

MERRY CHRISTMAS

hear about that strange presentiment you had the night your Aunt Eliza broke her leg. Don't let's bother with *your* experience. I want to tell mine.

"You are quite mistaken, my dear young friend," repeated Father Time, "quite wrong."

"*Young* friend," I said, my mind, as one's mind is apt to do in such a case, running to an unimportant detail. "Why do you call me young?"

"Your pardon," he answered gently—he had a gentle way with him, had Father Time—"the fault is in my failing eyes. I took you at first sight for something under a hundred."

"Under a hundred?" I expostulated. "Well, I should think so!"

"Your pardon again," said Time, "the fault is in my failing memory. I forgot. You seldom pass that now-a-days, do you? Your life is very short of late."

I heard him breathe a wistful, hollow sigh. Very ancient and dim he seemed as he stood beside me. But I did not turn to look upon him: I had no need to. I knew his form, in the inner and clearer sight of things, as well as every human being knows by innate instinct the unseen face and form of Father Time.

I could hear him murmuring beside me: "Short