

## Chapter 9

### The Ghost of Christmas Present

When Scrooge woke up again, it was dark. He knew that, the next ghost was going to arrive soon.

What would this ghost look like? Scrooge was ready for the next ghost. He did not care if it looked like a baby or an elephant!

The church bell rang once. It was one o'clock. Scrooge pulled back the curtains around his bed and waited. There was a bright, redcoloured light around his bed, but there was no ghost.

Five minutes passed. Ten minutes. Fifteen minutes. Scrooge lay in his bed, very frightened. At last, he saw that the strange light was coming from under the door of the next room. He got out of bed and walked slowly to-wards the door.

A voice suddenly called his name. 'Come in, Ebenezer Scrooge. Come in.'

Scrooge opened the door and looked into the room. Yes, it was his room. But it had changed! It looked completely different.

There were branches of trees hanging everywhere. All the branches were covered with bright green leaves and little red berries. There was a huge fire with lots of bright yellow flames. It was the biggest fire Scrooge had ever seen in that room. And there was food! Lots and lots of food! There were turkeys and geese. There was fruit. There were pies and puddings. There were all the good things that people eat at Christmas.

In the middle of the room was a huge, smiling man. He was holding a big torch. The torch looked like an animal's horn. A small, bright, red flame was burning at the top of it. This was the light that Scrooge had seen.

'Come in,' shouted the huge man. He had a kind voice and a kind face.

But Scrooge did not want to look at him.

'I am the Ghost of Christmas Present,' the huge man said to Scrooge. 'Look at me.'

Scrooge saw that the ghost was wearing a long green and white robe. The ghost's hair was long and brown. There were leaves from a holly tree around the top of his head. There was ice on the holly leaves.

'Have you ever seen anyone like me before?' asked the ghost.

'No. Never,' replied Scrooge.

The ghost stood up. 'Take me with you,' said Scrooge.



*In the middle of the room was a huge, smiling man. He was holding a big torch.*

'Last night I saw many things that happened in my past life. I learnt many things. Tonight I want to go out and learn more. I want to learn to live a better life.'

'Take hold of my robe,' said the Ghost of Christmas Present.

Scrooge took hold of the green and white robe and the room disappeared.

Suddenly it was morning and they were standing in a London street.

There was snow on the ground and there were lots of people everywhere.

It was a sunny, cold Christmas morning. Church bells were ringing and people were coming out of the churches. They were going home to eat their Christmas dinners.

Other people were carrying baskets along the streets. There were geese and turkeys in the baskets. These poor people couldn't cook their Christmas dinners at home because they didn't have ovens. They were taking their Christmas turkeys or geese to the baker's shops. Bakers didn't bake bread on Christmas Day. On Christmas Day, they cooked poor people's Christmas dinners in their big ovens.

Most of these people were happy. When the Ghost of Christmas Present saw people who were sad or angry, he stopped. He waved his torch over their heads. The light from its red flame shone on them. Then these people smiled and laughed happily too.

Scrooge was pleased. The ghost wanted to make the poor people happy.