The main idea

Marley shows what recognition looks like when it arrives too late. His warning gives Scrooge the opportunity he no longer has.

Character development

Accumulates wealth

Dies in isolation

Recognises failure

Warns his partner

A self-made burden

“I wear the chain I forged in life” — Marley, Stave 1

“Mankind was my business” — Marley, Stave 1

The chain makes repeated choices physically visible. The redefinition of business challenges the belief that commercial success fulfils human duty.

Shared past, different possibilities

“a good man of business” — Scrooge about Marley, Stave 1

“a chance and hope of escaping my fate” — Marley to Scrooge, Stave 1

Scrooge’s compliment exposes the narrow values they shared. Marley’s later offer turns their resemblance into a warning: the same past need not produce the same future.

Develop the interpretation

His regret is sincere but cannot undo his life. His role is to make Scrooge’s remaining time morally urgent.

Recall question

How does the chain connect personal choice to lasting consequences?