,” said Scrooge. “One half-hour, Spirit, only one!”

It was a game called Yes and No, where Scrooge’s nephew had to think of something, and the rest must find out what, he only answering to their questions yes or no, as the case was. The brisk firing of questioning to which he was exposed, elicited from him that he was thinking of an animal, a savage animal, an animal that growled and grunted sometimes, and talked sometimes, and lived in London, and walked about the streets, and wasn’t made a shoe of, and wasn’t led by anybody, and didn’t live in a menagerie, and was never killed in a market, and was not a horse, or an ass, or a cow, or a bull, or a tiger, or a dog, or a pig, or a cat, or a bear. At every fresh question that was put to him, the nephew burst into a fresh roar of laughter and was so inexpressibly tickled, that he was obliged to get up off the sofa and stamp. At last the plump sister, falling into a similar state, cried out:

“I have found it out! I know what it is, Fred! I know what it is!”

“What is it?” cried Fred.

“It’s your uncle Scro-o-o-oge!”

Which it certainly was. Admiration was the universal sentiment, though some objected that the reply to “Is it a bear?” out to have been “Yes,” inasmuch as an answer in the negative was sufficient to have diverted their thoughts from Mr. Scrooge, supposing they had ever had any tendency that way.

“He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure,” said Fred, “and it would be ungrateful not to drink to his health. Here is a glass of mulled wine ready to our hand at the moment and I say, ‘Uncle Scrooge!’”

“Well! Uncle Scrooge!” they cried.

“A merry Christmas and a happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is!” said Scrooge’s nephew. “He wouldn’t take it from me, but may he have it, nevertheless. Uncle Scrooge!”

Uncle Scrooge had imperceptibly become so [happy] and light of heart, that he would have pledged the unconscious company in return, and thank them in an inaudible speech, if the Ghost had given him time. But the whole scene passed off in the breath of the last word spoken by his nephew, and he and the Spirit were again upon their travels.