

FRED SIDE

EBENEZER

Why on earth did you get married?

FRED

Why does anyone get married?

EBENEZER

Don't ask me?! Marriage is only slightly less absurd than Merry Christmas!

FRED

I love Grace. She brings light into my life and I wanted to spend that life with her.

EBENEZER

Spend! Yes! I see you're spending quite a lot of time and money and for what?

FRED

Love.

EBENEZER

Rubbish.

FRED

I am doing my best to keep my head and fulfill a promise I made to my mother, but I tell you sir; you dishonor her memory.

EBENEZER

And what would you know about that?

FRED

Only what she taught me. That our walk upon this earth is not infinite. We are but fellow passengers to the grave. And on Christmas day we should lift our hearts to one another.

EBENEZER

All I will be "lifting" is my pen from the well to the ledger page and back again. Now if you will excuse me.

FRED

As one last grasp. Will you dine with us tomorrow?

EBENEZER

I'm busy.

FRED

You're certainly not. At least consider it. Please?

EBENEZER

The only thing I can think of that's worse than spending an evening with a bunch of singing, drunken, partygoers is... No, I can't actually think of anything worse.

FRED

I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute.

EBENEZER

Then stop asking!

FRED

Never. Mother warned me many times, you know. He will buck like an unbroken horse, but stay at it, Fred. His wounds are old and deep but under all that -

EBENEZER

Enough! As if I need any reminder of who my sister was or her senseless denial of the darkness of humanity -

FRED

Senseless? I wonder, were she here
today would you dare say such a thing?
Uncle, you are a particular challenge.

EBENEZER

Nephew, you are an incorrigible pest!

FRED

Nevertheless, a promise is a promise
and I will keep mine AND my Christmas
humor to the very last. So... A Merry
Christmas, uncle!