

Marley was Dead: A Flash Fiction Anthology from MWA-NY





Caroline Todd

“Marley’s dead,” the Inspector said. “We found your fingerprint on the knife.”

Damn. I’d cleaned it well.

“And—you were the only one in the Counting House on Christmas Eve.”

“Bob Cratchit was there when I left.”

“He has no motive—but *you* stand to inherit the firm.”

“But Marley made us rich. He was loved, generous. Ask anyone—my nephew—the gentlemen who requested charitable contributions.” I hated his spendthrift ways!

The Inspector regarded me. “True. You’re famously hardhearted. Thank you, Mr. Scrooge, you can go.”

I left. Short of haunting me, I was finished with Marley for good.

Jeff Markowitz

Marley was dead. How he’ll be remembered depends on who gets to tell his story. According to the authorities, he was an enemy of the state. I tell you now, Marley was a hero. Does that make me an enemy of the state? Perhaps. There have been no pronouncements, but things can turn on a tweet. I have gone off the grid. I will deliver Marley’s story in pieces, much as his body, drawn and quartered, was delivered in pieces to the capital. What you may ask was Marley’s offense?

Don’t you know? He certified the vote.



Steve Liskow

L.A. Coincidental

Marley was dead.

The word flashed across LA faster than Nancy Drew blackmail pix, and every PI worth his single malt converged on the scene to sift through the clues: Christmas presents; tangled chains and locked strongboxes; bed curtains and coal futures.

“Is that really a crutch?” one gimlet-eyed veteran wondered aloud.

“Does the kid really limp?” asked another.

“Loan sharks, right?” said a third. “Protection? He couldn’t pay the vig?”

“I told you,” Scrooge wailed, “his name is Jacob *Marley*.”

“Oh.” Fay Dorah sucked his Lucky Strike. “Marley?”

“Yes,” Scrooge said. “Not Marlowe.”

The trenchcoat brigade huddled together.

“Never mind.”

Don Blinbry

Marley was dead. I know, I know—Dickens, but we’re not talking about Jacob.

We’re talking about my brother, Marley McCormack. The one I dragged out of the gutter and gave a job to when his world went to hell. The sibling who got *beaucoup* shares of the company when McCormack Holdings went public. The sniveling ingrate with the secret off-shore accounts and sticky fingers.

Yeah, that Marley—a-bullet-in-the-head dead.

Me, I just wanted to grow the business. Make a decent living. Give everybody a bonus. Is that so bad? Now, all I want for Christmas is an acquittal.



Mark Murphy

Marley was dead. Shot.

Briscoe and Logan brought his partner in, guy named Scrooge.

A tough nut to crack? A regular macadamia.

Scrooge: Alibi? Humbug! I was home alone that night.

Logan: Alone with a kisser like yours? That's hard to believe!

Briscoe: What did you have for dinner?

Scrooge: Gruel.

Briscoe: What's that? Wait — I don't want to know.

Logan: Here comes the lieutenant!

Van Buren: We've got the perp.

Briscoe: Great!

Van Buren: Don't celebrate — he's in the morgue. Find out who put him there.

Logan: Vic have a name?

Van Buren: Some dooper — name of Eddie Drood.

Richie Narvaez

Ups and Downs

Marley was dead, and it fell to me, his longtime BFF, to attend to his post-life checklist.

1. Clear his browser history—sadly, no surprises there. *Check.*
2. Donate his millions to charity, so his next-of-kin would get *nada. Check.*
3. Destroy boxes in storage. *Che*—but there was one box, small, with my name on it. A note inside read: “You thought you'd lost your cherry red Duncan Imperial Yo-Yo when you were 11. You didn't. I've had it the whole time!” Underneath, the yo-yo gleamed. *Marley, you bastard. I was even more glad then that I'd killed you.*



Chelle Martin

Marley was dead. And I had been the unlucky one to discover his body. As I gazed at him now, floating there, his eyes appeared empty and unfocused.

I stole a glance at Cratchit, but he appeared unfazed. Had he had a hand in this? I'd never know since Marley had no marks on his body.

Cratchit followed at my heels as I assured him Marley would approve of a burial at sea...of sorts. I said a few words of remembrance, telling him how much he'd be missed. Cratchit meowed and, with a flush, Marley my goldfish was gone.

Jacqueline Freimor

Marley was dead—*dead*. Last week, I said, “Honey, I love you, but throw your wet towels on the carpet again, I’m gonna kill you.”

Deaf ears, right? I come home today, bunch of beach towels piled on the living room shag, beer cans floating in the pool, a lounge chair tipped over. Must’ve been some party.

“Marley!” I yell, “get your unemployed ass out here. Why are you spending my money on your degenerate friends?” No answer. I kick at the pile, hit something solid, peel the towel back.

Damn. Marley was dead. Someone beat me to it.



Bruce Conord

Marley was dead. Murdered in his bed.

Good luck with a botched robbery scenario, he had more enemies than hair on his head.

His demise was no great loss as far as I was concerned, but it puts me in a tough spot. I've been screwing his wife for the last six months.

And because we had Survivorship Life Insurance on the PI business we set up together, that he bled dry, I was due a lot of money. Two motives and no alibi.

It'll be hard to find his killer stuck in jail. I need your help — and fast.

Penelope Karageorge

Marley Was Dead

My partner Marley, the apotheosis of the buck chaser, earned my admiration if not my affection. Until horrors! I espied him patting a scurvy urchin on the head, grinning at a bosomy wench, and slipping a pence to a beggar. Sentiment! Humbug! Using a heavy ledger, I bopped him on the bean. As he succumbed, he shouted: "I will be back to haunt you, Scrooge." Come Christmastide, he kept his vow. All hideous and pale, he rattled his chains, wept and begged me to reform and love mankind. But I saved you, Marley, said I. He just did not understand.



Richard Koreto

Each year the Emerald Players puts on "A Christmas Carol" and the same actress always plays Belle. I have never checked her real name--it was enough to watch those coltish legs try to walk in the heavy Victorian costume, stare at the freckles she failed to hide under the pancake makeup, listen to her sweetly incompetent English accent. Her imperfections only made her more achingly perfect. I have now seen 21 performances, but I will never speak with her, never meet her. A few stingy minutes, but enough to keep my heart warm for another year.

Charles Dickens

Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it: and Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for. You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

