

OP E 22-36

Warm Welcome?

THIS IS A SEASON of hard choices. Things are tight. Energy is short. Are you going to blow the whole thing by ignoring the plea to keep your thermostat down to 65 degrees and your lights turned low? Or are you going to conserve the way you've been told and risk being called a Scrooge or a Grinch?

The trouble is, we've been conditioned by our childhood reading of those gothic novels such as Daphne Du Maurier wrote. The cold, dark house was always forbidding and evil, full of cobwebs, creaky doors and distant screams and hysterical shrieking. By contrast, the warm, bright house was the symbol of love, good will and healthy fun.

Well, when you were brought up to believe in blazing light and logs, it seems downright inhospitable to ask a guest through the door unless the welcome is really warm.

The answer, of course, is to crack down on yourself when there are no guests around. Only your family need know — and they probably think you're Scrooge already.

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