

## Chapter 2

# The Spirit of Times Past

When Rouge awoke, the urban glow around the edges of the thick curtains of his fourteenth story window gave enough light for him to see that he was, again, alone in his hotel room. On the nightstand, the digital clock showed 12:58 a.m., and then blinked to 12:59. “In a minute I will know that my vision of Old Farley was only a dream, or nightmare,” he thought. “It was just my imagination. I know the Dickens’ *Christmas Carol* so well I could almost recite it; there is even a Muppets version. Just the power of suggestion. Soon I can sleep again.”

But even as he resolved within himself that it was all a dream, his mind flew back, like a strong spring released, to its first position, and presented the same problem to be worked all through, Was it a dream or not?

Rouge lay in this state until the clock flashed 1:00 a.m. But nothing happened. With a sigh of relief, Rouge fumbled for his cell phone to see the time. Still only 12:59. “Rubbish,” he muttered.

At last the cell phone flashed 1:00 a.m.

Rouge noticed a glow increasing around the edges of the closed, heavy curtains. Some light was moving just outside his window, eventually passing through the curtains and growing brighter at the foot of his bed.

It transformed into the figure of a gentle matronly woman. Her hair, which hung about her neck and down her back, was white as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it. She wore a tunic of the purest white and round her waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful. The dress was trimmed with the four seasons: spring blossoms, summer flowers, fall foliage, and winter ice.

But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of her head there sprung a bright, clear jet of light, by which all this was visible in the otherwise dark bedroom.

“Are you the Spirit I was told would come tonight?” asked Rouge, suddenly aware that his words were the modern equivalent of the older English of Dickens.

“I am.”

The voice was soft and gentle. Singularly low, as if instead of being so close beside him, it was at a distance.

“Who, and what are you?” Rouge demanded.

“I am the Spirit of Times Past.”

“Long past?” inquired Rouge.

“No. Your past.”

“Why are you here?”

“For your welfare!” said the Ghost.

Rouge expressed himself much obliged but could not help thinking that a night of unbroken rest would have been more conducive to his welfare. The Spirit must have heard him thinking, for it said immediately in a reprimanding tone:

“For your reclamation, then. Take heed!”

It put out its strong hand as it spoke and clasped him gently by the arm.

“Rise! and walk with me!”

It would have been in vain for Rouge to plead that the weather and the hour were not good for a stroll; that the bed was comfortable, and that he might be catching a cold. The grasp, though gentle as a woman’s hand, was not to be resisted. He rose. The Spirit waved for the heavy curtains to separate as they moved towards the window.

Clasping the Spirit’s robe in supplication, Rouge remonstrated: “I am mortal and liable to fall.”

“Bear but a touch of my hand *there*,” said the Spirit, laying her hand upon his heart, “and you shall be upheld in more than this! I can take you anywhere in the past.”

As the words were spoken, they passed through the window and soared high to see the panorama of Rio de Janeiro, with the statue of Jesus illuminated on the Corcovado peak.

“Take me to see the true Jesus,” requested Rouge.

“I could take you to him or Buddha or Mohammed or Krishna or Moses at the burning bush. You could hear Jesus say in a language you would not understand, ‘It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.’ And ‘Blessed are the meek, ... the merciful, ... the peacemakers ... ‘ But you already have those messages and do not heed them. All great religions condemn excesses and greed, but you don’t care.



**“Take me to see the true Jesus,” requested Rouge**

“Instead, I will take you to someone else whom you follow with religious fervor, the great Adam Smith, the father of your beloved capitalism.”

Then the city of Rio vanished under clouds, and Rouge and the Spirit were standing in a room with men meeting in Scotland.

“These are but shadows of the things that have been,” said the Ghost. “They have no consciousness of us.”

A slender man spoke. “Adam, have you heard that the American colonies declared independence in July? They want something called democracy. King George will squash them like insects.”

“I heard,” replied a short, plump man wearing a high-collar shirt,

dark coat, and white wig. “But that is not my concern. My writings get more attention than any uprising of struggling colonialists.”

“A great book and fitting title,” added another. “*The Wealth of Nations*. The modern world, and I do mean Britain, has set the pace for commerce and the growth of capital.”

“Oh yes, the *Wealth* book,” responded Smith. “My earlier book on *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* should be equally recognized, but is neglected, as are the unfortunate souls in society. I observed in that book that as some of us become wealthy, we lack sympathy with the poor class. Though our brother is in horrible conditions, if we ourselves are at our ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers. Our senses never did, and never can, carry us beyond our own person. It is only by imagination that we can form any conception of his sensations. People can only relate to what they themselves should feel in the like situation, but they do not share the experience because they build shields and distance between themselves and the poor. Thereby, they are blind and without sympathy.”

Rouge was incredulous. “You are making up the past, just like Dickens made up Tiny Tim.”

“Not so,” said the Ghost. “I cannot alter the past, and you can read virtually those same words Smith published in his first book. They are on what you would call the Internet; just check Wikipedia. And while widely available, Smith’s early concerns are seldom taught in economics classes. It is true that the father of capitalist principles about competition and wealth accumulation was highly concerned about the disparity between the wealthy and the poor.”

Smith continued. “Our sympathy is not from the actual experiences of the disadvantaged — rather, it is only the impressions of our own senses of seeing, hearing, etc. which our imaginations copy. By the imagination, we place ourselves in the other man’s situation, but imperfectly and incompletely. And when the wealthy have no immediate experience of what other men feel, they can form no idea of the manner and degree in which the poor are affected.”

"Labour was the first price, the original purchase – money that was paid for all things. It was not by gold or by silver, but by labour, that all wealth of the world was originally purchased."



"When the regulation, therefore, is in support of the workman, it is always just and equitable; but it is sometimes otherwise when in favour of the masters."

"As soon as the land of any country has all become private property, the landlords, like all other men, love to reap where they never sowed, and demand a rent even for its natural produce."

"It is not very unreasonable that the rich should contribute to the public expense, not only in proportion to their revenue, but something more than in that proportion."

### **Some sentiments by Adam Smith, the Father of Capitalism**

The Ghost of Times Past slowly swept her arm and revealed to Rouge scenes of abounding poverty, but with pockets of substantial wealth practicing the arts of capitalism of the Eighteenth Century and into the 1800s. "This is the British world of Adam Smith and, seventy years later, of Charles Dickens. Tens of thousands of real people were living lives like *Oliver Twist*, the *Artful Dodger*, *Fagan*, *David Copperfield*, and *Tiny Tim*, but without storybook endings."

"And Dickens did not even consider other societies of that time," said the Ghost, sweeping her other arm to show the ravages of poverty while continuing to speak to Rouge: "China: That hungry field worker is Chen's ancestor. India: Srinivas' forefathers are in that village. And the slave trade took many from Africa to Brazil and America. Andrew is a descendant of that slave woman, and Luis' ancestor is conducting the auction."

Rouge was clearly moved by the scenes, and the Spirit continued: "Smith spoke of the need for 'sympathy,' but that there should be more than just a cringe and a tear at this moment of seeing such want. You have a little pity, yes, but you are hardened against such misery." And then she touched Rouge's arm and transferred them to an open courtyard of a university campus.

Rouge's eyes sparkled. "Ah, Ivy University, the way it was when I studied here. A fabulous time of my life."

"We are here to attend Professor Farley's famous lecture of 1987 that helped solidify his dominance in economics."

"I was a graduate student then, one of Farley's chosen assistants. It is over there in Buckley Hall."

"You recollect the way?" inquired the Spirit.

"Remember it?" cried Rouge with fervor; "I could walk it blindfolded."

"Let's go there."

In an instant the Ghost and Rouge were in the hall, almost touching the people who entered the room without noticing them. As cheerful, talkative students and faculty came in, Rouge knew and named almost everyone.

A young Rouge himself entered. "There I am! And there is Chen, just a freshman, but in one of my tutoring groups. And Ivan and Luis and Srinivas."

The large lecture room filled to overflowing, and eventually Professor Farley was introduced by the University Provost.

Farley began: "Our time is short, so my explanations are brief. But we want to capture the essence of modern Capitalism. First, let us recognize that Capitalism is dynamic and has evolved, slowly but changes are increasingly more rapid. Nobody should discuss Capitalism without defining what 'flavor' or variation he is discussing.

"For hundreds of years up through the 15<sup>th</sup> Century there were forms of Feudalism in which virtually all power and wealth rested in the hands of a few who were born to rule or who took command by force, shrewdness, or as representatives of God. The vast majority of people lived in simplicity and ignorance while cooking meager meals on smoky fires in cold huts or tropical thatched shacks. At night, if they were fortunate, they had candles. Perhaps one change of clothes. Still today such poverty exists for two billion people, even though the economic structures around them have changed.

"During the 1500s and into the 1600s," Farley continued. "tradesmen and merchants prospered and gained power. Europe was the leading example. This was Mercantilism, which I will denote as Mercantilism-16 to link

it to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and into the 1600s. From this, the earliest forms of capitalism gradually grew in Europe from the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century beginnings and through the middle of the 1700s. This we will label Capitalism-17. At that time America was just an outpost of European colonialism, mostly with farmers, isolated frontiersmen, and some early urbanization with budding businesses. This was the America of our Founding Fathers.

“A keen observer of this early Capitalism was the Scotsman Adam Smith who published in 1776 his famous book *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith spelled out the fundamentals of basic Capitalism:

*“An economic system in which the means of production, that is, businesses, are privately owned and operated for profits that come after the payment of wages to workers and other costs. Businesses are in economic competition, leading to improvements and progress.”*

“Although Smith’s fame comes from being the first expounder of Capitalism, he had other, earlier writings, mainly *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, also based on his observations of British life in the 1700s, including the core of Capitalism-17.” Farley paused briefly.

“Capitalism continued to develop in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century and well into the 1800’s, becoming Capitalism-18, or just ‘Cap-18’ or ‘C-18’. Competition was king in Capitalism-18. Classic illustrations of life under Capitalism-18 can be found in popular literature. In the 1830s to ‘50s, Charles Dickens tells us of Oliver Twist, Little Dorrit, Mr. Micawber, Ebenezer Scrooge, and Bob Cratchit. People were flowing from rural areas into the cities, and industry was providing jobs.

“In England, there was a booming textile trade using cotton and wool from America and the British colonies. And it sold the fabric back to the colonies for a handsome profit for the business owners. For the workers, life was not easy, wages were low, and extremely few benefited from the likes of Oliver Twist’s wealthy grandfather. While some did prosper through hard work and good fortune, others were forced into the poor houses, debtors’ prisons, or onto the streets.”

The Ghost turned to Rouge and said: “At age twelve in 1824, Charles Dickens worked 12-hour days for several months, and on Sundays visited his father in a debtor’s prison. Child labor was a fuel for Capitalism-18. Come Rouge, there is more to see. We can come back to Farley’s lecture any time we want.”

With a touch of the Ghost's hand, they were transported to a rustic, rural scene. A small distance away was a striking two-story, multi-room home with glass windows and a full-length porch with pillars.

"Good heavens!" said Rouge, clasping his hands together as he looked about him. "This is the old Rouge homestead in northern Georgia, built in the 1820s by my ancestor Samuel Rouge. I have seen it in old drawings and photos. It survived the Civil War, and the land is still owned by some distant Rouge relatives. This house and plantation were the foundation of the family's cotton business."

"This is October 1838," said the Spirit, "and there is Samuel Rouge coming to the house."

Samuel was a scruffy man in dirty overalls, about 35 years old, and missing one front tooth. He was carrying an ax and leading twelve men and three women; one brought a horse and a farm wagon. They were not a pleasant group, rather more like a mob. Samuel was shouting and leading, along with a stout man wearing a sheriff's badge.

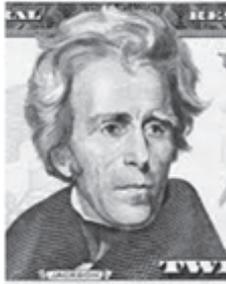
The noise had brought the residents of the house to the front porch. The family included a stately, elderly man in a waistcoat, his wife in a pleasant dress, and five of the next younger generation, including a clearly-pregnant young woman, plus three small grandchildren, all in contemporary American clothing. Their distinctive facial features showed clearly that they were Native American Indians.

The sheriff spoke. "Mr. Cloud, it is final. The orders from the President are perfectly clear. You and your family must leave now. You have known for months, even years, that this day could come. You will be escorted by Sergeant Williams." Williams and three soldiers stepped forward.

Mr. Cloud started to protest, but Samuel Rouge had stepped behind the Cloud family and occupied the door to the large house. "You heard the sheriff, you must go *now*. And I'll take care of this house and land from here on out. I worked for you for 14 years bossin' your slaves, so at the government's land auction next spring, I expect I'll buy this place. We here figure I earned it. It's time for you to move on now." Others in the group showed their agreement.

Edward Rouge was aghast!! "What is this all about!" he shouted. But his words and gestures were not noticed.

“They cannot hear or see us, Edward. You are just as much a specter as I am. And this is what actually happened. I can show you anything of the Past, but I cannot change it. It is the result of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, pushed through a willing Congress by President Andrew Jackson. Tens of thousands of Native Americans were moved from the eastern States to lands across the Mississippi River, mainly in Oklahoma. It seems that your ancestors conveniently forgot to tell you that part of the story.”



“Established in the midst of another and a superior race, and without appreciating the causes of their inferiority or seeking to control them, they [Native Americans] must necessarily yield to the force of circumstances and ere long disappear.” -- *Andrew Jackson, December 3, 1833, Fifth Annual Message to Congress.*

### **President Andrew Jackson applied the Indian Removal Act of 1830.**

The Indian family and the guards were soon walking away from the house. Meager possessions were carried in the wagon along with the pregnant woman.

As if a mist swept past them, Rouge and the Ghost were transferred to a bleak, wintery woodland. A wagon train of Native Americans was stopping for the night in a clearing. A few soldiers milled around them, but there was no threat. The sojourners were too cold, hungry and weak to cause any problems. Mr. Cloud and some of his family were gathering around a small campfire for warmth.

“They are the Cherokees,” said the Spirit, “expelled from their lands by President Jackson and the American Congress. As law-abiding Americans, they had appealed various rulings all the way to the US Supreme Court where they won their case, but Jackson ignored the ruling.”

“And this?” queried Rouge.

“They are on the ‘Trail of Tears’ from Georgia, through southern