

C. PRESENT Come in; come in, and know me better, man.

SCROOGE goes timidly a little closer to him, awed and filled with wonder by all he sees. But despite THE GHOST'S warmth and friendliness and geniality, he is unable to look at him, partly because of all that surrounds him.

C. PRESENT I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me. Look upon me. You have never seen the like of me before.

SCROOGE I have never seen so wondrous a spread of Christmas cheer. So many turkeys and geese; so much game and poultry and brawn; such great joints of meat, and suckling pigs, and such wreaths of sausages.

C. PRESENT Ahh, but look here to this side, look at these.

SCROOGE So many Christmas puddings - and such large ones. And mincepies, and red-hot chestnuts, beautiful red apples, and juicy oranges and luscious pears, and - fruit of every kind.

C. PRESENT And still that is not all. Look - look over there.

SCROOGE Cakes, the most wonderful Christmas cakes - and sweets - and nuts and raisins - and yet more sweets - and more sweets -

C. PRESENT And over here...

SCROOGE Seething bowls of punch - and ginger wine - and; oh, no Spirit, I have never seen the like of any of this before.

C. PRESENT Have you not met any of my brothers?

SCROOGE Your brothers?

C. PRESENT I am the Spirit of this Christmas. Last year was the turn of one of my brothers - the year before that of another - the year before that another - and so on, back through time.

SCROOGE Then you have had many brothers?

C. PRESENT More than eighteen hundred.

SCROOGE A tremendous family to provide for.

Suddenly for a moment, the joy seems to leave THE SPIRIT, and he towers almost menacingly over SCROOGE, searching for the meaning and the attitude behind these words...SCROOGE continues hurriedly...

SCROOGE Spirit, take me where you will. Last night I was compelled to look on the shadows of the Past. Tonight, if you have anything to teach me, let me profit by it.

C. PRESENT Touch my robe.

But SCROOGE is afraid to do so.

C. PRESENT Touch my robe.

SCROOGE Where shall we be going, Spirit?

C. PRESENT Among our fellow men.

SCROOGE But where? In the streets?

C. PRESENT In the streets. In people's homes...

SCROOGE Whose homes?

C. PRESENT You shall see.

SCROOGE Yes, I shall see. But - I am afraid to be seen.

PAUSE.

C. PRESENT You shall not be seen, as I am not seen. But as the Spirit of Christmas Present, I have only a short while to live, and much work to do. You shall come with me and see that work. You shall see people in every walk of life.

SCROOGE People I know?

C. PRESENT Some you will know. Others you will not even have thought of. People in the remotest parts of the world...people across the seas and on the seas.... people of good fortune and people who suffer.

SCROOGE How can you visit so many?

C. PRESENT Because I am a Spirit.

SCROOGE But do all these people know of your visit? Even though they cannot see you?

C. PRESENT Some know - without the need to see me. Others would not know even if they did see. But I visit them all, those who reject me as well as those who welcome and accept me. *(He holds his torch high.)* To each and every one I give something from the light of my torch.