

Jacob Marley was Scrooge's **business partner for many years** and probably his one and only friend or companion, although it is doubtful they had any real feelings for each other. The two were indistinguishable, both good men of business, both are/were selfish greedy misers. Because they were so alike Scrooge can see what his fate will be if he doesn't change,

Marley's advice to Scrooge is important. He says, "I wear the chains I forged in life," and makes it clear Scrooge is forging similar chains. "Mankind was my business," not money and greed that was the motivating forces in his and Scrooge's lives. "Incessant torture of remorse," is what he finds in death and offers Scrooge the chance of redemption if he learns from the 3 ghosts of Christmas to follow.

Marley has a **bandage around his jaw** and the top of his head. Scrooge knows that Marley is dead, although he initially tries to blame it on something he has eaten, and the bandage confirms this to him. In death the muscles of the jaw loosen and the mouth gapes open to look unsightly. It was the practice in the mid 19th century to hold the jaw of the dead closed with a bandage. Marley has to remove the bandage to talk to Scrooge.

Marley has a **weighty chain wound around him** and trailing behind him evoking thoughts of a devil's tail. It is composed of cash boxes and ledgers and was forged by Marley during his selfish money grabbing life. He is doomed to travel the earth weighed down by the sins of his life. He died 7 years ago and tells Scrooge that his sins had produced a chain every bit as long as his back then and he had continued forging it over those 7 years.

THE GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY



Scrooge could see through Marley's lower body to the back of his waistcoat. **Marley had no bowels.** This is a biblical reference to the bowels being the source of compassion, what today we would locate in the heart, someone without compassion would today be called heartless. This shows that in life Marley had no thought for his fellow man but was only concerned with business and the making of money even if other people suffered.

Marley is doomed to spend eternity in the realm of **purgatory**, a limbo state between heaven and hell. A place of suffering inhabited by the souls of sinners. This continues the religious theme of the novella. It offers the possibility of redemption and it may be that Marley's attempt to change the course of Scrooge's life is a way Marley can find this redemption. Marley's purgatory consists of seeing the poor and needy that he could have helped in life but being unable to help them now.

When Marley leaves Scrooge follows him to the window and sees many other spectres who like Marley are forced to roam the earth weighted down by the sins of their former lives. Scrooge even sees people he knew in life and begins to realise that this may be his fate. **All the phantoms are chained to whatever they cherished in life and they wail in torment** at being unable to help the poor and needy they see around them.

Marley has an important role in the novella, setting the scene for the arrival of the 3 ghosts of Christmas and thus outlining the plot of the story. He also shows Scrooge what will happen to him if he carries on with his selfish money grabbing ways with no concern for his fellow man. This scares Scrooge and acts as a warning. He also makes it clear that there is still a chance for Scrooge if he changes his ways.

