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**SELECTED READING: page 622**

**FOIL:** A character in a story who serves as a contrast to another character. A writer uses a foil to accentuate-to emphasize or call attention to-and clarify the distinct qualities of two characters.

Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had every struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shriveled his cheek, stiffened his gail; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days, and didn’t thaw it one degree..

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose,…

“A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!” cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge’s nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

“Bah! said Scrooge. “Humbug!”

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge’s, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome, his eyes sparked, and his breath smoked again.

“Christmas a humbug, uncle!” said Scrooge’s nephew. “you don’t mean that, I am sure?”

“I do,” said Scrooge. “Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You’re poor enough.”

“Come, them,” returned the nephew gaily. “What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You’re rich enough.”

Scrooge, having no better answer ready on the spur of the moment said, “Bah!” again and followed it up with “Humbug!”

“Don’t be cross uncle!” said the nephew.

“What else can I be,” returned the uncle, “Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas! What’s Christmastime to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, and not a hour richer; a time for balancing your books, and having every item in ‘em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will, said Scrooge indignantly “every idiot who goes about with ‘Merry Christmas’ on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!”

“Uncle!” pleaded the nephew.

“Nephew!” returned the uncle sternly, “keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.”

“Keep it!” repeated Scrooge’s nephew “But you don’t keep it.”

“Let me leave it alone, then” said Scrooge.

“Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!”

“There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited I dare say,” returned the nephew; “Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmastime, when it has come round—apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that –as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of , in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pockets. I believe that it has done me good and will do me good…”

“Christmas a humbug, uncle!” Scrooge’s nephew. “

“Don’t be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us tomorrow.”

Scrooge said that he would see him--. Yes, indeed he did. He went the whole length of the expression, and said that he would see him in that extremity first.

“But why?” cried Scrooge’s nephew. “Why?”

“Why did you get married?” said Scrooge.

“Because I fell in love”

“Because you fell in love!” growled Scrooge, as if that were the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas. “Good afternoon!”

“Nay, uncle, but you never came to see me before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?”

“Good afternoon,” said Scrooge.

“I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends?”

“Good afternoon!” said Scrooge.

“I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel to which I have been a party. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I’ll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So a merry Christmas, uncle!”

1. Number the direct contrasts between Fred and Scrooge.

**Scrooge**  **Fred**

Example: 1. “The cold within him froze his old features,…” 1a. “He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost…”

2. Explain in about twenty words or less what you think the theme of the “Christmas Carol” is. Circle three sentences or phrases from the selected reading to support your answer. If you have analyzed the patterns, then you should be able to recognize the theme.