

The ghost of Christmas present is a giant of a man who carries a torch in the shape of a goats horn, a cornucopia, traditionally seen as the horn of plenty a symbol based on Greek mythology. The torch he holds may symbolise goodwill and the transforming power of Christmas

**A large jolly character**, he is sat upon a throne composed of a Christmas feast, turkeys, geese, fruit, cakes and bowls of punch.

He wears a rusty scabbard with no sword indicating that there is no place for conflict at Christmas time and that it is a time for love and happiness.

The Ghost of Christmas present takes Scrooge to **the Cratchit household at Christmas**. Scrooge sees a small, poor home, perhaps similar to one Dickens himself lived in as a child. Warmed only by an open fire it is, nevertheless, filled with excitement and joy, a stark contrast to Scrooge's own cold, dismal abode. Despite the poverty of the family and ill health of Tiny Tim, typical of many families in 19th century Britain, the Cratchit family are optimistic and have a strong sense of family.

Scrooge is moved by the scene of daily life and is concerned for the future of the crippled Tiny Tim, he asks the ghost if Tim will live and is saddened by the reply that he will die unless things change. "I see a vacant seat, and a crutch without an owner." Although Mrs Cratchit calls Scrooge, "an odious, stingy, hard unfeeling man," Bob Cratchit still proposes a toast to Scrooge.

The ghost has a green coat trimmed with white fur and a holly wreath around his head which was the traditional look for **Father Christmas** in the 19th century. So the ghost actually represents Christmas.

Surrounded by the feast of food and holding a horn of plenty he also has the look of the Roman god Bacchus, the god of fertility, wine and pleasure.

This illustrates both the religious and secular nature of the novella.

The ghost takes Scrooge to various **Christmas scenes** to illustrate the joy of Christmas. In the first scene Scrooge is in the streets of London and sees a happy throng preparing for Christmas. The ghost uses his torch to bless the food and placate any dissent. Later he is shown miners on an isolated moor and lonely lighthouse keepers who all feel the joy of Christmas, music and companionship.

## THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT



The Ghost ends his tour of Christmas scenes with a visit to Scrooge's nephews Fred's house and Christmas party. Despite the fact that Scrooge had earlier declined Fred's invitation to the party, Fred says he will continue to invite Scrooge because he pities him because although he is wealthy he is not happy.

Scrooge joins in all the games at the party even though he can't be seen by the revellers.

Scrooge feels 'gay and happy' when he leaves the party and is beginning to **realise the joy of Christmas and the value of family**.

Scrooge is submissive towards the spirit saying, "Conduct me where you will." It seems he is ready to accept change.

The Ghost uses Scrooge's own words against him when he suggests something should be done for the two wretched children. "**Are there no prisons. Are there no workhouses?**"

The ghost has a great deal to say, "Come in!" exclaimed the Ghost. "Come in! And know me better, man!" "You have never seen the like of me before!" These powerful first words make Scrooge fearful and submissive.

"There is never enough time to do or say all the things that we would wish. The thing is to try to do as much as you can in the time that you have," is the ghost telling Scrooge to do good to his fellow man while he can

When Scrooge asks if Tiny Tim will die the ghost replies, "If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, the child will die." He then quotes Scrooge by saying, "**If he be like to die, he had better do it, and reduce the surplus population.**" This makes Scrooge hang his head in shame.

At the end of his visit the Ghost opens his green cloak and reveals two wretched looking children who he calls **Ignorance and Want**.

The boy and girl are "yellow, meagre and ragged," and appear to represent the widespread ignorance and want that existed in 19th century society.

The ghost tells Scrooge to fear Ignorance the most as he sees DOOM written on his forehead, and this may be the ignorance of the poorer working class of society or it may also mean the ignorance of society itself that allows such want and wretched conditions to exist. it may also refer to Scrooge's own ignorance of love, family life and of society beyond his own narrow world of money and business. Scrooge may also now Want a second chance at being a better man.