Chapter 4.1
Two’s Company
By Raymond Wilson

About the poet
Raymond Wilson is a well-known American author of many publications articles in many learned journals. He was a professor of history in his university in Kansas and has won many awards and honors for his writing and university teaching. In the poem he entertains the reader with his story telling voice about a ghost story.

Two’s Company

They said the house was haunted, but He laughed at them and said, “Tut, tut! I’ve never heard such tittle-tattle As ghosts that groan and chains that rattle; And just to prove that I’m in the right, Please leave me here to spend the night.” They winked absurdly, tried to smother Their ignorant laughter, nudged each other, And left him just as dusk was falling With a hunch-back moon and screech-owls calling. Not that this troubled him one bit; In fact, he was quite glad of it, Knowing it’s every man’s mission To contradict all superstition. But what is that? Outside it seemed As if chains rattled, someone screamed! Come, come, it’s merely nerves, he’s certain (But just the same, he draws the curtain). The stroke of twelve—but there’s no clock! He shuts the door and turns the lock (Of course, he knows that no one’s there, But no harm’s done by taking care!)

'tittle-tattle' gossip or foolish chatter
Someone's outside—the silly joker,
(He may as well pick up the poker!)
That noise again! He checks the doors,
Shutters the windows, makes a pause
To seek the safest place to hide—
(The cupboard's strong—he creeps inside)
"Not that there's anything to fear,"
He tells himself, when at his ear
A voice breathes softly, "How do you do!
I am the ghost. Pray who are you?"

Raymond Wilson
EXPLANATION
There are people in the society who are either disbelieve ghost stories or show off that they do not fear ghosts nor believe in such stories (may be just to show that they are brave.) Sometime people challenge each other to prove themselves in a group; naturally we can find this kind of behavior in the youth.

Poet reveals the scene bringing visual imageries to the scene. The environment foreshadows the important horror that he is going to face; thus, the reader gets ready to experience something sad or fearsome. The behavior of others shows that they know something that the challenger does not know; they are quite happy that he is going to learn a lesson. On the other hand, the hero is happy that he has a sacred mission to fight against the superstition.

Further the poet involves the reader creating suspense; he asks questions from the readers to accompany them to the scene. Poet introduces the behavior of the hero for a short while which evokes humor. His behavior is contradictory to his boasting in first part of the poem. His behavior exactly shows the frightened state of his mind. That shows the reality of the most in the society. Although everyone knows that there is no such thing called ghosts, everybody fears the devil in the dark cave.

Although the challenger knows that there is nothing to fear, he arms himself with a poker hiding under a cupboard. The end is quite ironic to the subheading where the reader expects a sad ending but find humor. The actions, behavior and utterances suggest humor just like watching a humorous movie. The introduction of the ghost is rather gentlemanlike deepening the humor. So the poet brings out this dual reality within most of us.