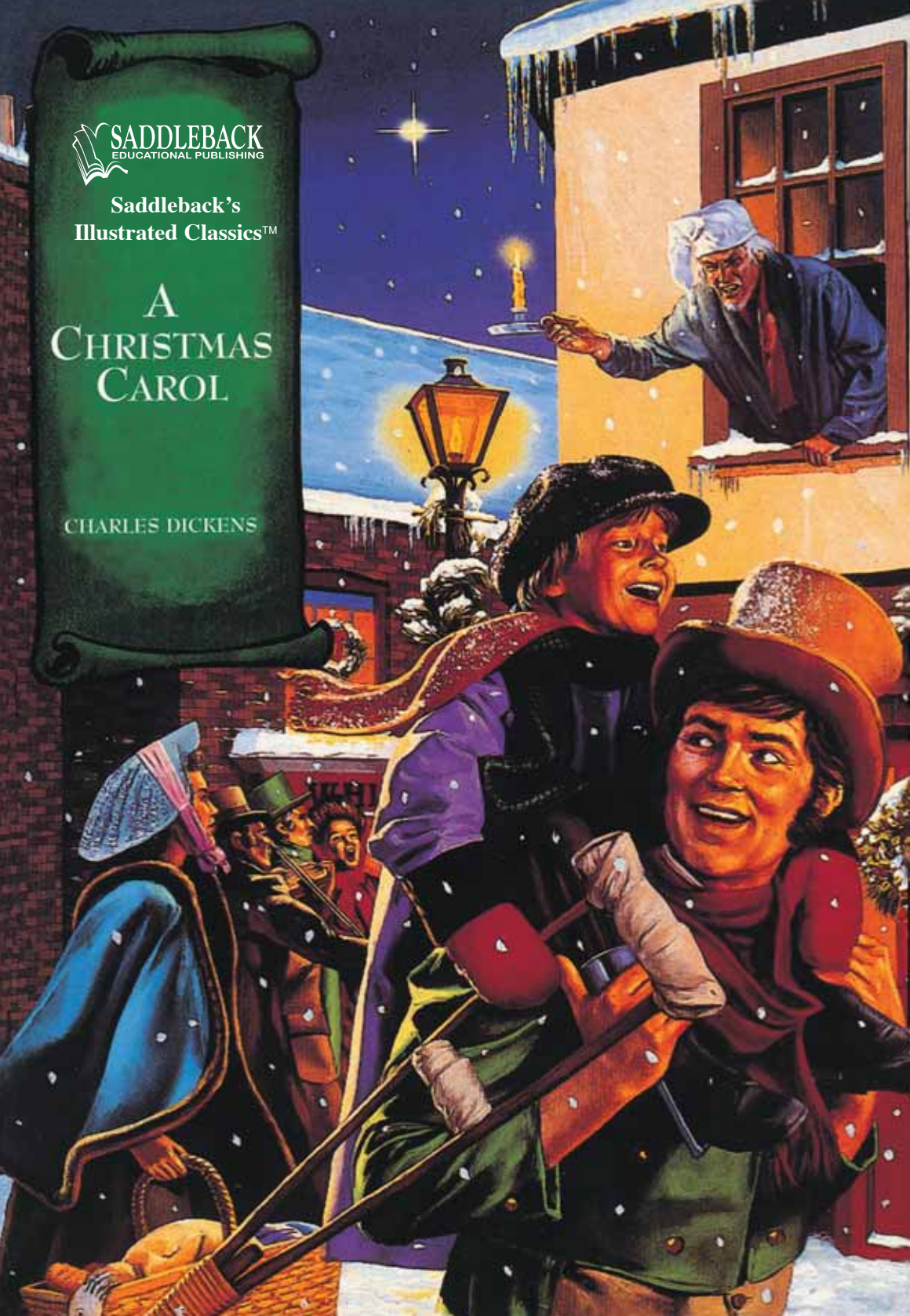


 SADDLEBACK  
EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING

Saddleback's  
Illustrated Classics™

# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

CHARLES DICKENS



A  
CHRISTMAS  
CAROL

CHARLES DICKENS



# Saddleback's *Illustrated Classics*<sup>TM</sup>



Three Watson

Irvine, CA 92618-2767

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*ISBN 1-56254-896-4*

# Welcome to Saddleback's *Illustrated Classics*<sup>™</sup>

We are proud to welcome you to Saddleback's *Illustrated Classics*<sup>™</sup>. Saddleback's *Illustrated Classics*<sup>™</sup> was designed specifically for the classroom to introduce readers to many of the great classics in literature. Each text, written and adapted by teachers and researchers, has been edited using the Dale-Chall vocabulary system. In addition, much time and effort has been spent to ensure that these high-interest stories retain all of the excitement, intrigue, and adventure of the original books.

With these graphically *Illustrated Classics*<sup>™</sup>, you learn what happens in the story in a number of different ways. One way is by reading the words a character says. Another way is by looking at the drawings of the character. The artist can tell you what kind of person a character is and what he or she is thinking or feeling.

This series will help you to develop confidence and a sense of accomplishment as you finish each novel. The stories in Saddleback's *Illustrated Classics*<sup>™</sup> are fun to read. And remember, fun motivates!

# Overview

Everyone deserves to read the best literature our language has to offer. Saddleback's *Illustrated Classics*<sup>™</sup> was designed to acquaint readers with the most famous stories from the world's greatest authors, while teaching essential skills. You will learn how to:

- Establish a purpose for reading
- Use prior knowledge
- Evaluate your reading
- Listen to the language as it is written
- Extend literary and language appreciation through discussion and writing activities

Reading is one of the most important skills you will ever learn. It provides the key to all kinds of information. By reading the *Illustrated Classics*<sup>™</sup>, you will develop confidence and the self-satisfaction that comes from accomplishment—a solid foundation for any reader.

# Step-By-Step

The following is a simple guide to using and enjoying each of your *Illustrated Classics*<sup>™</sup>. To maximize your use of the learning activities provided, we suggest that you follow these steps:

1. ***Listen!*** We suggest that you listen to the read-along. (At this time, please ignore the beeps.) You will enjoy this wonderfully dramatized presentation.
2. ***Pre-reading Activities.*** After listening to the audio presentation, the pre-reading activities in the Activity Book prepare you for reading the story by setting the scene, introducing more difficult vocabulary words, and providing some short exercises.
3. ***Reading Activities.*** Now turn to the “While you are reading” portion of the Activity Book, which directs you to make a list of story-related facts. Read-along while listening to the audio presentation. (This time pay attention to the beeps, as they indicate when each page should be turned.)
4. ***Post-reading Activities.*** You have successfully read the story and listened to the audio presentation. Now answer the multiple-choice questions and other activities in the Activity Book.

Remember,

*“Today’s readers are tomorrow’s leaders.”*



## Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens, perhaps the most popular and greatest English novelist of all time, was born in 1812, the son of a clerk in the Navy-Pay office. Although from a poor background and forced to go to work at the age of 10, he was still both ambitious and industrious. His education came on his own through books—those in school as well as his own.

Dickens wrote of people as he saw them, and because of his concern for social conditions in England, created some of the most memorable, timeless characters in literature. At 31 years old, in order to pay some pressing debts, he wrote *A Christmas Carol*, a wonderful, intriguing, joyful mystery about the spirit of Christmas, and without question one of the most widely read classics of all time. The particular characters Dickens created for this story. . . Scrooge, Bob Cratchit, Tiny Tim and the Ghosts of Christmas. . . will always remain indelibly etched in literature.

The turning point in his life came at the time of his marriage. Both his wedding day and his first publication occurred in the same year. Some of his other timeless stories such as *Bleak House*, *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* were immensely popular in Victorian England; however, it is said that *A Christmas Carol* is his finest accomplishment.

Dickens, surely one of the greatest storytellers and creators of memorable characters, died in 1870.

Saddleback's *Illustrated Classics*™

# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

CHARLES DICKENS

## THE MAIN CHARACTERS



FRED



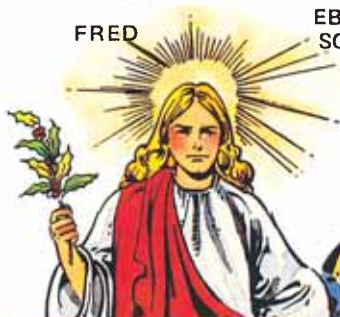
EBENEZER  
SCROOGE



THE GHOST OF  
JACOB MARLEY



TINY TIM &  
BOB CRATCHIT



I am the Spirit of  
CHRISTMAS PAST!  
I show what has  
been.

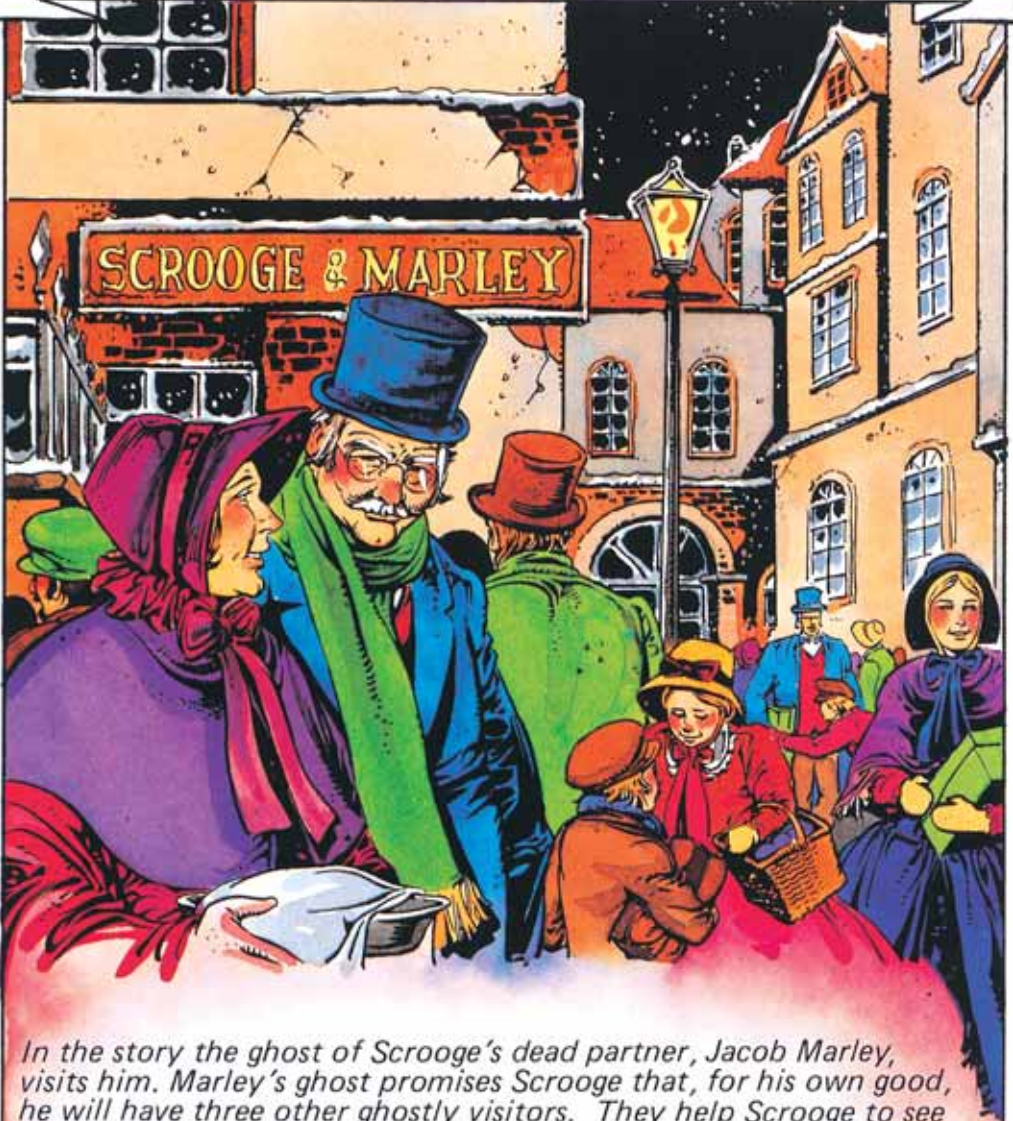


I am the Spirit of  
CHRISTMAS  
PRESENT!  
I show what is now.



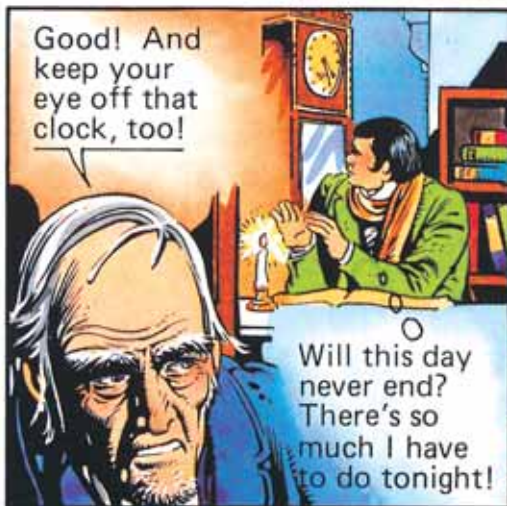
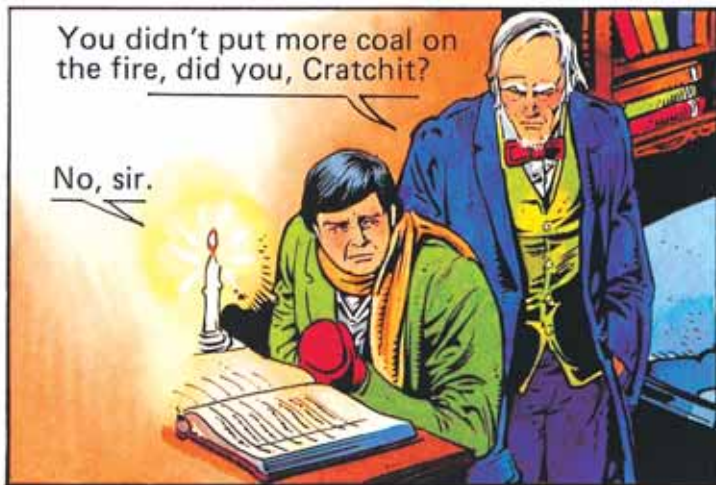
I am the Spirit of  
CHRISTMAS  
FUTURE!  
I show what  
could be.

*Ebenezer Scrooge and Jacob Marley had been business partners for years. However, when our story opens on this cold Christmas Eve in eighteenth-century London, Jacob Marley had been dead for the last seven. Since money had always been the most important thing in the world to them, the sign outside the office still read Scrooge and Marley. It would have cost Scrooge money to have Marley's name painted out!*

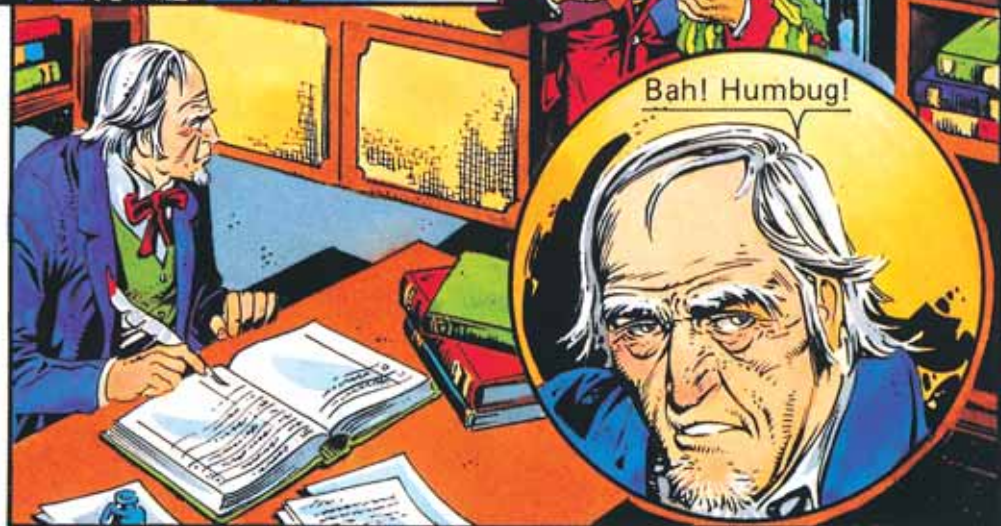


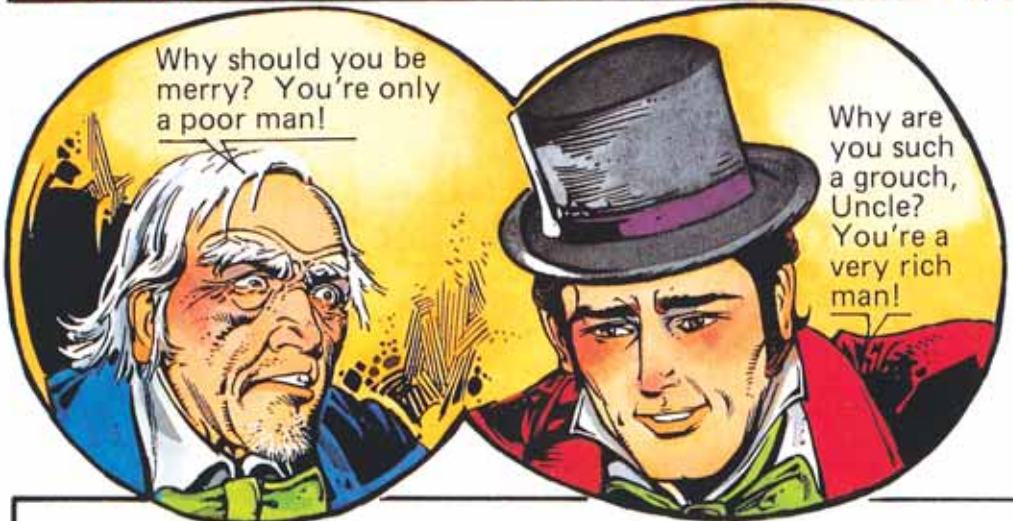
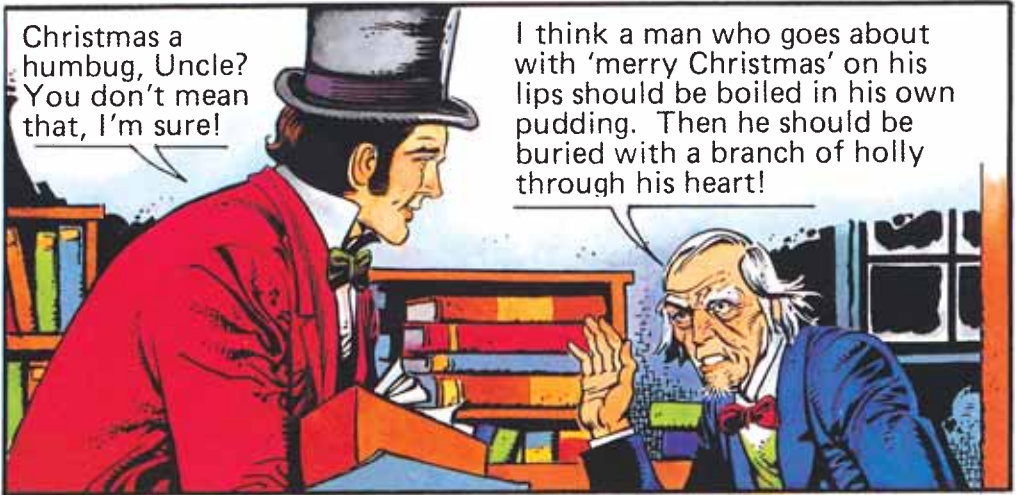
*In the story the ghost of Scrooge's dead partner, Jacob Marley, visits him. Marley's ghost promises Scrooge that, for his own good, he will have three other ghostly visitors. They help Scrooge to see what he has become: a man without love or friends. But most important of all, Scrooge is left with the chance to change his future.*

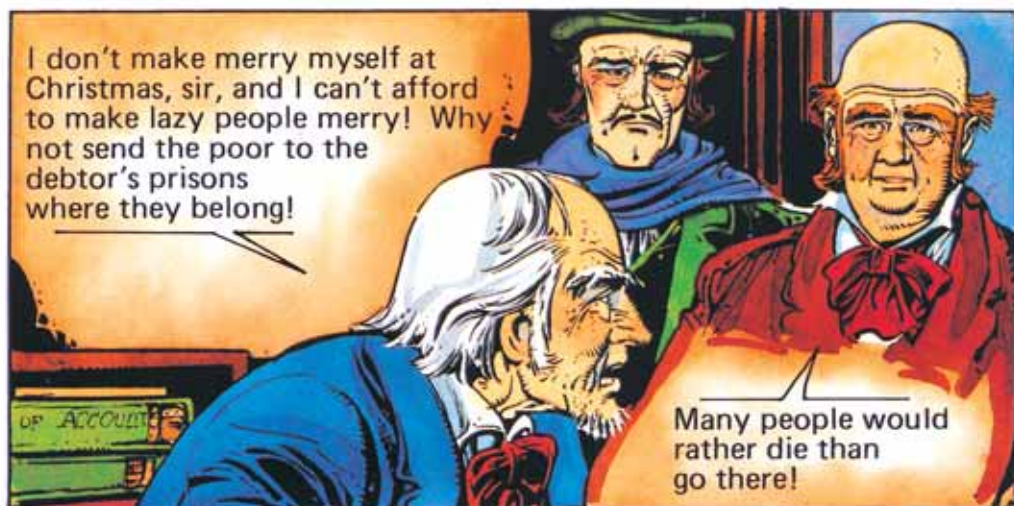
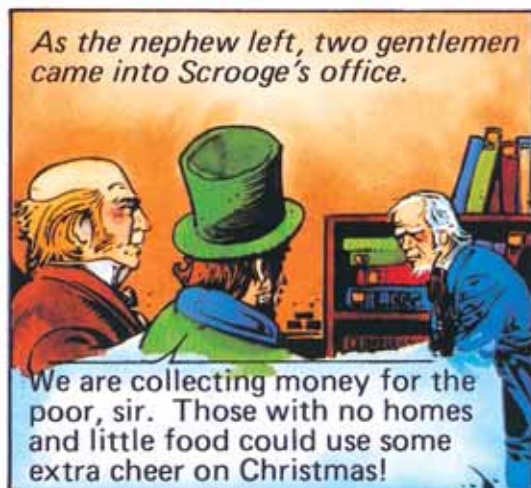
Although the hour was late, Scrooge and his clerk, Bob Cratchit, were still at work in the chilly, dark office. Outside, people rushed by on last-minute Christmas errands. None of them were too cold or too hurried to wish the others a merry Christmas! It seemed warmer outside than it was in Scrooge's office.



A little later, as Scrooge sat at his desk, counting coins, a young man appeared in the doorway. It was his nephew, Fred.







If they would rather die, then let them do so. I say there are too many people in the world as it is!

A merry Christmas to you anyway, sir!

Since there was nothing more they could say, the two gentlemen left.



At last it was time for Bob Cratchit to blow out his candle and put on his hat. It was time to close the office.

I suppose you'll be wanting the whole day off tomorrow!

Y-yes, sir.

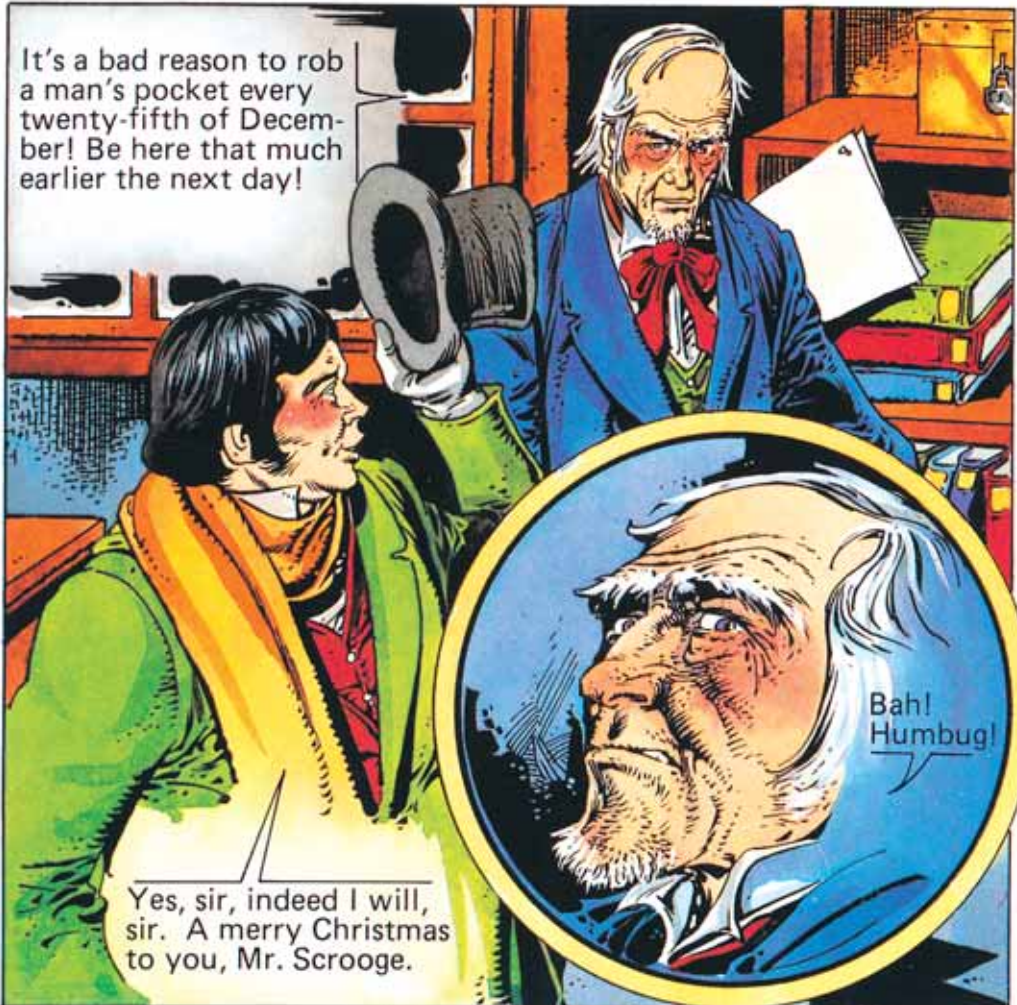


It's a bad reason to rob a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December! Be here that much earlier the next day!

Yes, sir, indeed I will, sir. A merry Christmas to you, Mr. Scrooge.



Bah! Humbug!



*After a lonely supper at a nearby shop, Scrooge started home. He lived alone in the same rooms that had once been the home of his partner, Jacob Marley.*



*He made his way through the dark streets until he reached the front door of an old building. As he reached to unlock it, the door knocker before him seemed to glow. Then it changed, and Marley's face appeared in its place!*



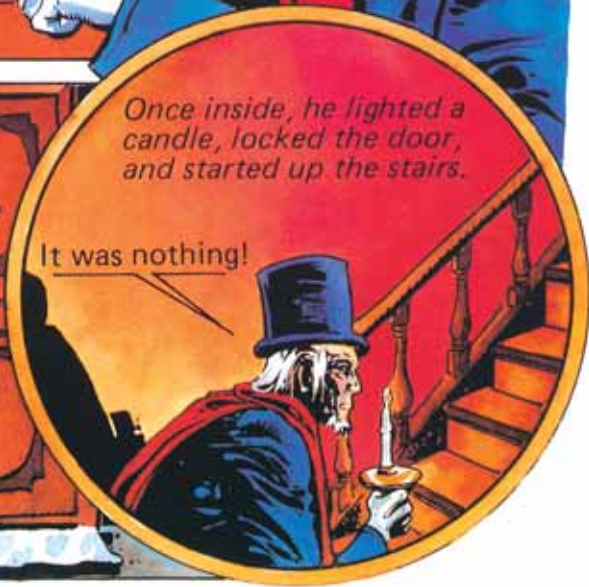
*As Scrooge stood watching, the face faded. Soon only the heavy iron knocker remained.*

*I couldn't have seen Marley's face. My mind must be playing tricks on me tonight!*



*Once inside, he lit a candle, locked the door, and started up the stairs.*

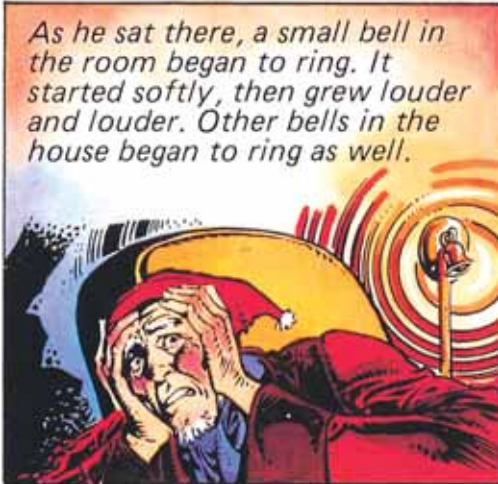
*It was nothing!*



When he reached his rooms, Scrooge put on his robe and nightcap and sat by his fireplace to sip a warm drink.

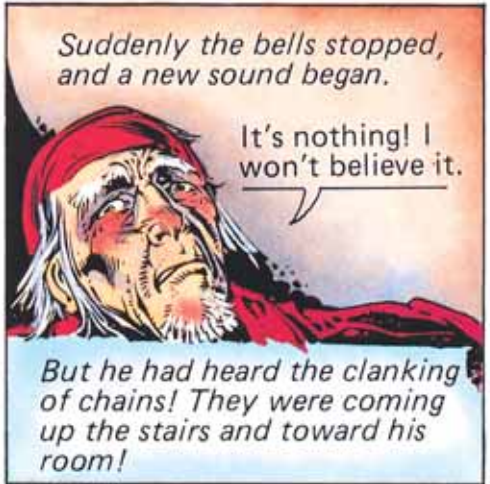


As he sat there, a small bell in the room began to ring. It started softly, then grew louder and louder. Other bells in the house began to ring as well.



Suddenly the bells stopped, and a new sound began.

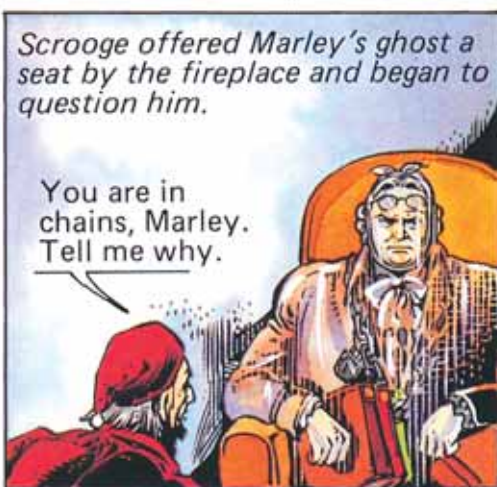
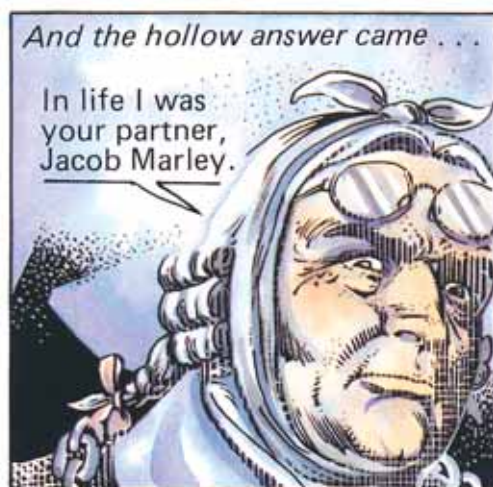
It's nothing! I won't believe it.

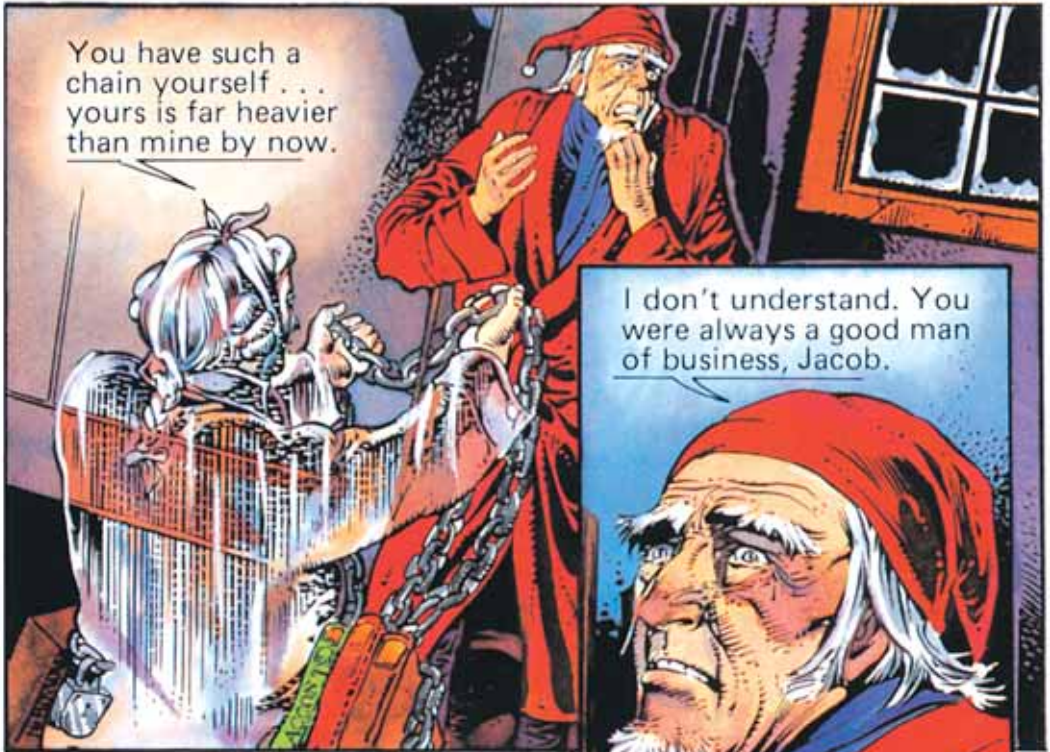


But he had heard the clanking of chains! They were coming up the stairs and toward his room!

Through the heavy doors and into the sitting room came the sound. There, in the light thrown by the fire, Scrooge could see the ghost of Jacob Marley.

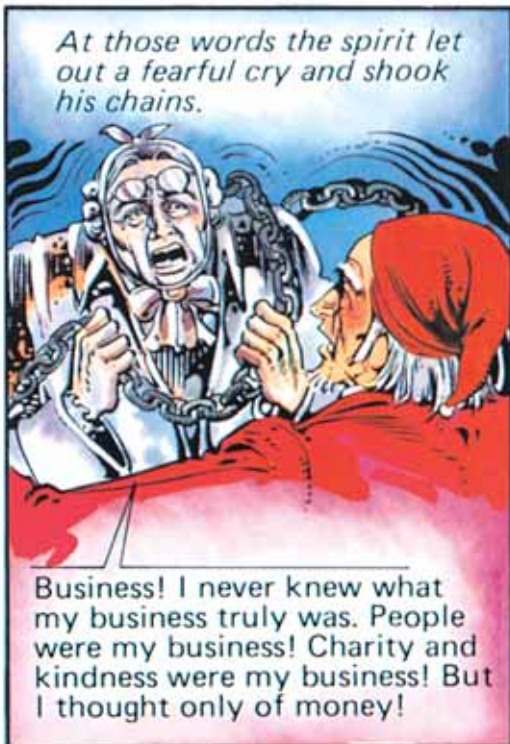






You have such a chain yourself . . . yours is far heavier than mine by now.

I don't understand. You were always a good man of business, Jacob.



*At those words the spirit let out a fearful cry and shook his chains.*

Business! I never knew what my business truly was. People were my business! Charity and kindness were my business! But I thought only of money!



Now I must walk the earth and see the things I might have done while I was alive. And the same thing will happen to you, Ebenezer!

*At this, Scrooge grew very much afraid, and he fell on his knees.*



Is there no hope for me, Jacob?

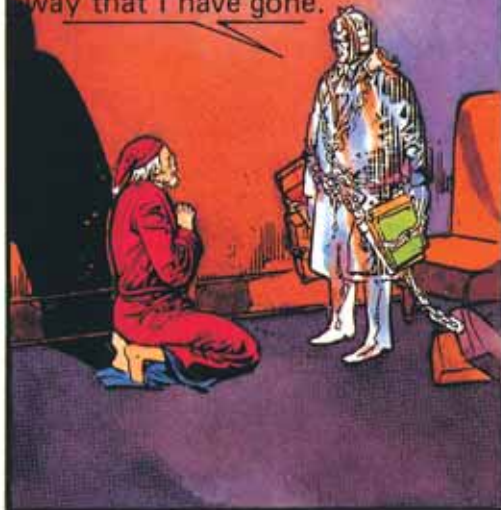
There is! That is why I am here. Listen closely! My time is almost gone.



I'm listening, Jacob. But don't be too hard on me.



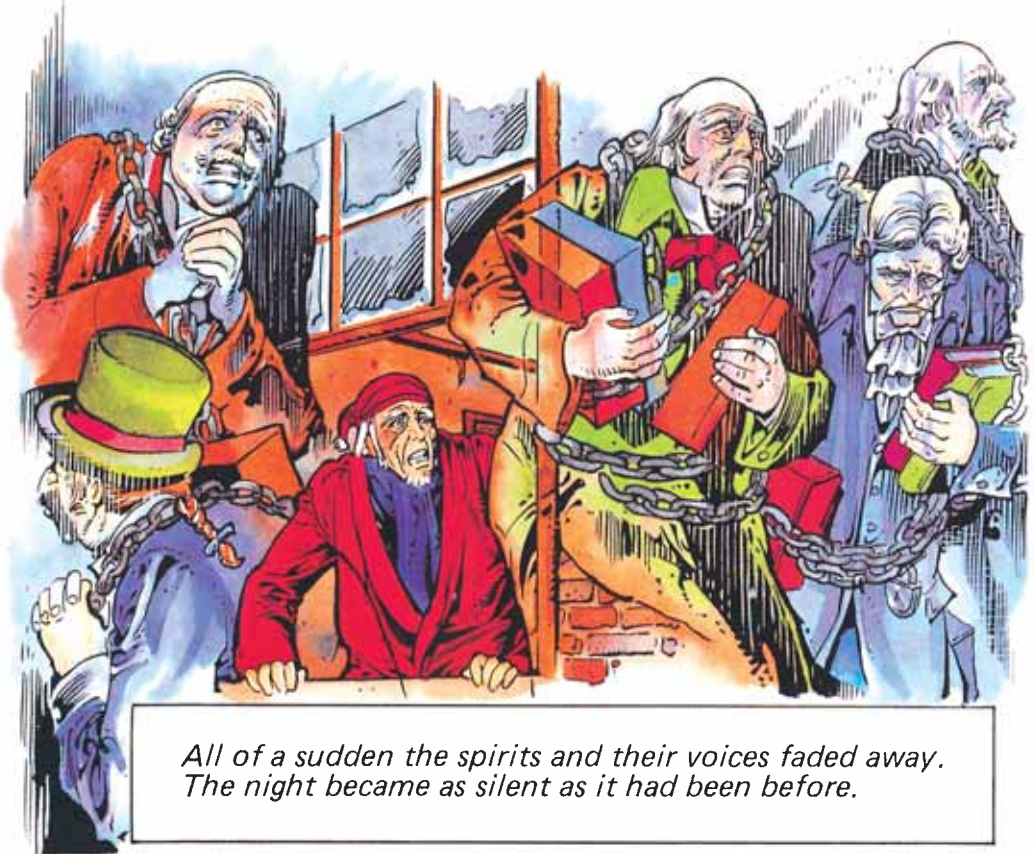
I don't know how I stand before you now in a shape that you can see. I have spent many days sitting beside you, and you have not seen me. But tonight I am here to warn you that you do not have to follow the way that I have gone.



You will be visited by three spirits. The first will come tomorrow when the clock strikes one. The second will come the next night at the same hour. The third will arrive the next night after the last stroke of twelve. You will see me no more, but remember what has passed between us.



Marley finished what he was saying and floated backward through the window into the night. Scrooge looked out after him and saw other figures in the air, all in chains like Marley's ghost. Many had been known to Scrooge during their lifetimes.



All of a sudden the spirits and their voices faded away. The night became as silent as it had been before.

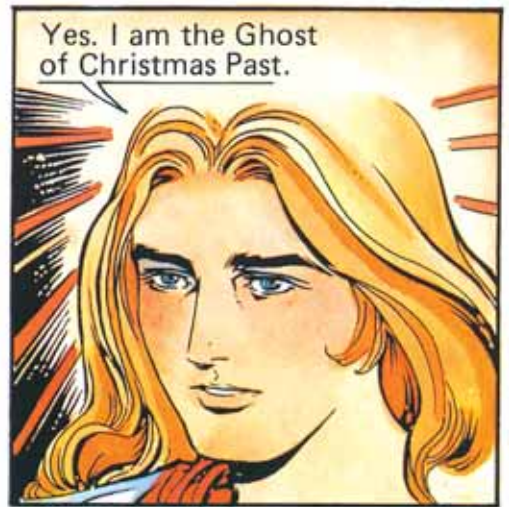
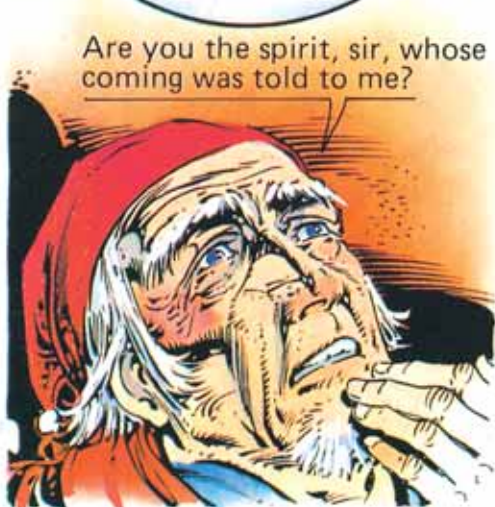
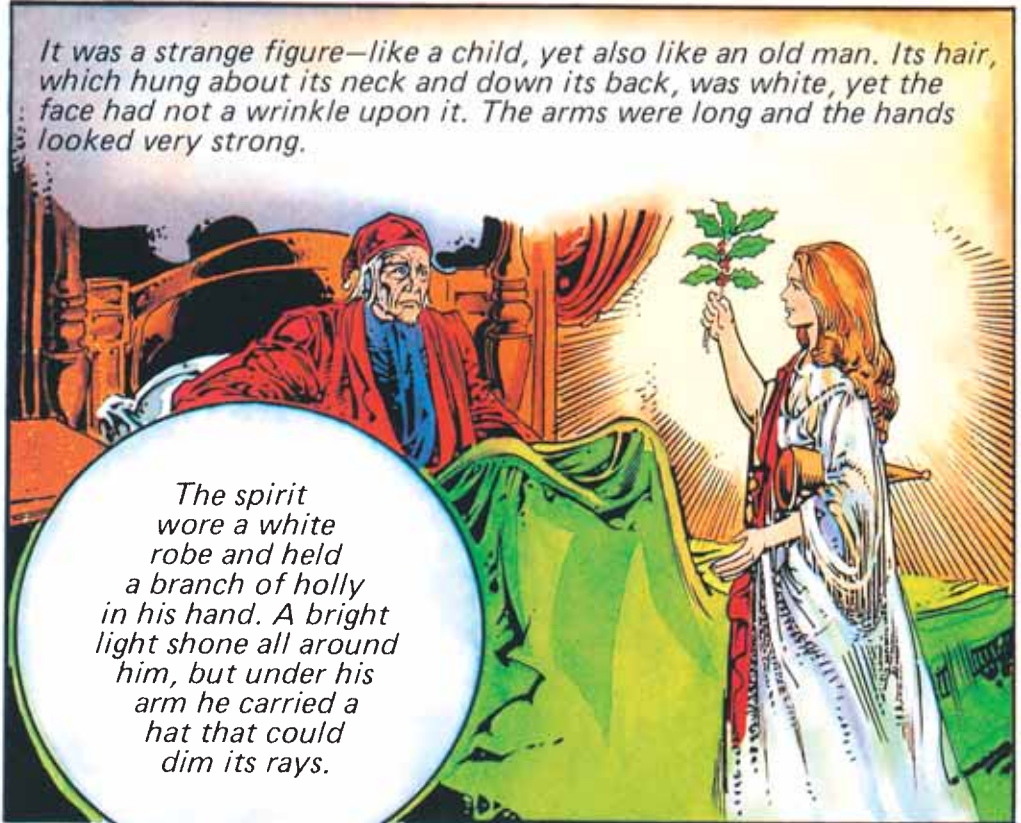
Full of strange thoughts, Scrooge went straight to bed without undressing. He fell asleep right away.



Something woke him up as the hour bell rang . . . a deep, dull sound.

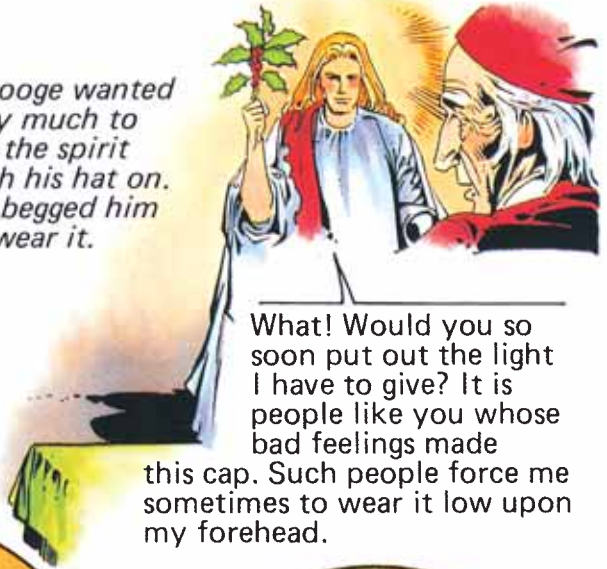


*Lights suddenly flashed and the curtains of Scrooge's bed were pulled back. He sat up quickly and found himself face to face with an unearthly visitor.*

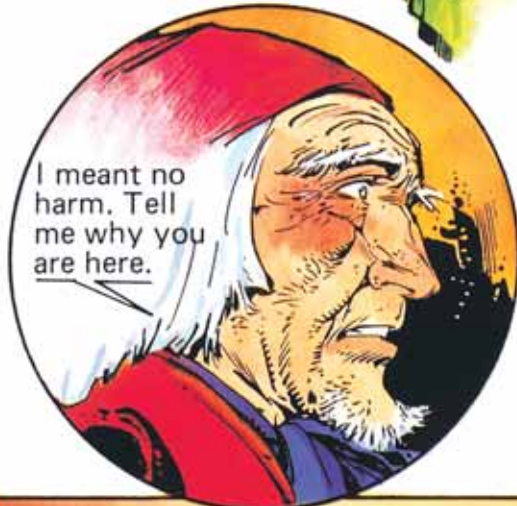




*Scrooge wanted very much to see the spirit with his hat on. He begged him to wear it.*



What! Would you so soon put out the light I have to give? It is people like you whose bad feelings made this cap. Such people force me sometimes to wear it low upon my forehead.



I meant no harm. Tell me why you are here.



I am here to help save you. Rise and walk with me!



*But as they moved toward the window, Scrooge held back.*

I am a man, not a spirit! I will fall!

Just a touch of my hand upon your heart will hold you up!



*Feeling better about it, Scrooge moved with the spirit right through the wall.*

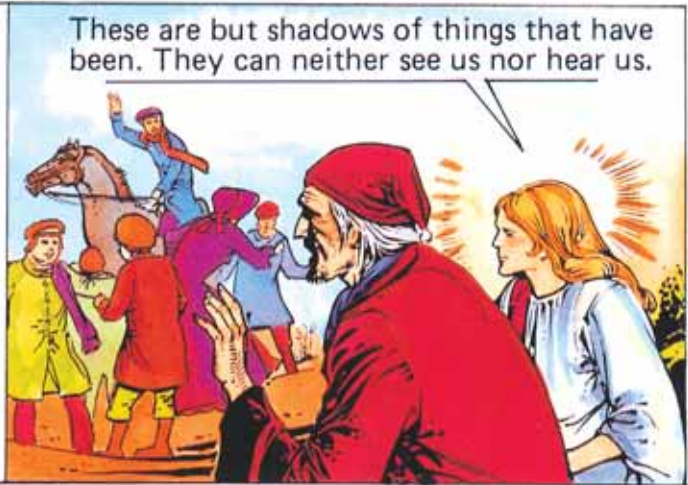
*They found themselves on an open country road. It was a clear, cold winter day with snow on the ground. Ahead of them lay a small market village.*



Do you remember the way?

Remember it! I could walk it with my eyes closed. I was born in this place.

*As they neared the town, they met schoolboys on their way home for the holidays. The two could tell because the air was filled with their Christmas greetings to each other. Several times Scrooge tried to call out to them.*



These are but shadows of things that have been. They can neither see us nor hear us.

*They walked through the town and entered an old school building. Soon they found a dark, bare room full of empty desks. At one of these a lonely boy sat reading.*

Only one child left here alone. That was you, Scrooge!



*And Scrooge sat down at one of the desks and wept to see himself as he used to be.*

*The spirit went on to remind him how books had given him many happy hours. They had been his only friends.*



They were good friends, but you would have traded them all for real friends.

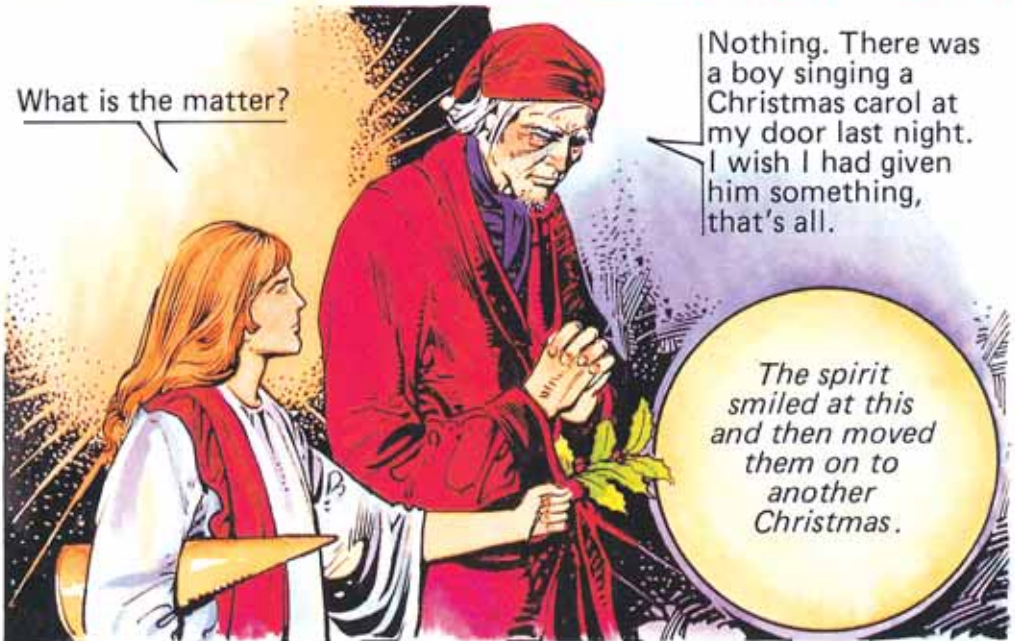
Poor boy! It's too late now, but . . .



What is the matter?

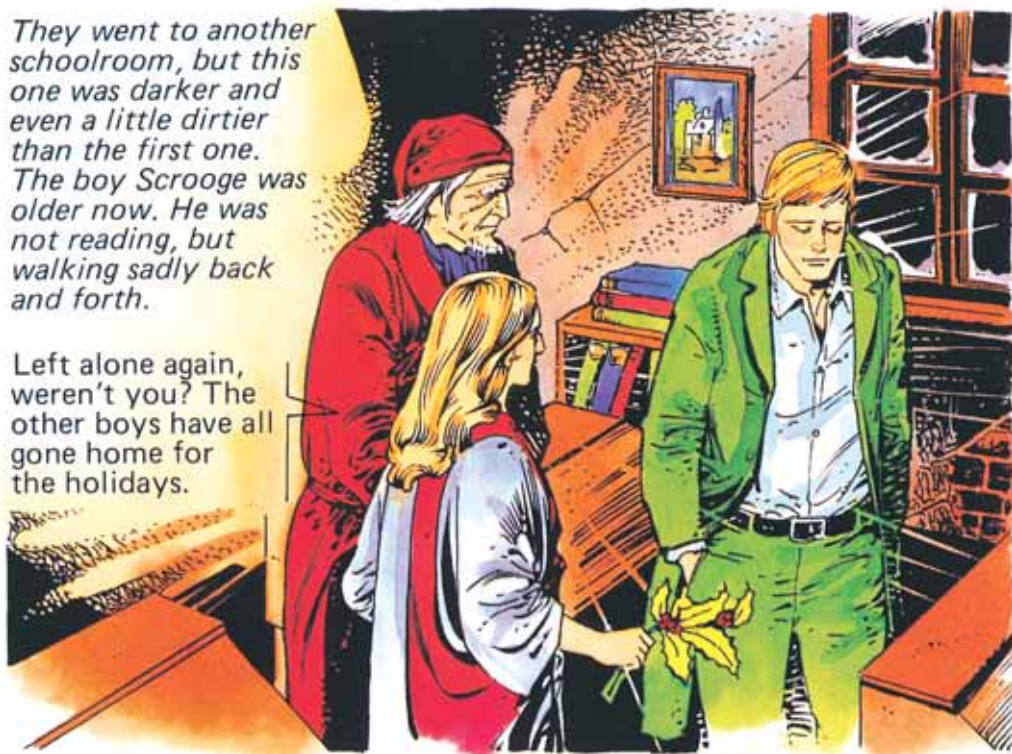
Nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas carol at my door last night. I wish I had given him something, that's all.

*The spirit smiled at this and then moved them on to another Christmas.*



*They went to another schoolroom, but this one was darker and even a little dirtier than the first one. The boy Scrooge was older now. He was not reading, but walking sadly back and forth.*

Left alone again, weren't you? The other boys have all gone home for the holidays.



*And then, as the boy Scrooge kept looking at the door, it opened softly. A little girl, much younger than he, came running in.*

I have come to bring you home, dear brother!



Home, little Fan?



Yes... home for good!



Father spoke so gently to me one night that I was not afraid to ask him again if you might come home. And he said yes.

*It was a happy meeting. Fan continued to tell her brother what their father had said.*



He is so much kinder than he used to be. Home's like heaven now.

*Young Scrooge could hardly believe her next words.*



He says you're to be a man and are never to come back to this school!

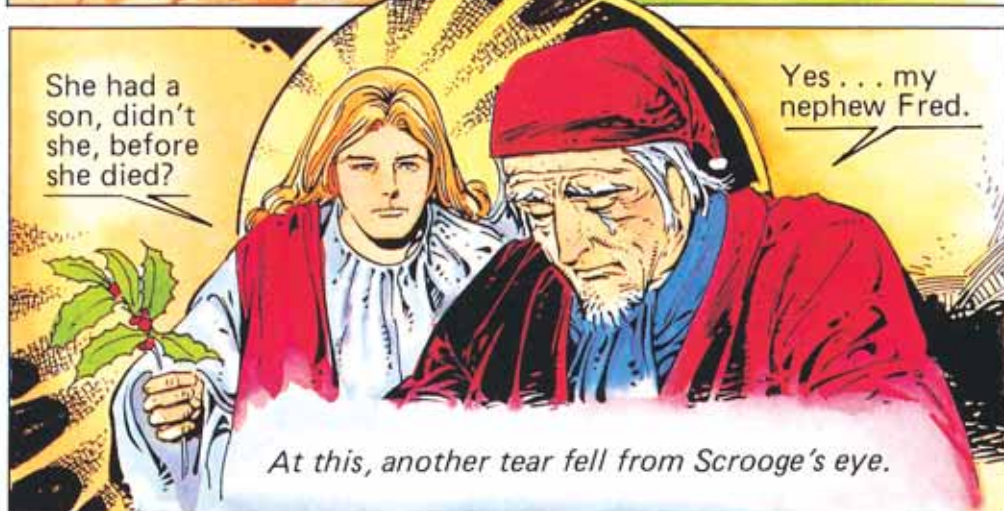
*And we're going to be together all this Christmas long! We'll have the best time in the world!*



*The boy's trunk was tied to the top of the carriage while the children said goodbye to the schoolmaster. Then they climbed in and the driver started off.*



*They drove down the schoolhouse road, brushing snow from the pine trees as they rode past on their happy holiday journey.*



*It was evening and the street lamps had been lighted. The spirit stopped Scrooge before a shop door.*

Do you know this place?



Know it! This was the first place in which I worked! Dick Wilkens and I were apprentices here.

*As Scrooge and the spirit moved inside they saw an old gentleman. He was sitting on a high stool working at a desk.*



Why, it's old Fezziwig!

*Then, as the clock struck seven, Fezziwig laid down his pen and called his two apprentices.*



Yo ho, my boys! Ebenezer Scrooge and Dick Wilkins. No more work tonight, for it's Christmas Eve!

Up with the shutters! Clear the room! All must be ready!



*The two boys jumped at Fezziwig's order.*

*Shutters went up one, two, three! Every piece of furniture that could be moved was packed off in a minute!*

*The floor was swept and the lamps were made ready.*



Ho there, Dick! Step lively, Ebenezer!

*Then wood was heaped on the fire. Soon the shop was as snug and warm and dry and bright a room as you would ever want to see on a cold winter's night!*

*People came in to spread a Christmas feast upon tables that had been set up just for the party.*



Nothing could be better than this!

*Other people began to arrive at the shop. Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig made everyone welcome.*



Come in! Merry Christmas!

*And in they all came, one after another. Some came quickly, some boldly, some pushing. But it was a happy place to be that Christmas Eve.*



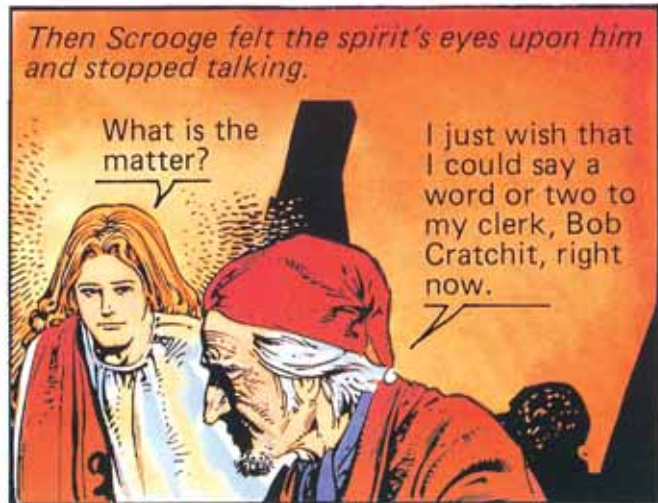
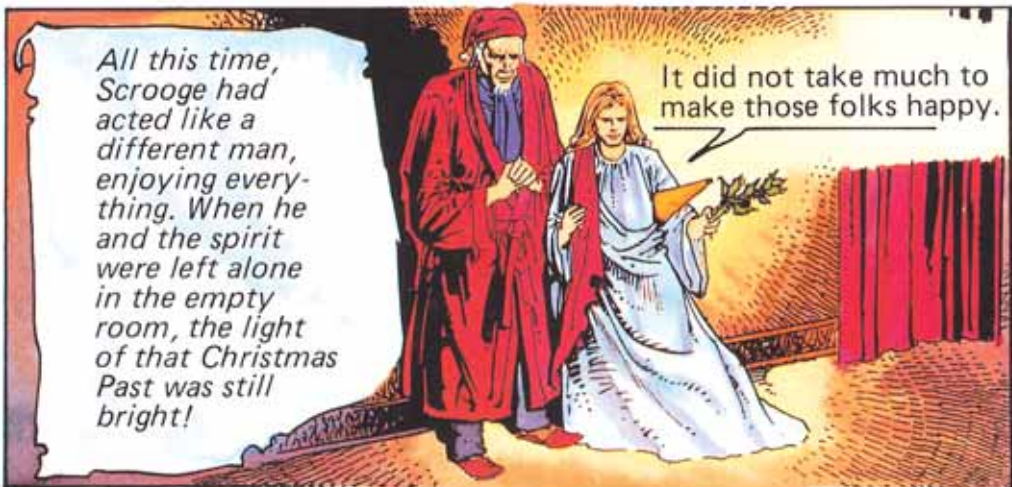
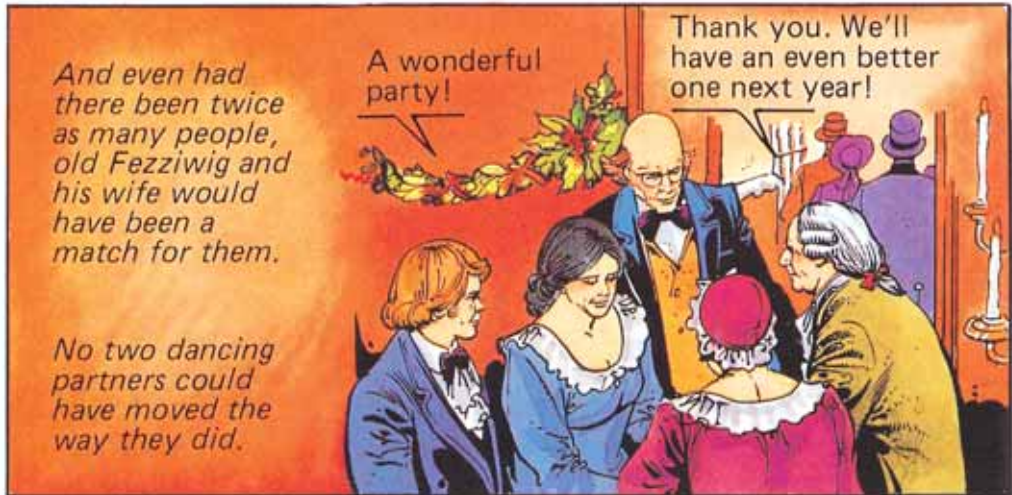
*Then in came a fiddler and the dancing started.*

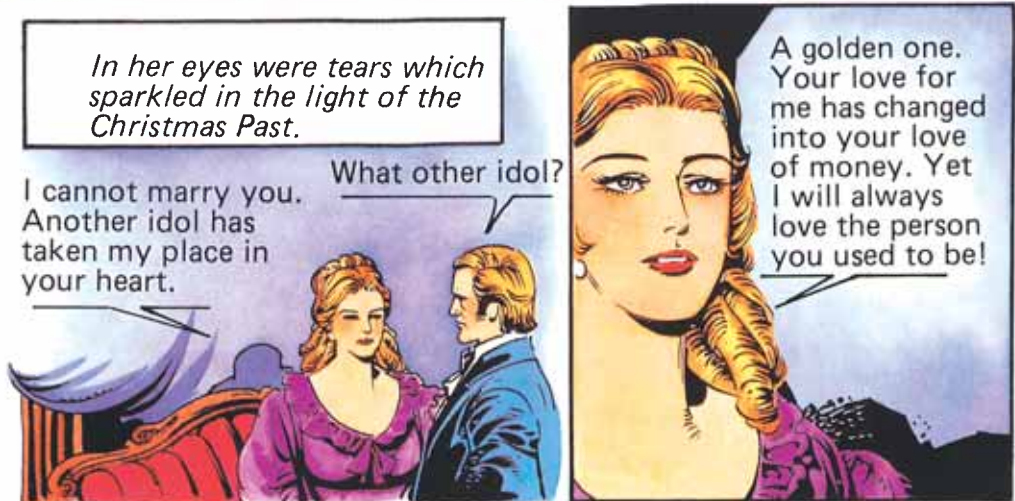
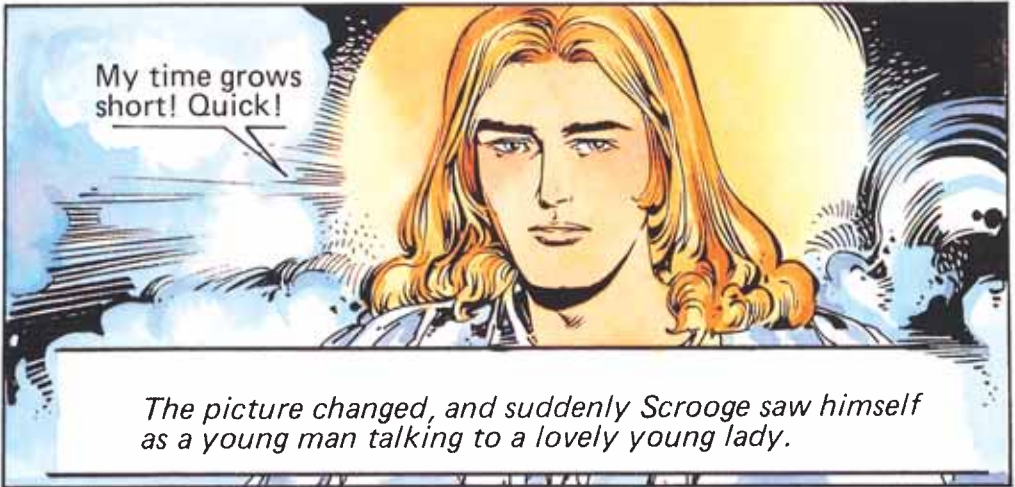


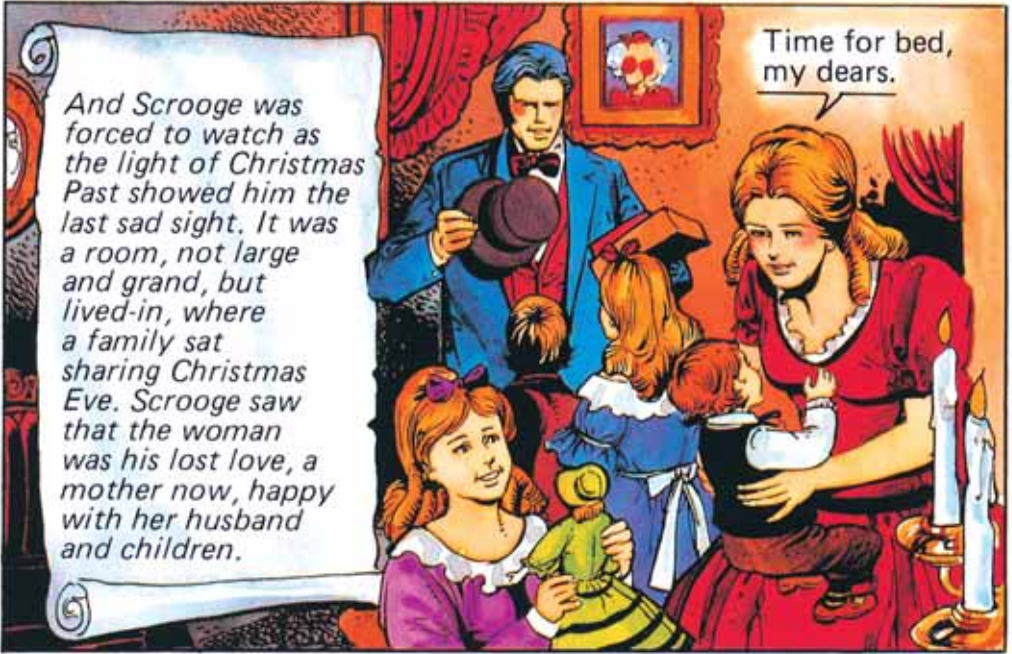
*Away they all went, twenty couples at once, with Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig leading them.*



*They did dances old and new as the night flew by.*







And Scrooge was forced to watch as the light of Christmas Past showed him the last sad sight. It was a room, not large and grand, but lived-in, where a family sat sharing Christmas Eve. Scrooge saw that the woman was his lost love, a mother now, happy with her husband and children.

Time for bed, my dears.

With their children asleep, the couple enjoyed a quiet moment.

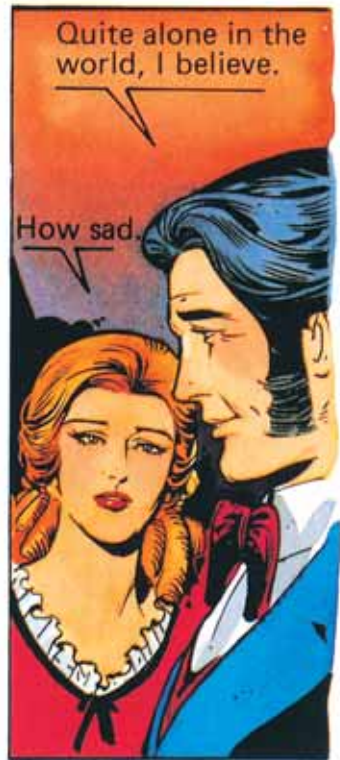


Belle, I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon.

Who?



Mr. Scrooge. I passed his office and there he sat alone.



Quite alone in the world, I believe.

How sad.

Almost in tears, Scrooge begged the spirit to take him home.



I must leave this place. I can bear no more!



These are only the shadows of things past. Do not blame me for what you see!

Take me back! Leave me alone!



Upset by all he had seen, Scrooge began to fight with the spirit. He tried to pull its cap down over the light that showed him too much. But though the cap soon covered the spirit's whole form, the light kept shining across the floor.



All of a sudden Scrooge felt very tired. He found himself back in his his own bedroom, so he fell into bed and sank into a heavy sleep.



*Scrooge awoke when the clock struck one, knowing it was time for his second visitor. A strange light filled his room. He arose and went to the door to see if the light was coming from the next room.*

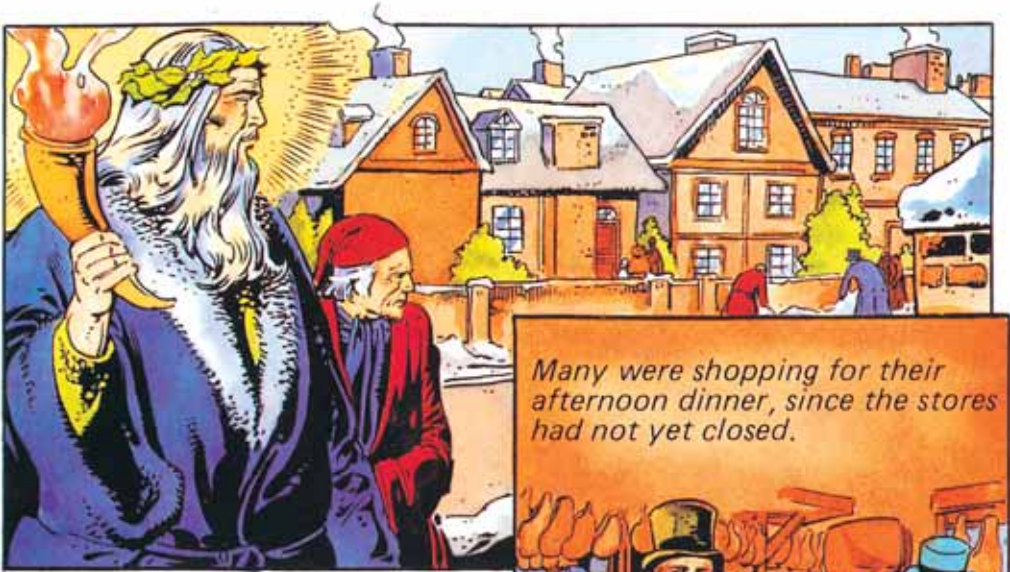


*At that moment a voice called him by name and told him to enter.*





*At that moment the room was gone, and Scrooge found himself standing on the city streets. It was Christmas morning. Although the sky was gray, people passing by all seemed happy.*



*But soon the Christmas bells called them all to church. Away they came, crowding through the streets in their best clothes and their biggest smiles.*



After church, the shops were busy again.

Is my roast chicken ready?

Done to a turn, sir. Still hot from the oven, too!



And many people, carrying their dinners home, had them blessed without ever knowing about it.



Is there a special flavor in the light that comes from your torch?



Yes, there is. My own.

Does it add to any kind of dinner on this day?



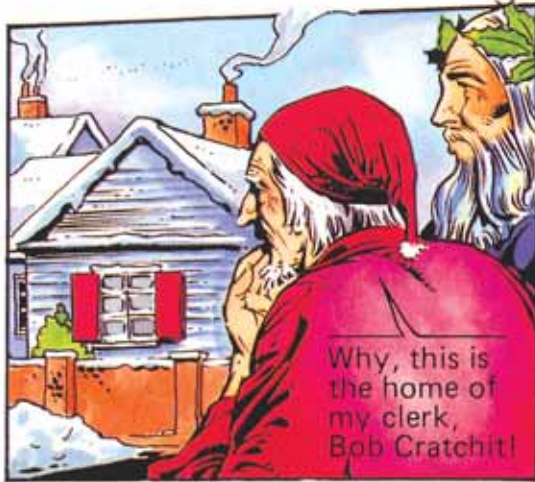
To any dinner kindly given . . . to a poor one most of all.

Why to a poor one most?



Because it needs my flavor most!

*And, still speaking of the poor, the spirit led Scrooge to a small house in a poor part of London. He and Scrooge stood before the building.*



Why, this is the home of my clerk, Bob Cratchit!

*Before entering, the spirit waved his torch.*



Bob has so little. Yet the ghost blesses this tiny house!

*Inside they found Mrs. Cratchit, her daughter Belinda, and her son Peter. All were busy preparing Christmas dinner. Their clothes looked worn, but their smiles made them beautiful to see.*

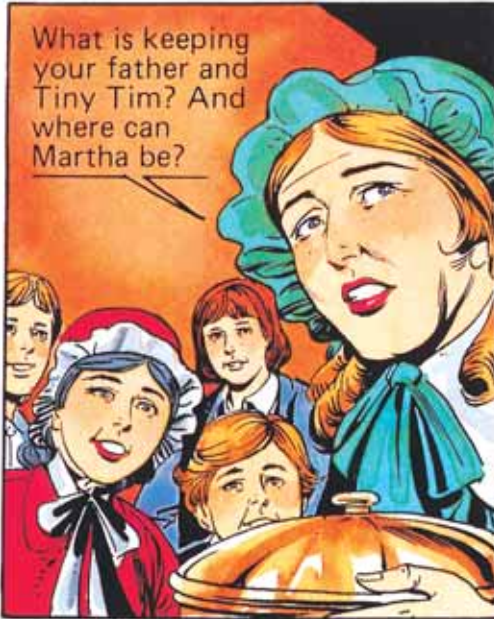


*Soon two smaller Cratchit children came rushing in shouting with joy. They had just passed the baker's shop and were sure they had smelled their very own goose cooking.*



I know it was ours!

It smelled so good!





Not coming. Not coming on Christmas Day?



At these words, Martha ran out to hug her father. Even for a joke she didn't want to see a sad look on his face.

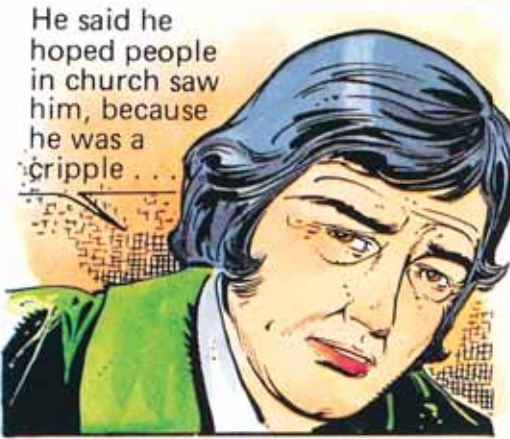
Dear father!

The two youngest Cratchit children took Tiny Tim to smell the Christmas pudding as it cooked.



And how did little Tim act in church?

As good as gold and better. But he thinks the strangest things.



He said he hoped people in church saw him, because he was a cripple . . .



. . . and it might be good for them to remember, on Christmas Day, who made cripples walk and blind men see.

Here Bob's voice broke.

*But Christmas Day would not be a sad one for the Cratchits. Their simple meal had been prepared with love, and everyone had something good to say. Bob Cratchit, for example, said he thought it was his wife's best meal since their wedding dinner. It was such a happy day for the Cratchit family!*



*When the flaming pudding appeared at the end of the meal, everyone clapped, and Mrs. Cratchit beamed at her family.*



*At last dinner was done, and the family gathered around the fire-place for hot punch. Before they drank, Bob Cratchit offered a toast.*



*A merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!*



God bless us!

*Tiny Tim was the last to speak. He was sitting close to his father's side, upon his little stool. Bob Cratchit held Tim's hand in his own.*

*As he watched the happy family, Scrooge whispered something to the spirit.*

God bless us, every one!

Tell me, spirit, will Tiny Tim live?

I see an empty chair, and a crutch without its owner.

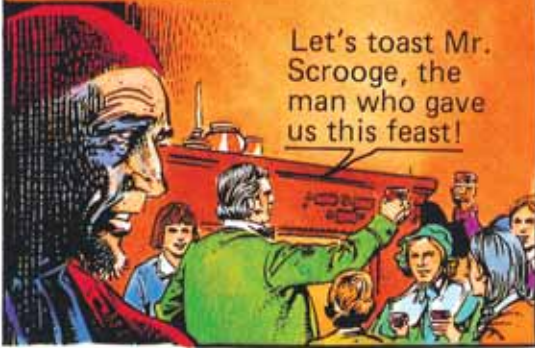
If these shadows are not changed by the future, the child will die!

Oh, no!

Why do you care? You've already said that there are too many people in the world!

*At the spirit's words, Scrooge hung his head.*

He raised it again, however, when he heard his name.



Let's toast Mr. Scrooge, the man who gave us this feast!

Gave us this feast indeed! I wish he were here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon!



My dear! Think of the children. It is Christmas Day!

Only on Christmas Day could I drink to the health of such a hard man as Mr. Scrooge!



And so Mrs. Cratchit joined the others in the toast.



May he be merry and happy! But I don't think he can be!

The family made the toast, but there was little feeling for it. The name of Scrooge set a shadow over the party which lasted a full five minutes. But after it had passed, their joy returned.

As the little group faded from sight, Scrooge kept his eyes upon them until the last.

They flew over land and over the ocean to see Christmas in many different places. They visited a miner's hut, a ship, and a lighthouse in the middle of a storm. The spirit of Christmas present seemed to be everywhere.



Suddenly, as he moved with the spirit over a dark world with howling winds around him, Scrooge heard laughing.

He found himself standing with the spirit in the bright, warm home of his nephew. Fred and his wife were having a Christmas party, and many of their young friends were there.



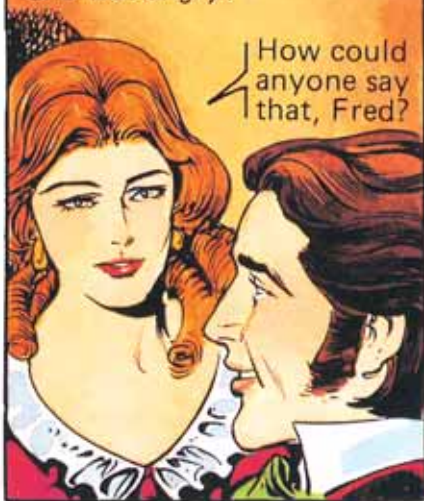
As Scrooge stood watching, he saw that Fred was telling a story and the young people were all laughing. The story was about him!

For the first time Scrooge saw Fred's beautiful wife. She was angry!

He said that Christmas was a humbug! And he believed it, too!

Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha!

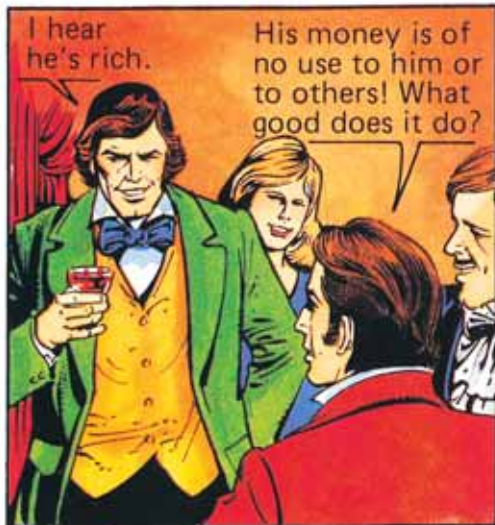
How could anyone say that, Fred?

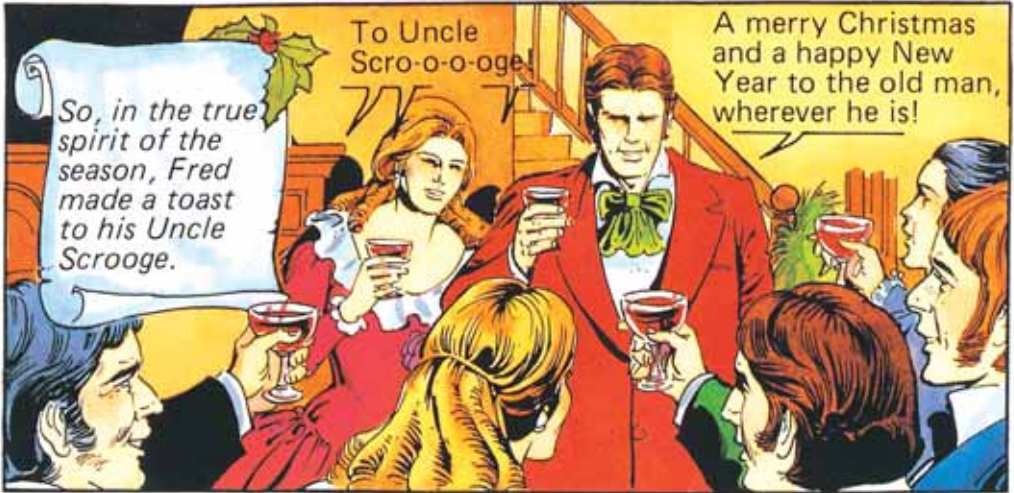


I hear he's rich.

His money is of no use to him or to others! What good does it do?

I asked him to come and have Christmas dinner with us, but he wouldn't do it. Just see the fun he misses! I feel sorry for him.



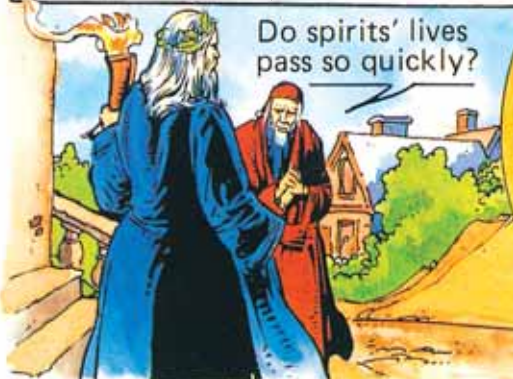


When the spirit said that it was time to go, Scrooge begged like a child to stay until the end of the party.

The happy group played games for the rest of the evening. Scrooge took part in everything, though no one else knew it!



When it was over, they traveled on. Soon Scrooge saw that the spirit's hair had turned gray.

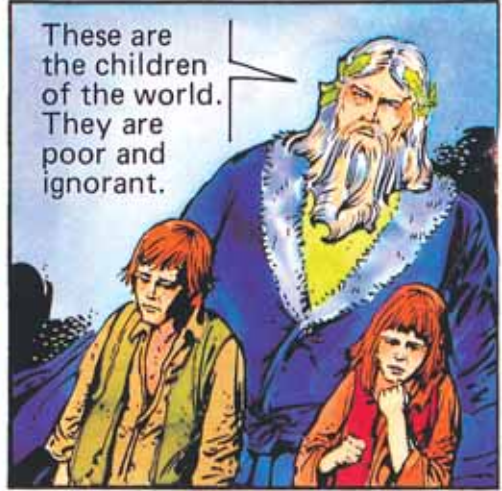


My life here is very short. It ends tonight at midnight, and the time is near!



*Then Scrooge saw that something seemed to be moving beneath the spirit's robe.*

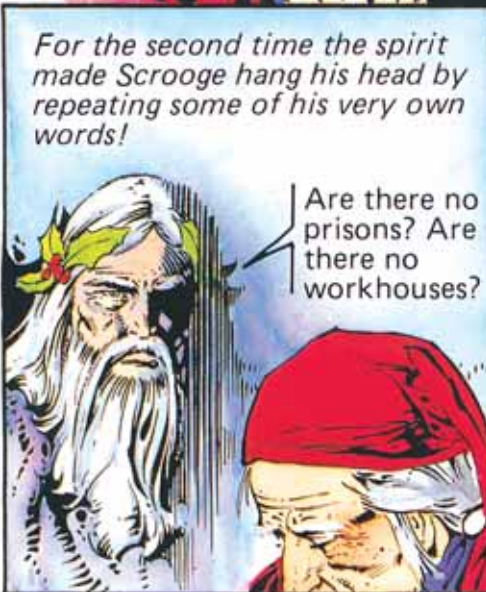
Spirit, what is that behind your robe?



These are the children of the world. They are poor and ignorant.



Have they no home? Is there no one to help them?



*For the second time the spirit made Scrooge hang his head by repeating some of his very own words!*

Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?



*Somewhere a clock struck twelve, and coming toward him was another spirit.*



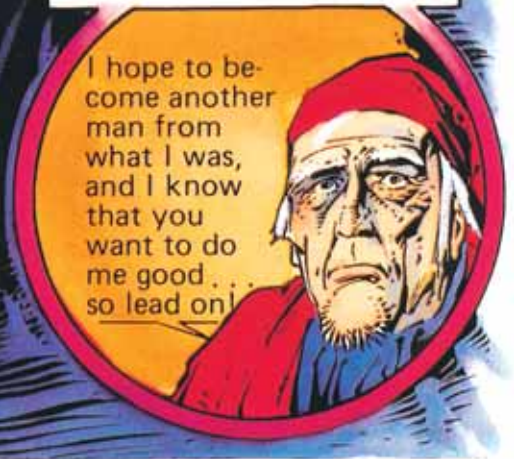
*The spirit wore a black robe which hid its head, face, and form. Nothing could be seen but his hand. Scrooge was terrified.*

*The spirit said not a word, but nodded its head and pointed with its finger.*

*Scrooge shook with fear as he talked.*



You are about to show me things that have not yet happened but could happen in the future?



I hope to become another man from what I was, and I know that you want to do me good, so lead on!

*The city seemed to spring up around them. They were in the Merchants' Exchange.*



Who would want to?

Who'll go to his funeral?



He died last night.

Left his money to his company, guess.



Since what he was seeing would take place in the future, Scrooge began to look around for himself. But another man was in his old place!

He looked closely at all the faces he passed but could not find his own.

Perhaps I will have changed my ways by now. I am probably in some other place that does people more good!

Hmmmm.  
That's strange!

With its finger still pointing, the spirit showed Scrooge a poor, run-down part of the city. Crime and evil were not strangers here!

What am I to learn from this?

They followed a woman carrying a heavy bundle as she sneaked into a hidden shop.



*It was a store whose owner bought and sold stolen goods. And it was here that Meg came to sell the clothes she had stolen.*

So you've been to his place, Meg?

Yes.


 A man with a long red beard and a purple top hat (Scrooge) sits on a wooden stool in a shop. He is wearing a green coat and red trousers. A woman (Meg) stands before him, wearing a blue hat and a red and yellow shawl. She is holding a bundle of clothes. The shop has wooden shelves and barrels in the background.

*Scrooge and the spirit listened to what the two people were saying.*

You took these with him lying there?

Yes—all of it!


 Scrooge and the spirit (a man with a long red beard and a purple top hat) are looking at Meg. The spirit is pointing towards the bundle of clothes she is holding. Scrooge is looking on with a stern expression.

What are these?

His blankets. He won't catch cold without 'em, I guess!


 A close-up of Scrooge and Meg. Scrooge is on the left, looking at Meg. Meg is on the right, looking back at him. She is holding a yellow blanket. Scrooge is wearing his purple top hat and green coat. Meg is wearing her blue hat and red and yellow shawl.

That fine shirt almost went to waste. He was to be buried in it.

And you took it off him?


 Scrooge and the spirit are standing with Meg. Scrooge is holding a yellow shirt. The spirit is looking at the shirt. Meg is looking on. Scrooge is wearing his purple top hat and green coat. The spirit is wearing his red beard and purple top hat. Meg is wearing her blue hat and red and yellow shawl.

*The man dropped some coins into her hand.*

You were born to make money!

Not from you, that's sure.


 Scrooge and the spirit are handing coins to Meg. Scrooge is holding a small pile of coins. The spirit is also holding coins. Meg is looking at the coins. Scrooge is wearing his purple top hat and green coat. The spirit is wearing his red beard and purple top hat. Meg is wearing her blue hat and red and yellow shawl.

He gave nothing in life. Let him do it in death, say !!


 A close-up of Meg's face. She is wearing her blue hat and red and yellow shawl. She has a determined and somewhat angry expression.

Scrooge heard her next words in great fear.

He drove everyone away. I don't think there was a soul who liked him.

Will she never stop talking!

If so, some one would have been with him on Christmas Eve. Instead, he died there alone.

Scrooge shook from head to foot.

Spirit! The story of this man might be my own! My life has been like that.

The spirit did not answer, but Scrooge moved quickly to another room. It was very dark, but Scrooge knew where he was.

He looked back at the spirit and saw its finger pointing to a figure on the bed. The ghost seemed to be telling Scrooge to draw back the cover and see who was there!

At this point Scrooge felt he could stand no more.

Let us go from this fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not forget its lesson, I promise.

No, spirit, I cannot do it.

*But the spirit continued to point.*



I cannot look on that face! Is there anyone in this town who feels sad about his death?

*The ghost's robe moved like a dark wing to show Scrooge a room by daylight. A man was speaking to his wife and children.*



He's dead, Caroline. But who will take over our debt?

It doesn't matter. No one could be as hard a man as he was!



Finally we are free of him!

*Of all the people the spirit had shown Scrooge, none seemed sorry that the man had died. Some of them were even happy!*



We may sleep with light hearts tonight, Caroline!

"Let me see some sorrow at his death," said Scrooge, "or that dark room which we left just now will be forever in my mind."

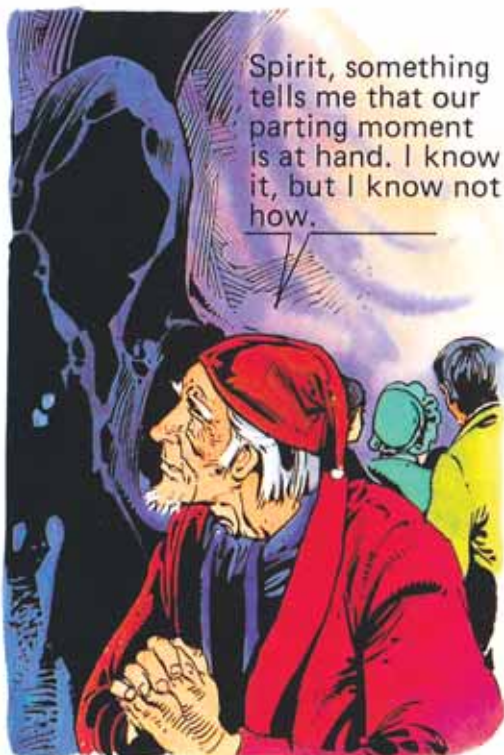


The ghost finally brought Scrooge into the home of Bob Cratchit.

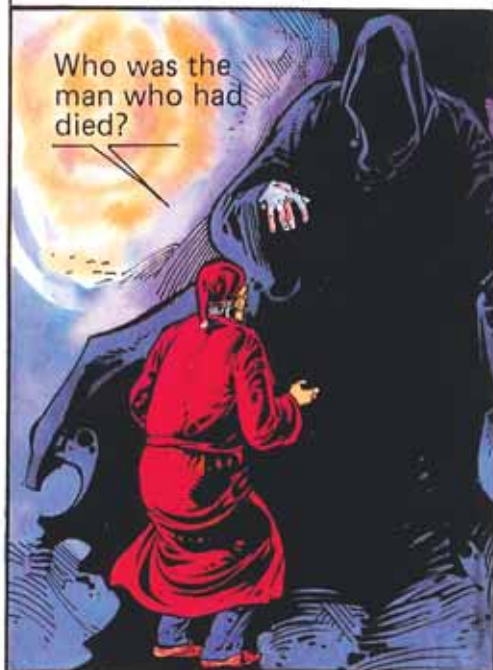


Tears ran down the father's face.





*The question he hated to ask was on his lips.*



*But the spirit did not answer. As before, only the pointing finger showed Scrooge where they were going next.*

There is my old office. My future self must be there!



*But the spirit had stopped; his hand was pointing down another road.*

My office is that way! Why do you point away from it?



*Yet the spirit did not move.*

By all that's holy, I'll see for myself!



Scrooge ran to the window of his office and looked in.



Inside he saw an office still, but it was not his! The man sitting at his desk was not Scrooge.

My office is the same, but someone else has taken my place.



Scrooge went back to the spirit and walked with him until they reached an iron gate. They entered an old graveyard at the side of a church.

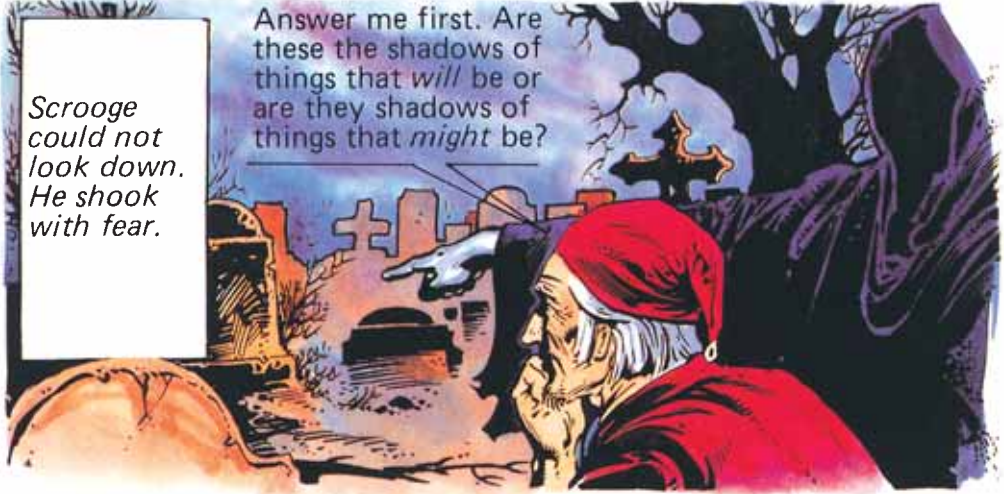


Walled in by houses and covered with weeds were the graves of those whom no one cared about. The spirit stood among them and pointed at one.

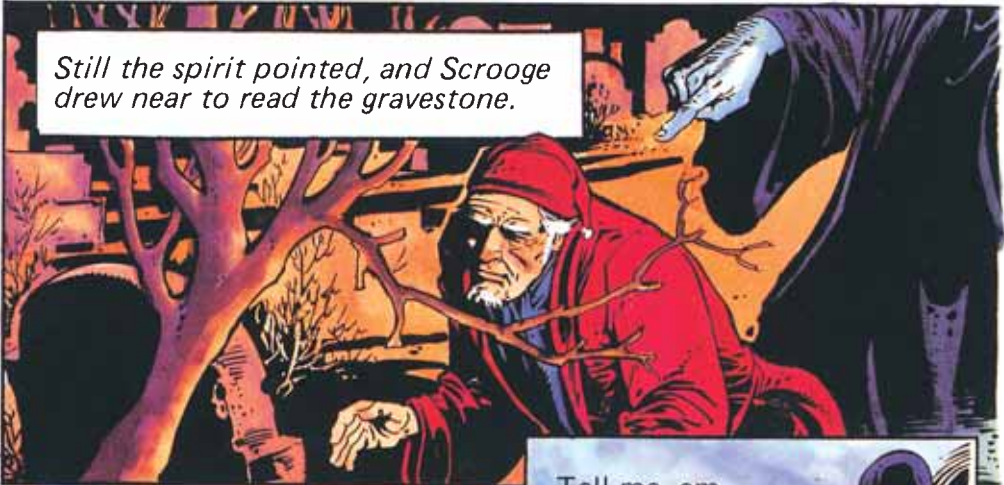


*Scrooge could not look down. He shook with fear.*

Answer me first. Are these the shadows of things that *will* be or are they shadows of things that *might* be?



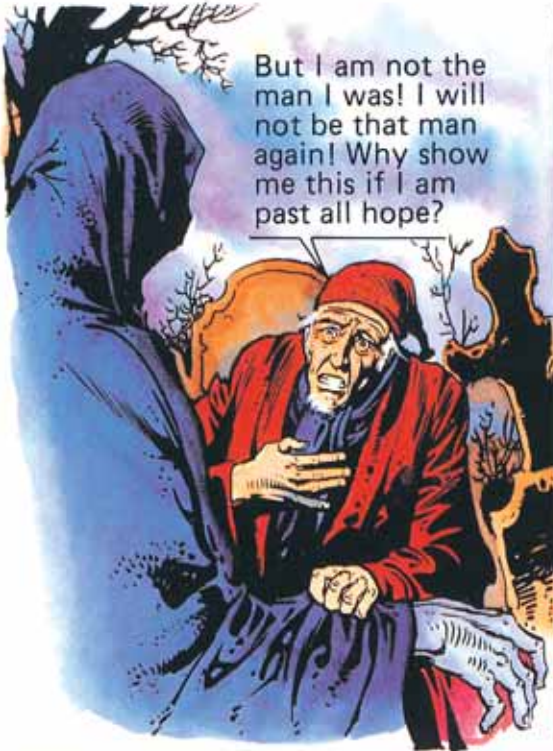
*Still the spirit pointed, and Scrooge drew near to read the gravestone.*



Tell me, am I that man who lay upon the bed?



*The finger pointed from the grave to Scrooge and back again.*



But I am not the man I was! I will not be that man again! Why show me this if I am past all hope?

*For the first time the hand seemed to shake a bit.*



Tell me, please, that I may change the shadows I have just seen. I want to live and become a better person!



*The kind hand shook again.*

I will honor Christmas in my heart and keep it all the year! Please do not let those things happen!



*As he prayed, the spirit began to slip away.*

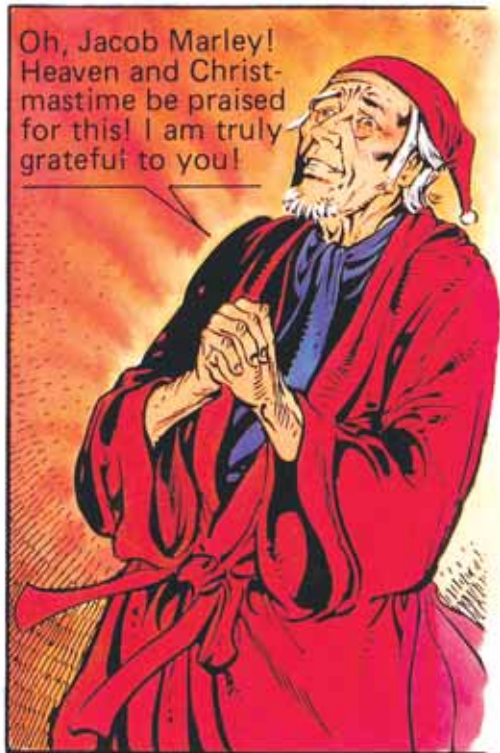
You must help me! You must!



*It grew smaller and smaller until it was no bigger than a bedpost.*

What . . . ?  
How . . . ?  
Where . . . ?

*Everything was the same, but Scrooge somehow knew he had been saved. He would have the time to make many changes!*



Oh, Jacob Marley!  
Heaven and Christ-  
mastime be praised  
for this! I am truly  
grateful to you!



I'm as light  
as a feather,  
happy as an  
angel, merry  
as a school-  
boy!

*He ran into the sitting room.*



Marley's ghost  
came through  
the door. There's  
where the Ghost  
of Christmas  
Present sat!

It's all right, it's all true! It all happened!

And then Scrooge laughed a great loud laugh.



It was the father of a long, long line of great laughs!

He flung up the window, and put out his head. Church bells were ringing.

I don't know what day it is! Or how long I was among the spirits! But who cares?

Oh, it's beautiful! Beautiful!





Christmas! I haven't missed it. The spirits have done it all in one night.



It's hanging there now.



*At the next promise, the boy was off like a shot.*

Be back in less than five minutes, and I'll give you two times as much!



He had barely written out the address card when the door knocker clanged.



I'll send the turkey to Bob Cratchit's. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim!

On the street again, he saw a man he thought he knew.



Yesterday I refused you some money to help the poor and needy. But today will you take...

It's impossible to carry that big turkey to Camden Town! I'll get you a cab and pay for it too!



Such an amount! My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you sure of this?



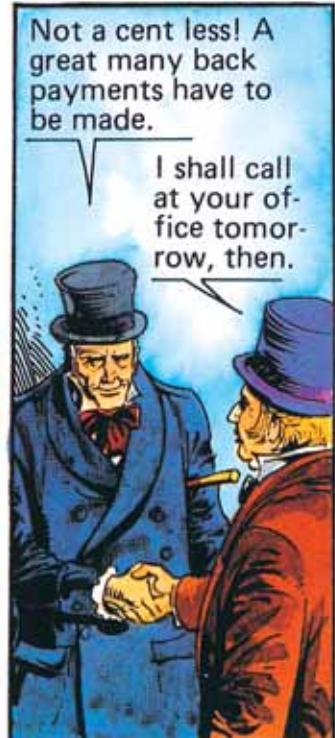
I am.

Now, dressed in his best clothes, Scrooge walked to church.



Not a cent less! A great many back payments have to be made.

I shall call at your office tomorrow, then.



*Next Scrooge hurried to the house of his nephew, Fred. He didn't want to be late for Christmas dinner. Fred and his wife greeted him with surprise.*

*The next morning Scrooge arrived early at his office. And, just as he thought, Bob Cratchit was a few minutes late.*

Uncle! You *did* come for Christmas dinner after all!


Uncle Scrooge it's so nice to meet you.

Bless you both, my dears!

I'm sorry to be late, sir. I'll never let it happen again!

*And Scrooge was the life of the party.*







*Then Scrooge spoke up. And as Bob listened, he could hardly believe his ears.*

We'll talk this over right now with a cup of holiday punch. I am happy with the good work you've done for me over the years. Now I want to help you and your family.

I have had quite enough of this! And so . . . I am about to raise your salary!



*Scrooge was even better than his word. He did it all, and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. He became as good a man as the good old city ever knew!*



*And from that time on, it was always said that if anyone knew how to keep Christmas well, it was Ebenezer Scrooge! May that be truly said of all of us!*

*And so, as Tiny Tim once said, God bless us, every one!*

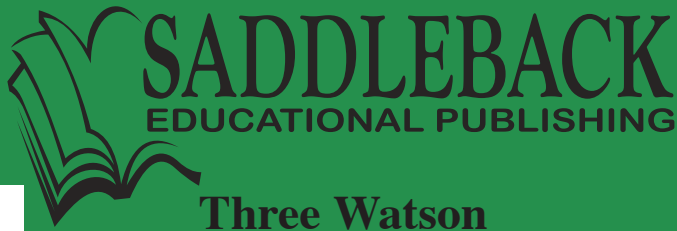
*the End*

# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

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