

**CLARA:** (*stops playing piano*) Dear husband, do you find my playing so amusing?

**FRED:** (*laughing*) Oh, I'm sorry, my love. I was thinking of his face yesterday. Humbug, he said. Humbug. He said that Christmas was a humbug! He believed it, too.

**CLARA:** (*indignant*) More shame for him, Fred.

**SCROOGE:** They talk of me...

**TOPPER:** I would very much like to meet your uncle, Fred. The droll way in which you portray him tickles my heart!

**FRED:** Well, that is very true. He's a comical fellow.

**CLARA:** Not so pleasant as he might be.

**FRED:** Yes, but... his offenses carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him.

**LILY:** I'm sure he is very rich, Fred. At least you always tell me so.

**FRED:** Yes, but what of that, my dear? His wealth is of no use to him, for he does no good with it. (*laughing*) He doesn't even make himself comfortable with it!

**CLARA:** Laugh as you will, but I have no patience with him.

**FRED:** Well, I have, and I feel 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 in his heart to dislike us, and not come dine with us.

What's the consequence? He loses a dinner.

**LILY:** Indeed. And a very good one at that!

**FRED:** *(with a smile)* The reason I talk about my uncle so is that mother... God rest her saintly soul... was very fond of him. She loved him.

**SCROOGE:** *(sadly)* It's true. Fan loved me and I her. Dear Fan... If only she were alive today.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT:** Fred looks very much like her.

**SCROOGE:** Yes, I... I've been reminded of that just recently.

**FRED:** *(continuing)* I was only going to say that the consequence of his not making merry with us is that perhaps he loses some pleasant moments which can do him no harm. I give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not.

**CLARA:** And every year he'll say, "Christmas... BAH!... *(all guests join in...)*

**ALL GUESTS:** HUMBUG! *(laughter)*

**CLARA:** Now, Fred, I think we have heard quite enough of the poor old devil. How about a lighter mood? A parlor game, perhaps!

*Ad libs of agreement, followed by suggestions of games, a la Blind Man's Bluff, etc.*

**FRED:** Ah! Let's play Similes!

*Ad lib excited agreement.*

**FRED:** Does everyone know the rules to Similes? Alright, everyone, you shall each have five seconds to answer. I'll ask the questions. Mr. Topper, you will keep count?

**TOPPER:** *(sheepishly)* I shall do my best!

**FRED:** *(laughs)* Ah! Well, again, you shall each have five seconds to answer. If you do not give an acceptable answer within that time, you must then stand behind your chair! Here we go! *(thinking of a simile)* Um.... Proud as...

*A beat.*

**LILY:** Proud as a peacock!

*Cheers.*

**FRED:** Dry as...

**TOPPER:** A bone!

*Cheers.*

**FRED:** Plump as...

**MALE GUEST:** My wife! Oh, sorry dear... Um. Let's see.  
A partridge!

**FRED:** Clara... Tight as...

**CLARA:** Oh. *(thinking)* Tight as... *(confused)*

**SCROOGE:** A drum! Anyone knows that!

**FRED:** *(again)* Tight as...

**CLARA:** *(has an answer, but not the right one)* Tight as your uncle Scrooge's purse strings!

*Laughter from the entire room.*

**FRED:** Oh, my dear! Tight as a drum! That was the answer! Oh, no matter... He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure, and it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. Merry Christmas and a Happy New year to him, wherever he is. He wouldn't take it from me, but he may have it, nevertheless. To Uncle Scrooge!