

A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens

retold by Jenny Dooley

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The Knocker

It was Christmas Eve in London. The bells in the church were ringing all day long, the candles in the shop windows were lit and you could see people walking quickly through the snow-covered streets. That special feeling which people only seem to have at Christmas was everywhere. Everywhere, that is, except in one place.

There was one office, with the name *Scrooge and Marley* painted across the window. Two men were in it, working, without smiles on their faces. There was a small fire in the fireplace. Ebenezer Scrooge, the owner, did not like to spend money so the fire stayed small. Scrooge thought it was a waste of money to put more coal on the fire. His clerk, Bob Cratchit, was sitting at his desk writing letters, trying to keep his hands warm by the heat of his candle.

Suddenly, the door opened and the cold and wind from outside filled the room. A young man with red cheeks, curly dark hair and a friendly smile stood in the doorway.

"Merry Christmas, Uncle! Merry Christmas, Bob."

Bob Cratchit looked up for a moment.

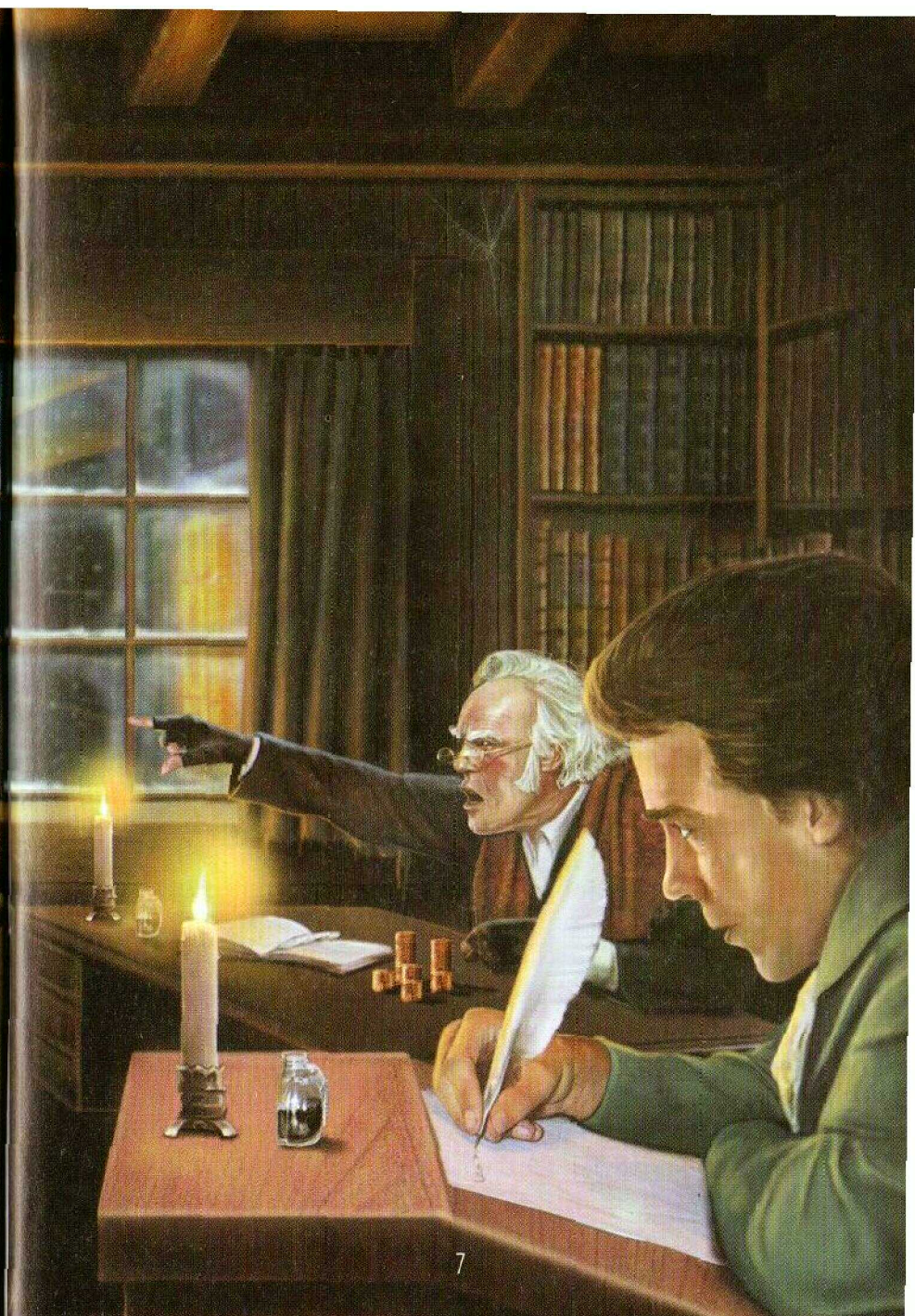
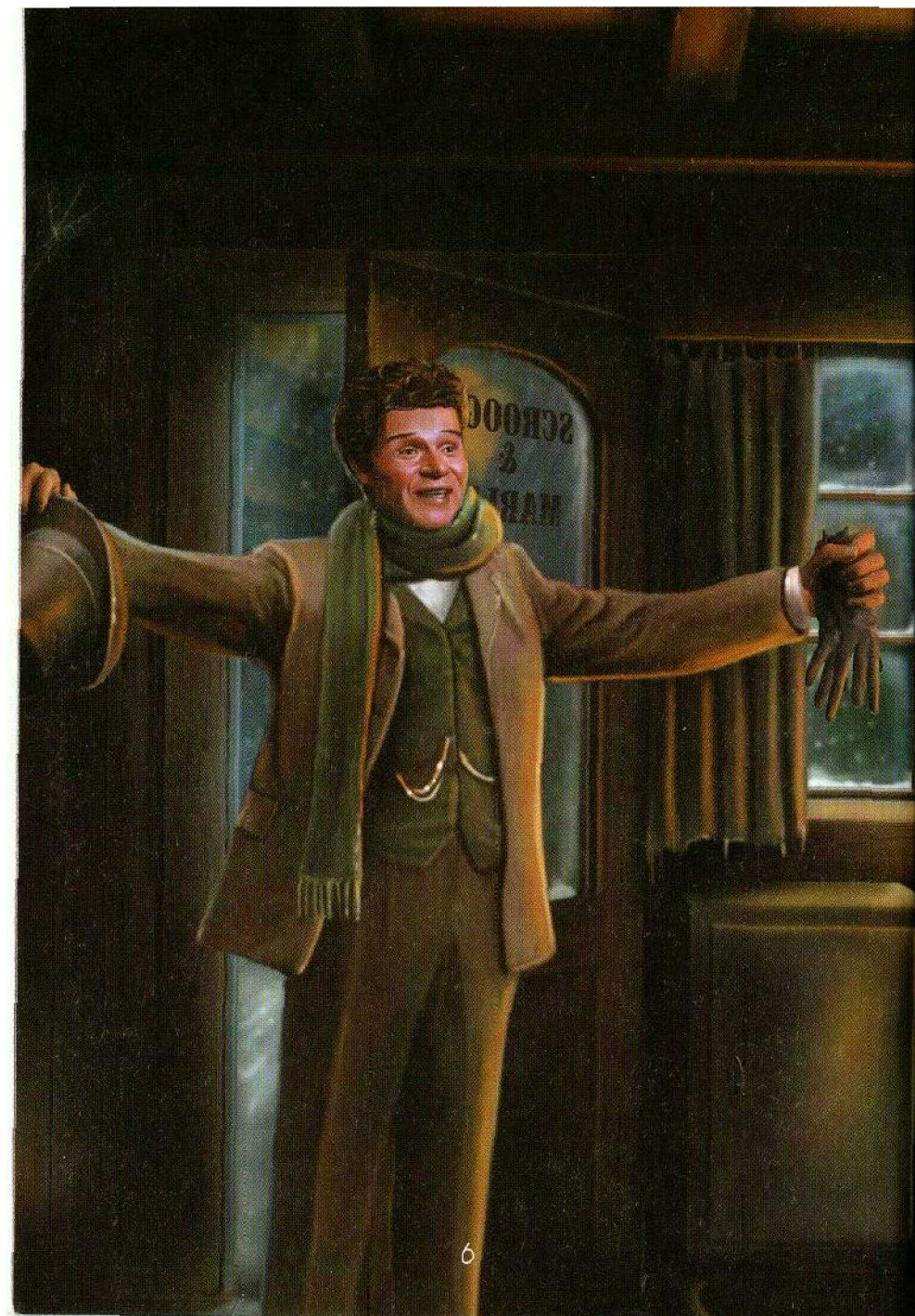
"Merry Christmas to you, sir."

Scrooge pointed his crooked finger at Bob Cratchit.

"Get back to work, and keep your 'Merry Christmas' to yourself! As for you, Fred, I have two words for Christmas: Bah! Humbug!"

Fred, Scrooge's nephew, came into the shop and closed the door. He never let the smile leave his face.





"Uncle, why do you call Christmas 'humbug'? It's the one holiday when people open their hearts and truly feel kind towards others. Even *you* can see that."

Scrooge got up from his desk. He had small, round glasses sitting on the end of his nose. His face was red with anger and he frowned as he spoke.

"I'll tell you what I see. I see people spending more money than they have. I see work stopping and money lost for a day that is just like any other day! If I could, I would cancel Christmas and make everyone work twice as hard."

"But the fact is, Uncle, only butchers and bakers work on Christmas Day. So my wife and I want you to come and have Christmas dinner with us."

"No!"

"Uncle, please ..."

"I said no and I mean no! Go away and have your Christmas without me!"

"As you wish, Uncle, but nothing you say can make me change how I feel. Merry Christmas to you, Bob, and a happy New Year!"

"And a Merry Christmas to you, sir."

"Goodbye!"

Soon after Scrooge's nephew left, a kind man in a black suit came into the shop asking for money for the poor; and then a young boy arrived wanting to sing Christmas carols. To the kind old man, Scrooge said,

"People who are poor don't have money because they never work. And those who are dying are better off leaving this world. There is no hope in it for them."

For the young boy, Scrooge had no words. He simply slammed the door on him.

"These people will never leave me alone! How can I get any work done?"

At the end of the day, Scrooge locked the office door behind him and walked home alone, with his black hat pulled far down on his head. He heard people laughing and singing Christmas carols in the streets. The only thing he said was,

"Bah! Humbug!"

The night was getting cold. The wind blew the snow up from the ground and made it difficult to see. When Scrooge came to his front door, he stopped to find his key. There was a large old knocker on the door. It looked like a round ball with lines on it. Suddenly, the knocker changed, and it was no longer a ball but the face of a man. It was the face of Jacob Marley, Scrooge's old partner. But Jacob Marley was dead! So whose was this face? And why was he red-eyed and crying like a madman?

Scrooge took a step backwards and hid his face in his hands in terror.

"Ahhh! Go away! Please don't hurt me!"

When Scrooge got no answer, he looked up. The knocker was just a knocker. Jacob Marley's face was no longer there.



Chapter 2

The Ghost of Jacob Marley

Scrooge went quickly into his house, his heart still beating fast. The knocker was only a knocker, after all. So why did it frighten him so much? Scrooge got angry with himself. What did he think it was, a ghost? He had only two things to say to that.

"Bah! Humbug!"

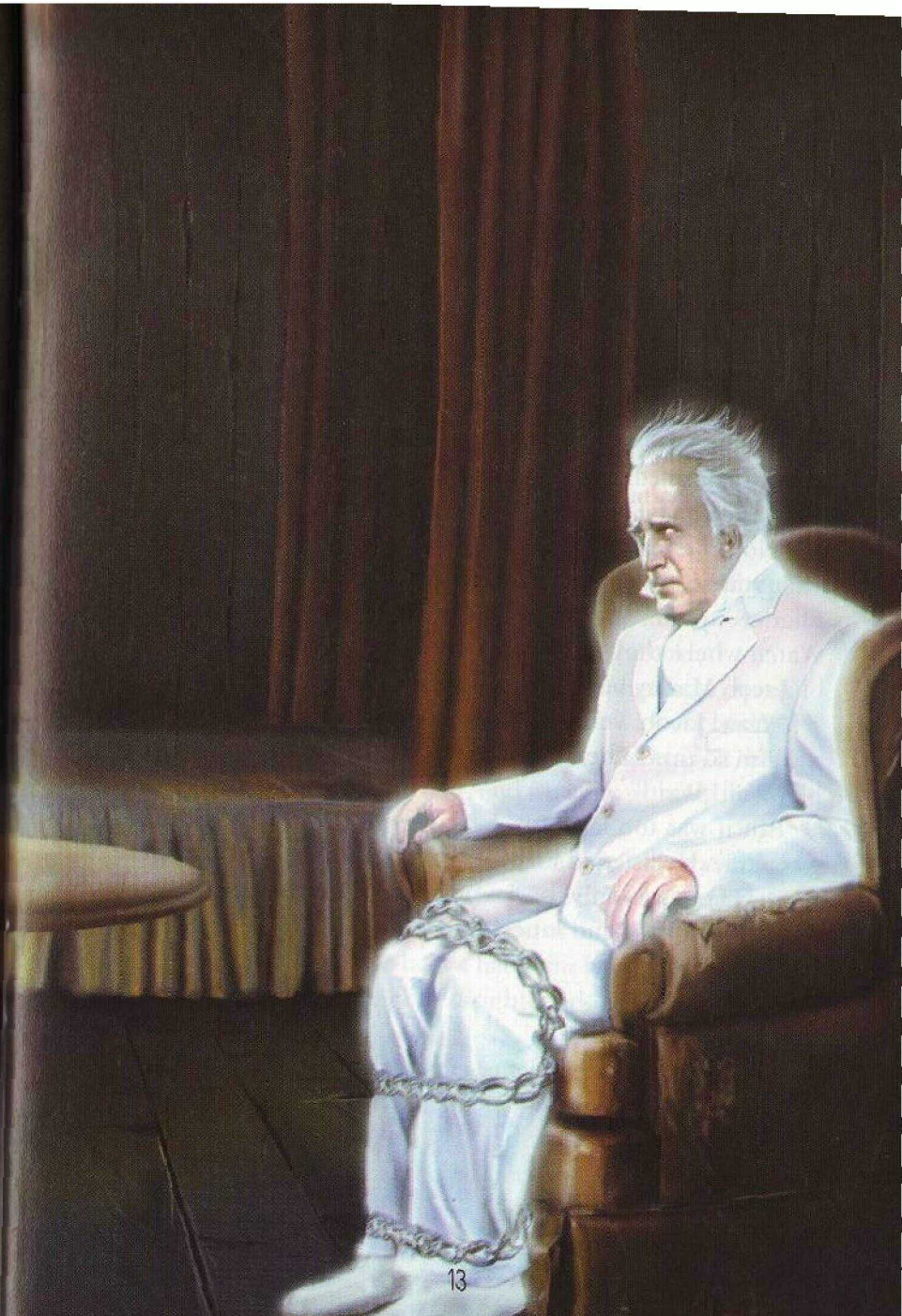
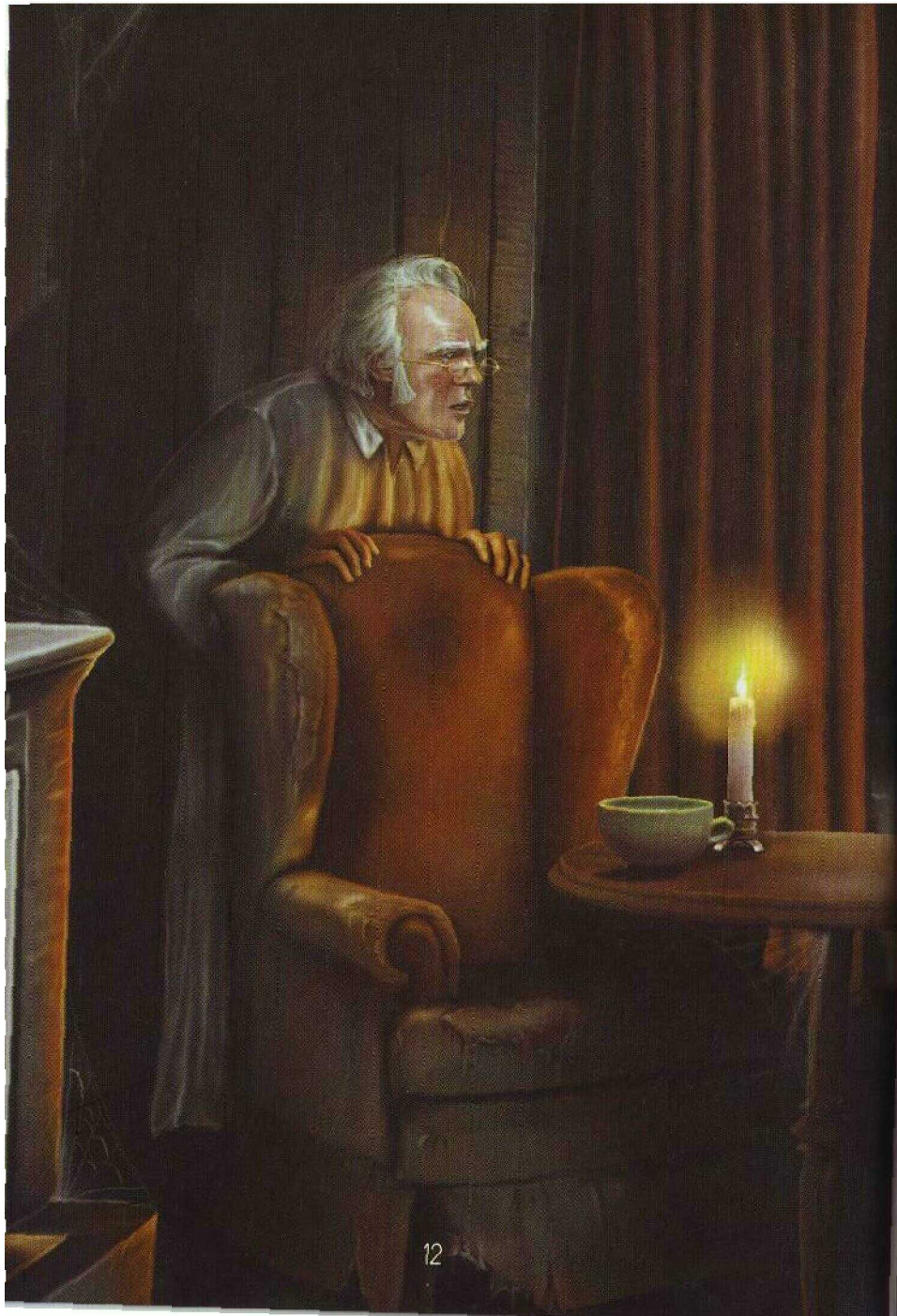
Scrooge lived alone in an old and empty house. Only one room had furniture and that was his bedroom, where he lived. He went to his room, as he did every night and lit the fire. Then he changed his clothes and put a pot of soup on the fire. As he sat, waiting for the soup to warm, he heard a bell, and then another bell. Soon, thousands of bells were ringing all over the house. The bells stopped, and then Scrooge heard something in the cellar. It sounded like chains moving along the floor. Then he heard the sound of someone in pain. He could hear these sounds coming up the stairs. And now, they were right outside his bedroom door!

"No, I won't believe it. There are no such things as ghosts!"

As soon as Scrooge said that, the ghost of Jacob Marley came through his bedroom door with chains around his legs. His old partner was standing in front of him.

"Jacob, what are you doing here? What do you want from me?"

Jacob Marley looked tired. He was wearing a white suit. His hair stood on end, and his eyes were red and sad. He sat down in a chair opposite Scrooge.





*The Ghost of
Christmas Past*

"I am here, Ebenezer, to help you. I don't want you to become unhappy, like I am."

"But you made lots of money, Jacob. You were a good businessman. How can you be unhappy?"

"I never gave to the poor. I never helped others. That's why I wear these chains. Now, I must travel the Earth as a ghost and see all of the unhappiness I never cared about when I was alive."

"Do you mean that I will become a ghost like you? Tell me!"

"No, Ebenezer, I can't. But I can tell you this: Tonight, after you go to sleep, three other ghosts will come to visit you. Ebenezer, you still have a chance, so listen to what they say. Watch where they take you. Your future depends on it."

Jacob Marley began to disappear.

"Wait, Jacob, you must tell me more!"

"I'm so tired Ebenezer. I have to go."

"Wait! Wait!"

But it was too late. Jacob Marley was gone and Scrooge was alone. He listened for sounds in the house, but there were none. There was only the sound of the wind blowing outside. Scrooge felt cold and lonely.

Scrooge walked around his room in his dressing gown, talking to himself.

"Jacob Marley said three more ghosts are going to visit me tonight while I'm sleeping. If I stay awake, perhaps they'll never come. What is this all about anyway? What did he mean, you still have a chance?"

The wind blew harder outside, and the fire in the fireplace started to get low. Scrooge got into bed, which had heavy curtains around it. He closed the curtains to keep out the cold.

"I'll just sit here until the morning. I'm not going to speak to any more ghosts. All this talk about ghosts ... It's a lot of humbug!"

Scrooge's eyes began to close and before he knew it, he was asleep. Scrooge slept very deeply, and when he woke up, he could hear the church bells ringing.

"What's that? Did I fall asleep? Ha! You see? No ghosts!"

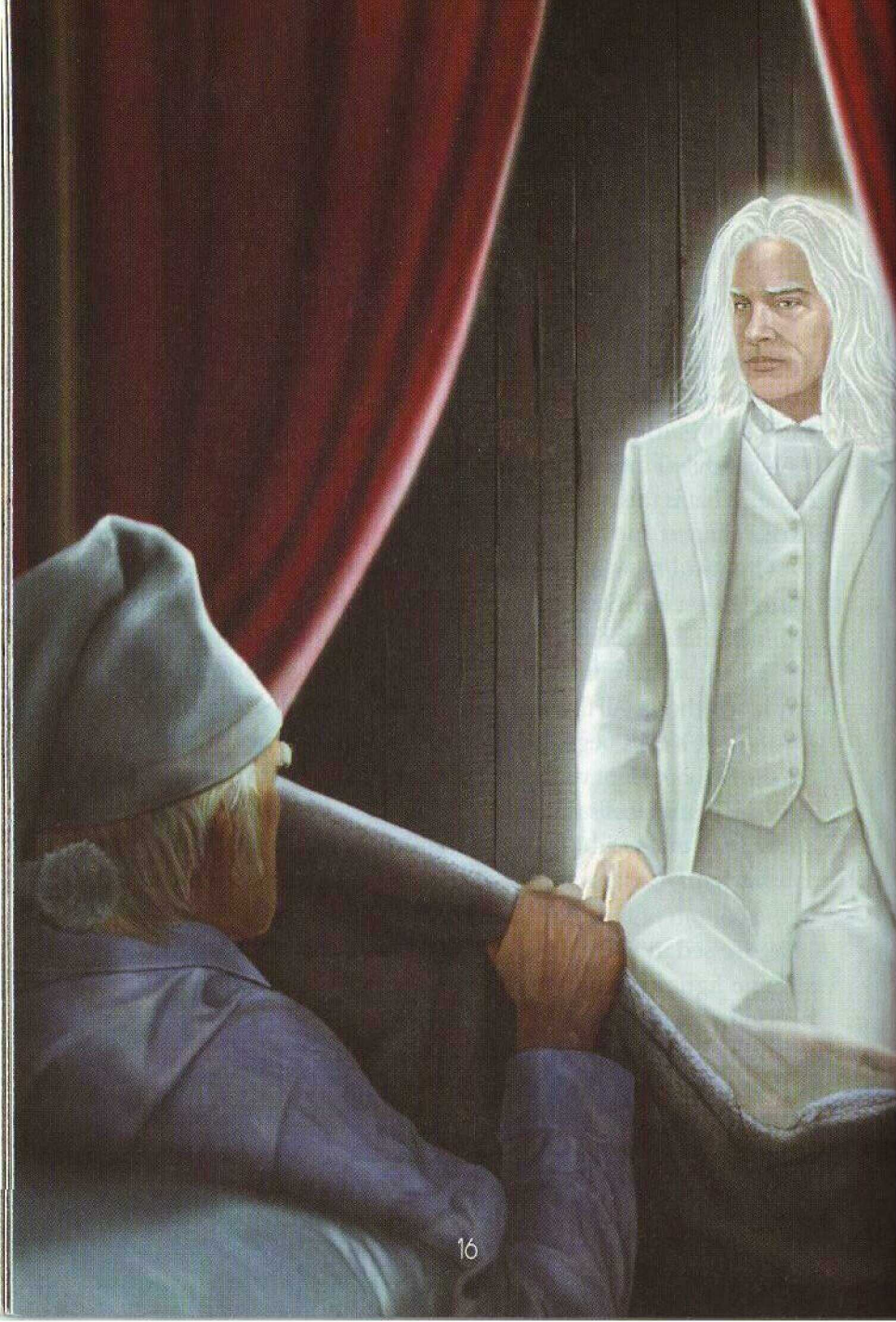
Slowly, the curtains around the bed were pulled open, and there, at the bottom of the bed, was the ghost of a man with long white hair, dressed in white. He held a hat in his hand and there was a strange light all around him. Frightened, Scrooge pulled the bedclothes up to his neck.

"Who are you? What do you want from me?"

"I am the ghost of Christmas Past."

"What do you mean 'past'?"

"Your past, Ebenezer Scrooge. I am here to show you how you used to be."



"Why? I know how I was. Tell Marley it's all right. I'll change. I don't need to see the past."

But there was nothing Scrooge could do. An invisible hand pulled back the bedclothes and made him stand up.

"Come with me. We're going outside."

"It's cold out there. I'll freeze."

"Take my hand."

Scrooge did what the ghost said, even though he didn't want to. The ghost's hand was soft and gentle, so Scrooge was no longer afraid when they walked through the wall.

Suddenly, they were not in London anymore. They were in the country. It was daytime. There was snow on the fields. A road over a small bridge, over an even smaller river, led to a town. There was a church right in the middle of the town.

"Do you know this place?"

Scrooge felt a new joy inside him.

"This is where I was born."

They passed several people, all wishing each other a Merry Christmas. Scrooge looked at them with happiness.

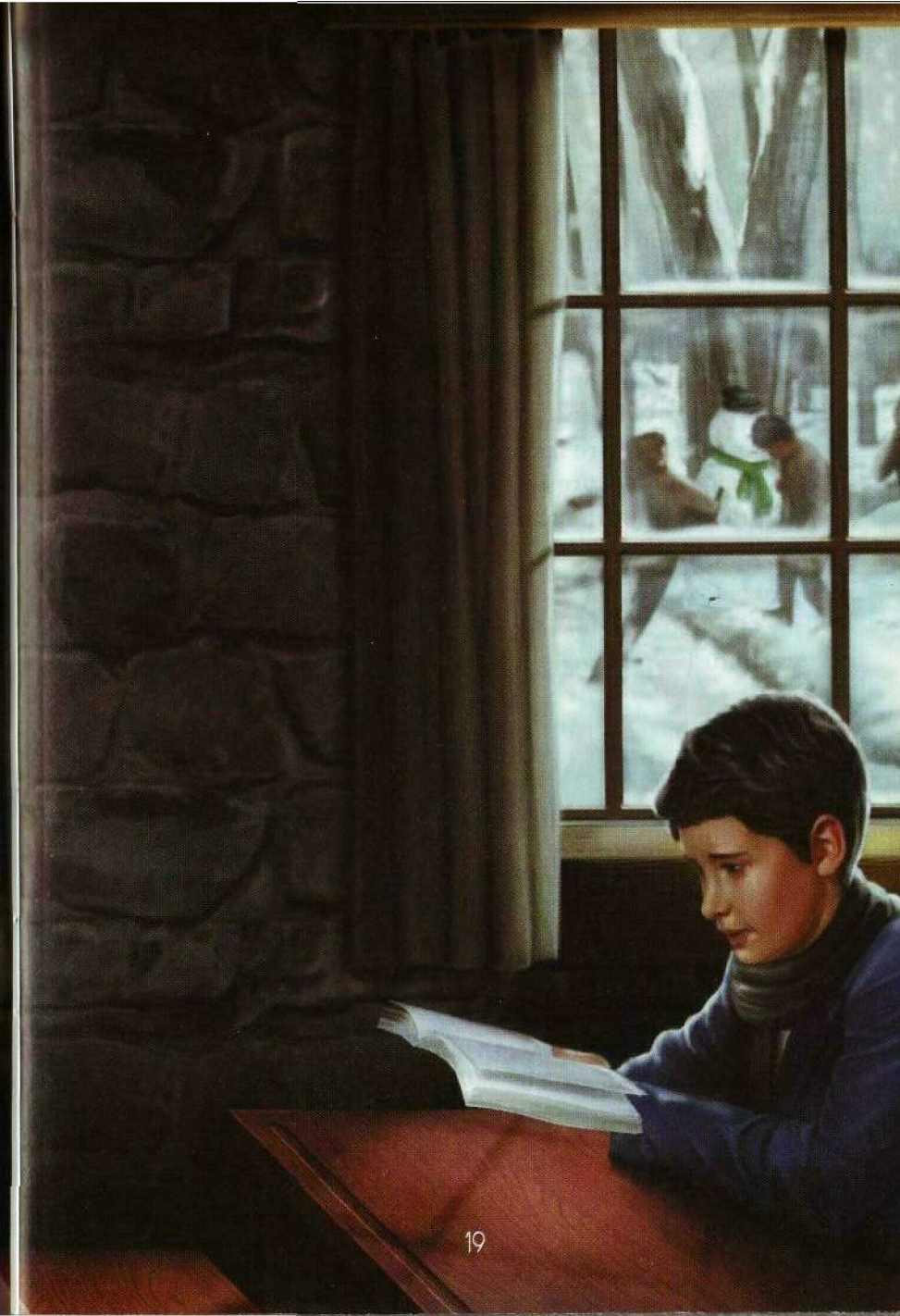
"I know all these people!"

"Yes, but don't try to talk to them. They can't see us. Come, let us go to the school. It is not *quite* empty."

Suddenly, Scrooge began to feel differently. School was a sad place for him. It was an old dark stone building. They went inside. There was a small boy, all alone, reading at a desk. Scrooge tried to turn away.

"Don't show me this."

"But why? Don't you know who that is?"



"Ofcourse I do. But why do you want to show me this? My father left me here. Nobody knows what it's like to be a young boy all alone on Christmas Day."

Scrooge's eyes filled with tears.

"Is something wrong?"

"I was just thinking of another young boy I saw today. He came to my shop, alone, singing Christmas carols. I didn't give him anything. Oh, take me away. I don't want to see anymore."

"Come. There are more things which you must see."

Scrooge did not argue. He did not have the strength. The ghost took him by the hand, and they set off again.

More Memories

The ghost and Scrooge were now inside a carriage pulled by two horses. Sitting opposite them was a young man and a young girl. The man had dark hair, red cheeks and dark eyes.

"You were a handsome young man."

Scrooge was not listening. His eyes were on the young girl, his sister. She had pale skin, dark hair and a soft voice. Everything about her seemed gentle and kind.

"Oh Ebenezer, I was so happy when father told me to go and bring you home. I've missed you so! And father is very different. He's a kind man now, not like before. I think you two will get on much better now."

"I didn't want to spend another Christmas in that awful school. But now that I am with you, nothing else matters."

"What a beautiful young girl your sister was," said the ghost. Scrooge felt sad but proud.

"She was, and she died so young."

"Yes, life can be cruel. Death takes the young as well as the old. But didn't she have one child?"

"Yes, a boy."

"He must be your nephew."

Scrooge looked down and his heart felt heavy. The ghost did not need to remind him of that afternoon, when his nephew came into his shop and invited him for Christmas dinner.



The carriage stopped, and the young Scrooge and his sister got out. The older Scrooge, with the ghost at his side, got out as well and now they were back in London. But it was the London of many years ago. Scrooge walked sadly through the snow-covered streets.

"Why are you showing me all that I wish to forget? My past was filled with unhappiness. *You* know it and *I* know it. What is the point of all this?"

"Well, not every memory was an unhappy one. Don't you remember this place?"

They were standing in front of the shop where Scrooge got his first job. His eyes lit up with joy.

"It's old *Fezziwig's!* I don't believe it! Can we go inside?"

When they opened the door, there was the sound of music, dancing and laughter. Mr Fezziwig was there with his wife and children. There was a table along one wall with all kinds of food and a huge bowl of fruit punch right in the middle of it. All the shopkeepers from the neighbourhood were there, and so was another young Ebenezer, a little older than before. He stood with his best friend, Dick Wilkins. The young Scrooge held his glass up in the air.

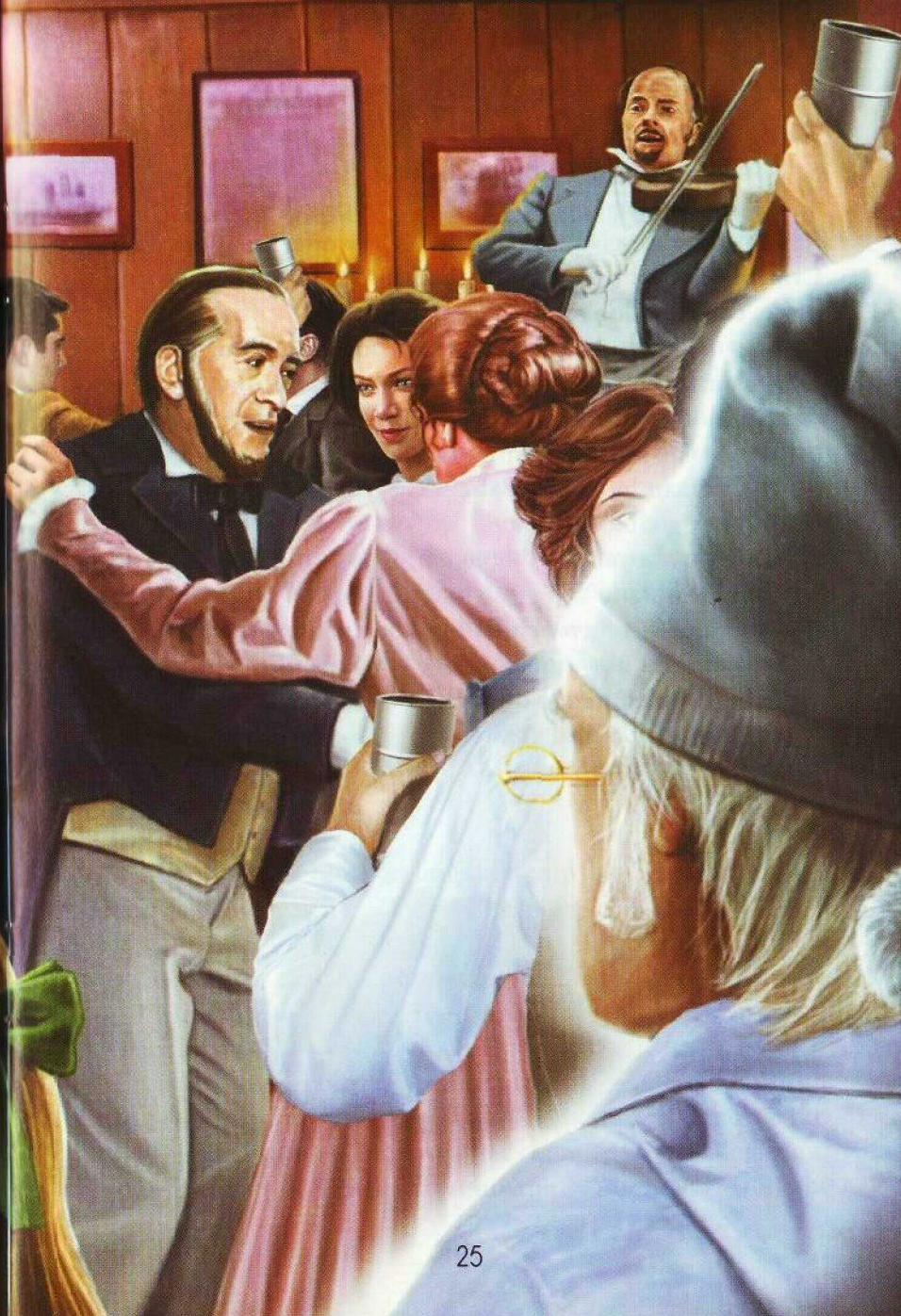
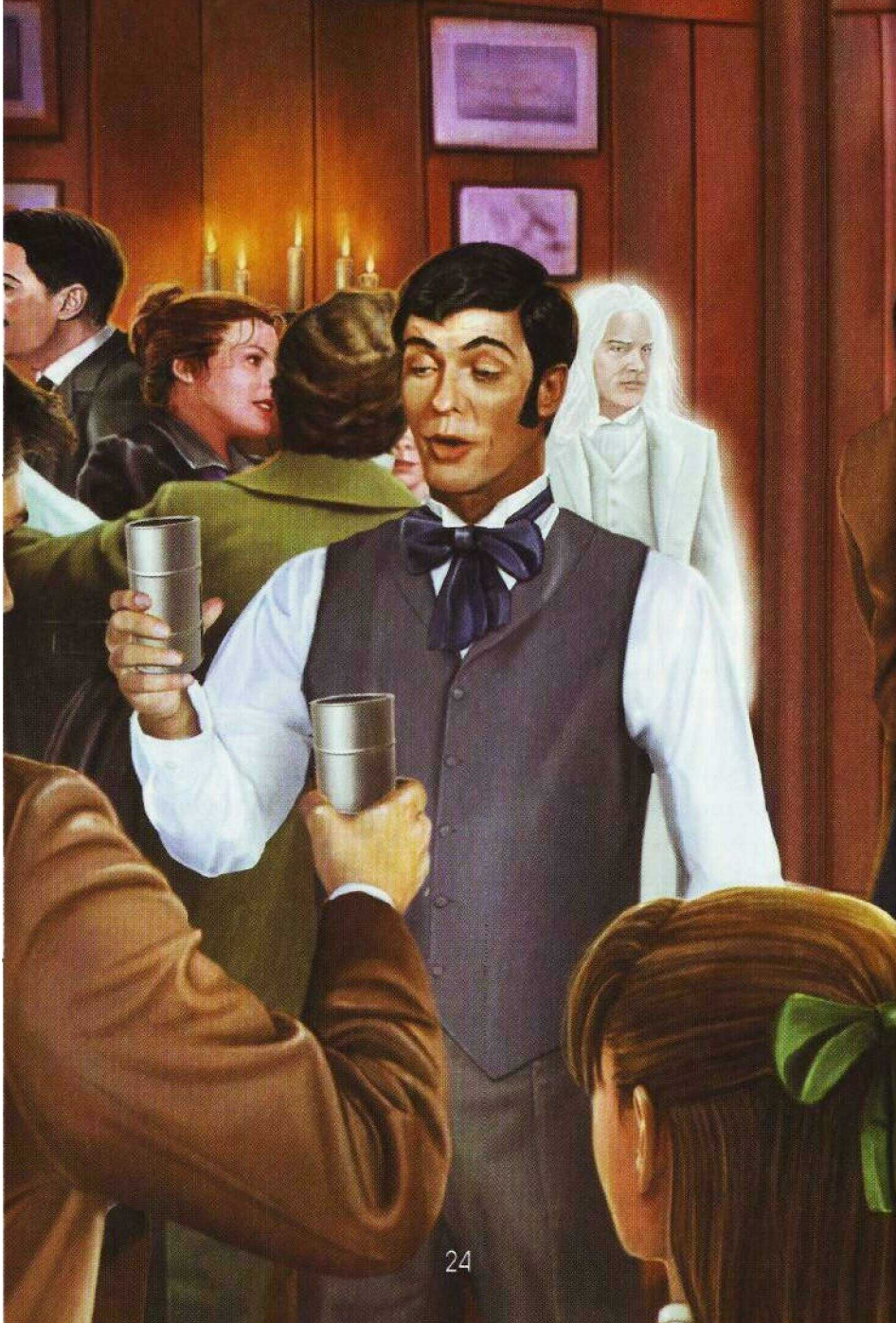
"Here's to Mr Fezziwig! Not a kinder man lives in all London! Hip-hip hooray!"

"Hip-hip hooray! Hip-hip hooray!"

The old Scrooge was smiling as he looked on at this scene. He forgot that the ghost was there for a moment.

"You liked Mr Fezziwig, didn't you?"

"Of course. He was more than a boss. He was a man you wanted to be like. He always made sure you were happy. He was interested in you and your problems."



Suddenly, Scrooge stopped talking.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing. I was just thinking of my own assistant, Bob Cratchit. I wasn't very nice to him today. Can we leave this place, Ghost? I don't want to see any more."

They walked outside and it was night-time. As they walked, the buildings changed. Time moved as they moved, but Scrooge did not notice. He was too busy thinking. They came to a bridge. A man and a woman wearing black were standing on it. The woman looked like she was crying. Scrooge stopped before they got too close.

"Don't make me see that again, Ghost, I beg you. I'll do anything you want."

"It is your last memory, and it is one you must see."

Scrooge did not want to move towards this couple, but something forced him to do it. With each step, the pain in his heart grew greater and greater.



The difference between the young man and the young woman on the bridge was in their faces. The woman's eyes were wet with tears. The man's eyes were bright and excited by the possibilities of the future. But the man tried to hide his excitement as he listened to the woman.

"There was a time when I thought your heart and mine were the same. Everything I thought, you thought. Everything I felt, you felt. It is not like that now. You have another love."

"Belle, you know I love you. But things are different now. It's time for me to go out and make some money so that we can be happy together."

"Do you think you will ever come back to me? Your love of money is too great. There was a time when money wasn't so important."

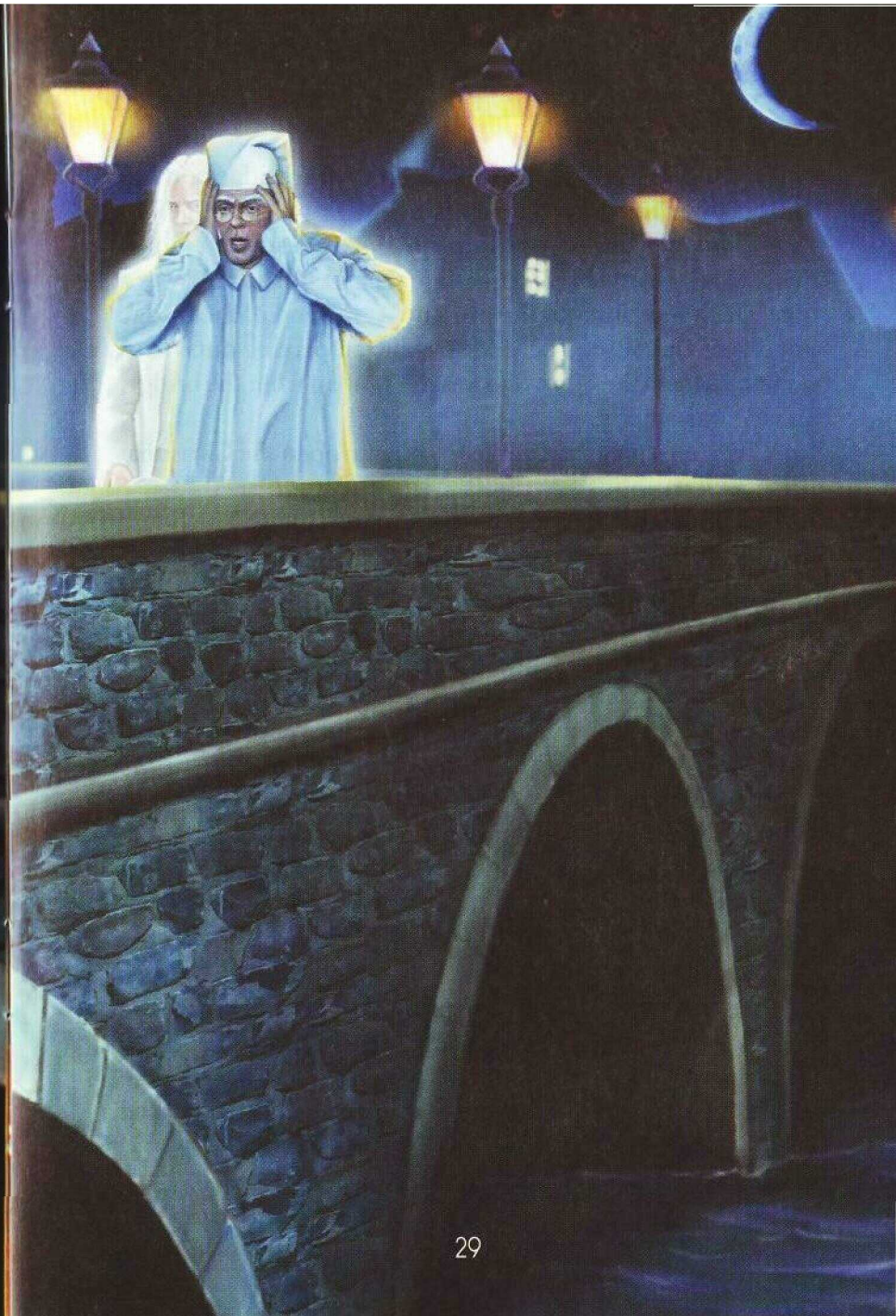
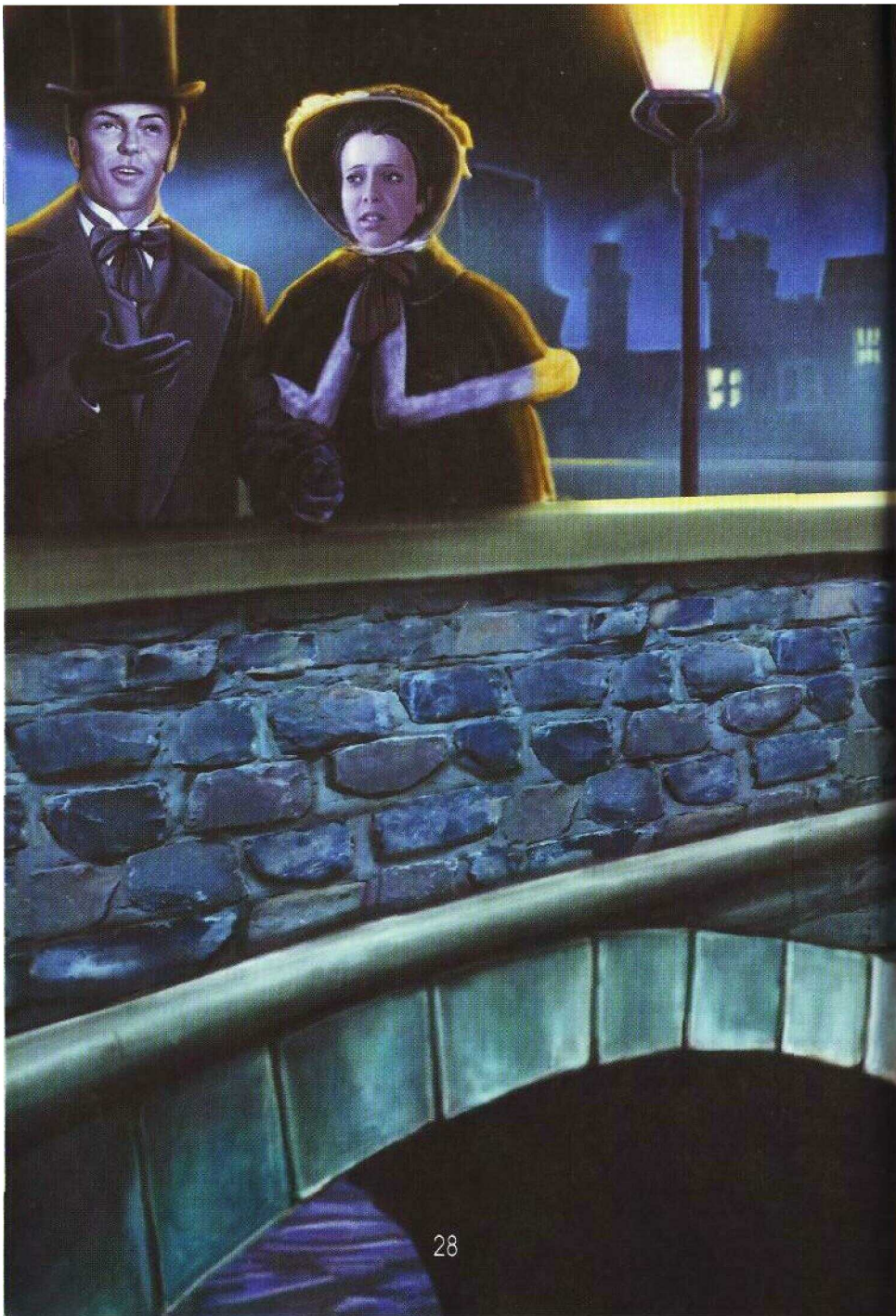
"I was young then."

"If you think those feelings are only for the young, then I feel sorry for you."

The pain in the old Scrooge's heart as he listened to this spread to the rest of his body. He held his head in his hands.

"Ghost, take me away from here. I cannot listen to another word of this!"

The Ghost of Christmas Past and Scrooge walked away from the young Scrooge and his first love. They walked over the bridge, and suddenly the weather changed. A thick fog came down and it was difficult to see anything. But Scrooge did not



notice. He was thinking of the woman on the bridge and her words. Why did he ever leave her?

As Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Past walked over the bridge, they walked to another time in the past. It was a time which was closer to the present. At the end of the bridge stood a small house. There were children playing outside. A woman came to the door. She was the woman from the bridge, but she was older now.

"Children, come inside. We're going to open the Christmas presents."

The ghost and Scrooge went inside with them. The house was small and poor, but a fire burned in the fireplace and the children's excitement filled the room with joy. Belle sat with her husband, smiling more and more brightly as the children opened their Christmas gifts.

"Look at Belle and her husband, Ghost! They have so many children and each one gives them such happiness. If only I could know what that man is feeling now ..."

"Very well, children. Go to your rooms and get changed for lunch."

The children all ran upstairs, screaming and laughing. When the parents were alone, the father, who was a happy and warm-hearted man, suddenly looked sad. His wife was worried.

"What is it? You look so sad you're frightening me."

"This morning, when I was leaving town, I walked past the shop of your old friend, Ebenezer Scrooge. He was inside working. I hear his partner, Jacob Marley, is dying and there was Scrooge - working on Christmas morning! He looked so alone in the world, it made me feel awful."

Scrooge turned away from the couple.

"No! No! No!"

The walls of the house disappeared. The night was dark and Scrooge was back in his own bedroom.

"Why?" he asked, but there was no one there any more to answer him.

Bob Cratchit's House

Scrooge was suddenly back in bed. He was shaking. Was it from the cold or was it from something else? He tried to hide under the bedclothes. He heard the wind blowing outside and then he heard someone calling his name.

"Scrooge! Ebenezer Scrooge!"

Scrooge sat up and put on his glasses. The curtains around his bed opened slowly. A bright light filled the room. There was a table near the fireplace covered with food. A big man wearing a green robe was sitting at the table and smiling at him.

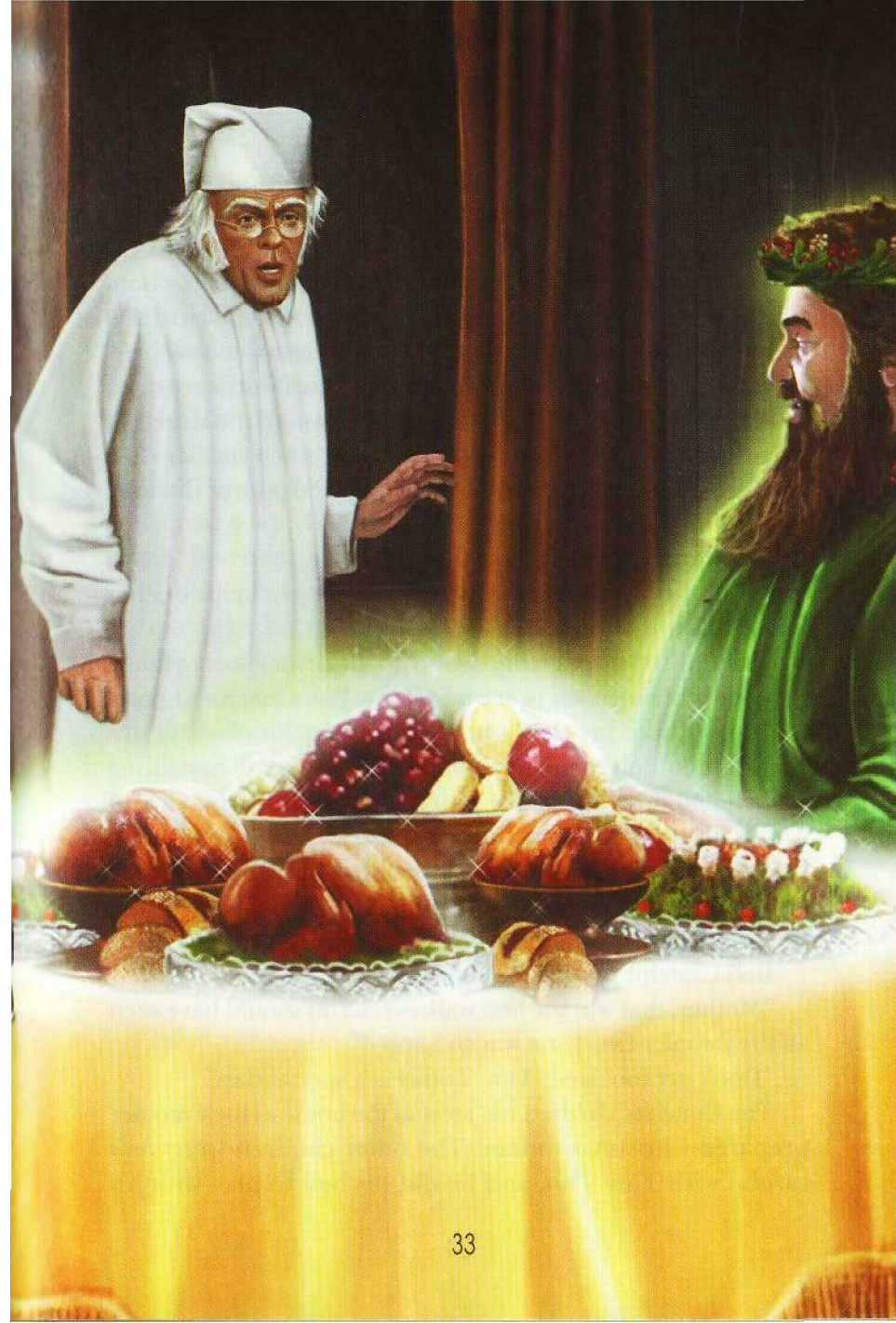
"I am the Ghost of Christmas Present, Ebenezer. Get up and come to me."

Scrooge walked over to the happy man's table. He was angry with these ghosts now. They had nothing to show him but pain, but he knew that he was supposed to learn something from their visits, so he wanted to be finished with them as quickly as possible.

"I know you have a lot to show me. I have a lot to learn. Let us begin."

"Ebenezer, do you believe that I don't know how you really feel? But if you wish to hurry, let us go. Hold onto my robe."

Scrooge did as the ghost said, and immediately they were outside. It was daytime and the streets were filled with people laughing and clearing the snow away from their front doors.



For the first time in his life, Scrooge saw that these people were truly happy. The ghost was smiling at everyone he passed even though they couldn't see him.

"Do you remember what you said, Ebenezer? You would make everyone work on Christmas Day and twice as hard. Do you see now how much you would take away from these people?"

Scrooge's heart sank when he heard his own words repeated to him. The ghost and Scrooge walked through the streets of London to an area where the houses were much smaller than Scrooge's. They stopped at one which looked poorer than the rest.

"How can people live like this?"

"Well, they don't get paid enough at their jobs to have better houses. Come, let's look inside."

They passed through the door without anyone seeing them. Scrooge was surprised to see that it was Bob Cratchit's house.

"Look, this is my clerk's house, Bob Cratchit's!"

Just then Bob came into the house with a small boy sitting on his shoulders. It was his youngest son, Tiny Tim. One of Tiny Tim's legs was thin and weak. He had to walk with the help of a crutch when his father couldn't carry him. But the boy looked very happy.

"We're here! We're here!"

Bob Cratchit put his son down.

"Mother, that was the best walk ever! You should have seen all the people! Everyone was so happy!"

"Don't get too tired, Tim. Today is a special day."

The Cratchits' children ran around the house as their mother prepared Christmas dinner. The other children were very careful with Tiny Tim, and he did his best to play with his

brothers and sister even though his leg hurt him. Scrooge could not stop looking at Tiny Tim.

"Look at that poor boy, Ghost."

"He will not live much longer if they don't find the money to pay for a doctor."

"What are you saying? You mean, the boy will die?"

It was the first time the ghost did not smile.

The Cratchits sat down to eat. Bob Cratchit did not make enough money to buy a turkey big enough to feed the whole family. They only had a very small turkey, some fresh bread and some soup. But nobody seemed to mind. Before they began, Bob said,

"Let us give thanks for the food we have, and let us thank the man who helped us buy it, Mr Scrooge."

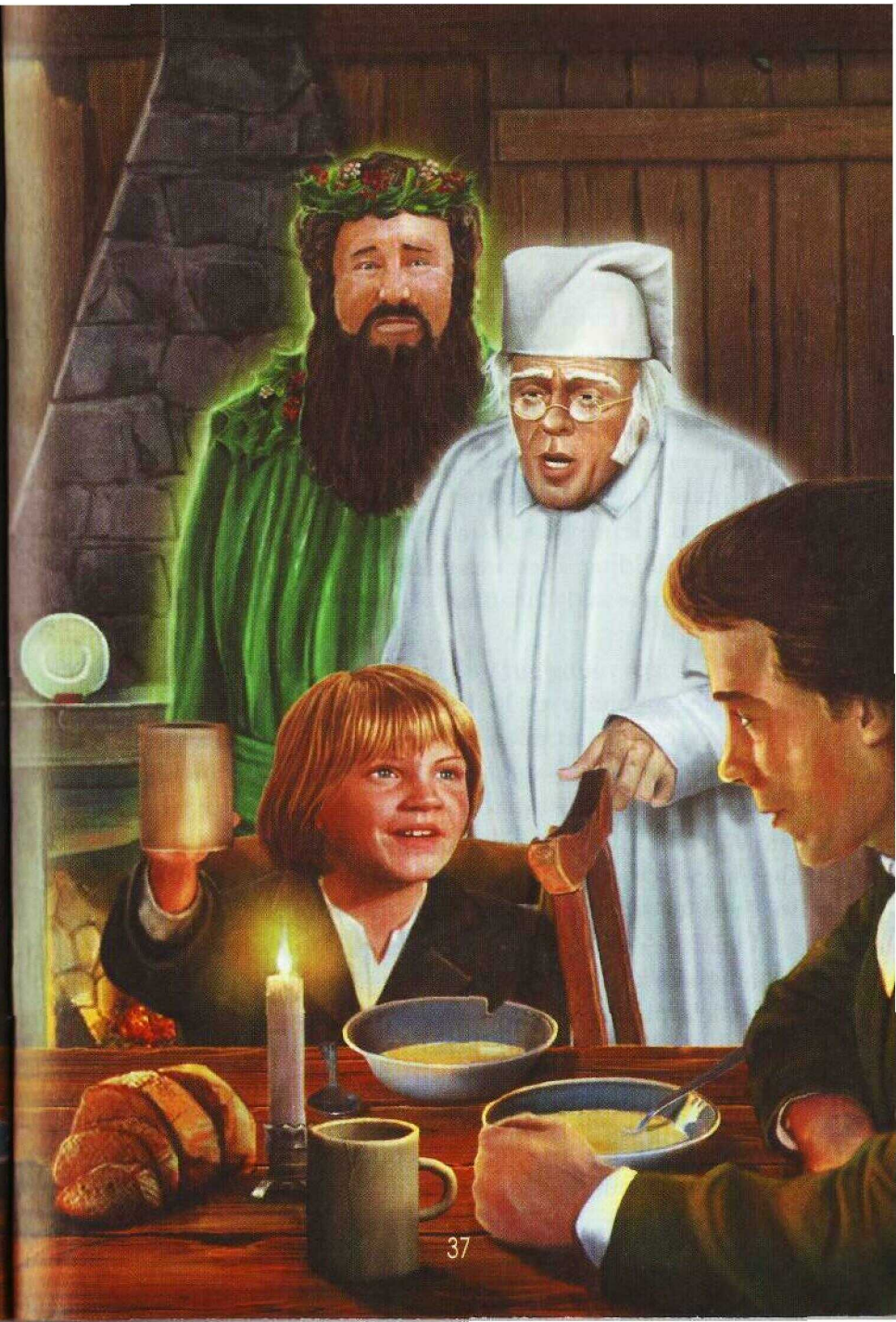
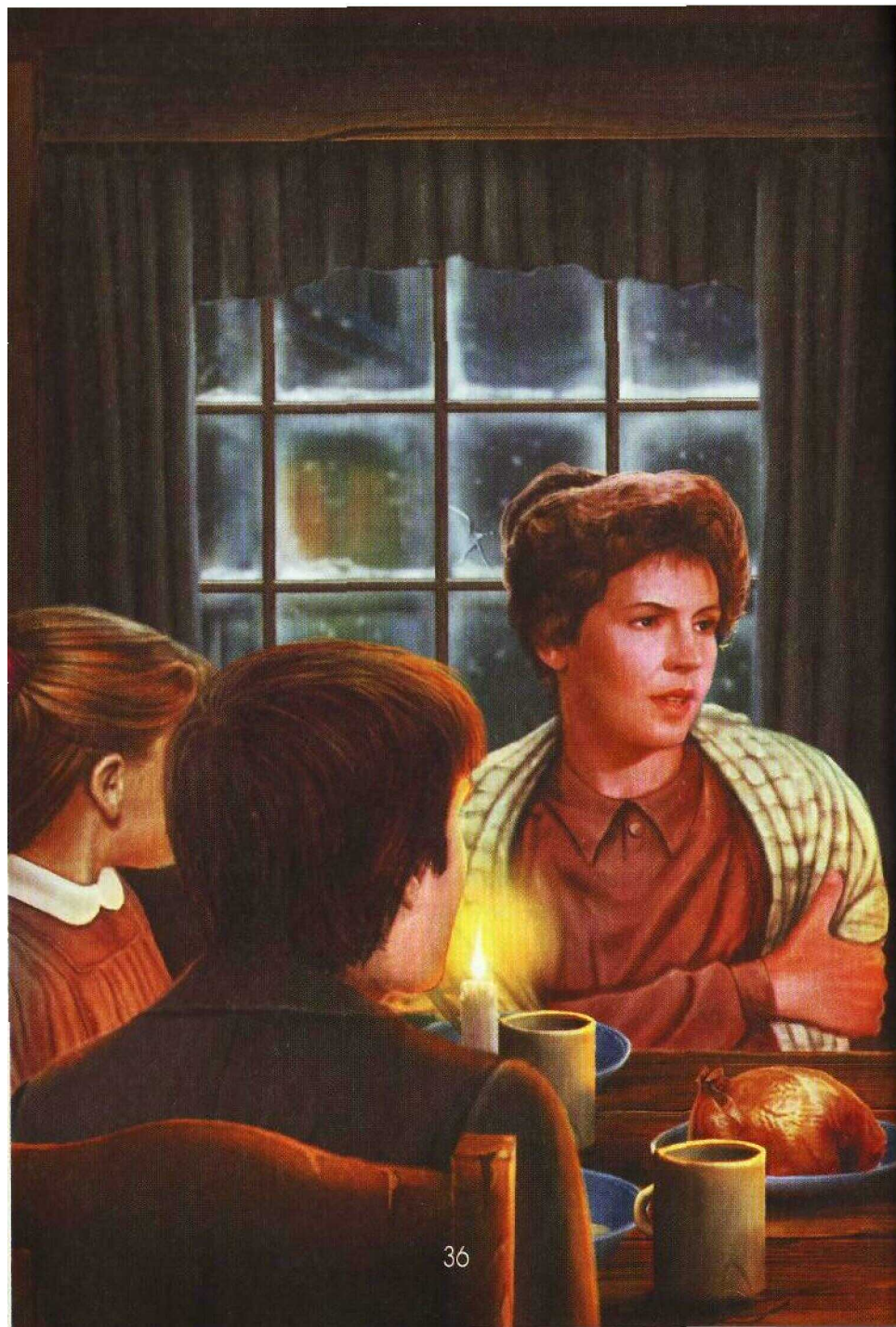
"Mr Scrooge?! That man never cared about anyone! He never gives you a pay rise, he makes you work late, he's mean and unkind ..."

"Please, dear, it's Christmas."

The family was sad when they heard Scrooge's name. Tiny Tim helped to break the silence.

"Merry Christmas to everyone!"

Scrooge looked at the boy with tears in his eyes.



Chapter 7



It was night-time and the wind blew the snow off the roofs of the houses. But Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Present could not feel the cold. As they were walking, they saw a light. And the very next moment, as if by magic, they were inside Fred's house. It was after dinner and the candles were glowing. A group of friends was sitting around a long table eating Christmas pudding. Fred was talking.

"And then he said Christmas was humbug! And he actually believes it!"

Fred's wife, a young girl with bright blonde hair, red cheeks and intelligent blue eyes, looked at him.

"That's the sad part, Fred. He feels no goodness in his heart. He has all that money and he doesn't share it with anyone."

There were another two young women, with the same colour hair as Fred's wife, sitting at the table. They were her sisters. They knew Scrooge and they all felt the same way about him. But Fred felt sorry for his uncle.

"I think he's unhappy because he doesn't know how to share anything with anyone. Every Christmas, I invite him here, and every Christmas he says no. But one year, he may change his mind, so I will keep inviting him."

The friends soon forgot about Scrooge. They played music and sang songs, and then they began to play games. Scrooge watched joyfully as they enjoyed themselves. He even laughed when they did, but no one could hear him. Finally, the Ghost

of Christmas Present spoke.

"It is time for us to leave."

"Just one more game. They're about to start a new one."

Scrooge felt like a child again. The ghost let him watch this last game. It was a game called *Yes-No*. Fred walked around acting like some kind of angry animal and the others asked him questions about who he was. The only answers he could give were "yes" or "no".

"Does it live in London?"

"Yes."

"Does it live in the zoo?"

"No."

"Does it walk through the streets?"

"Yes."

"Is it a hungry dog?"

"No."

One of the guests became excited.

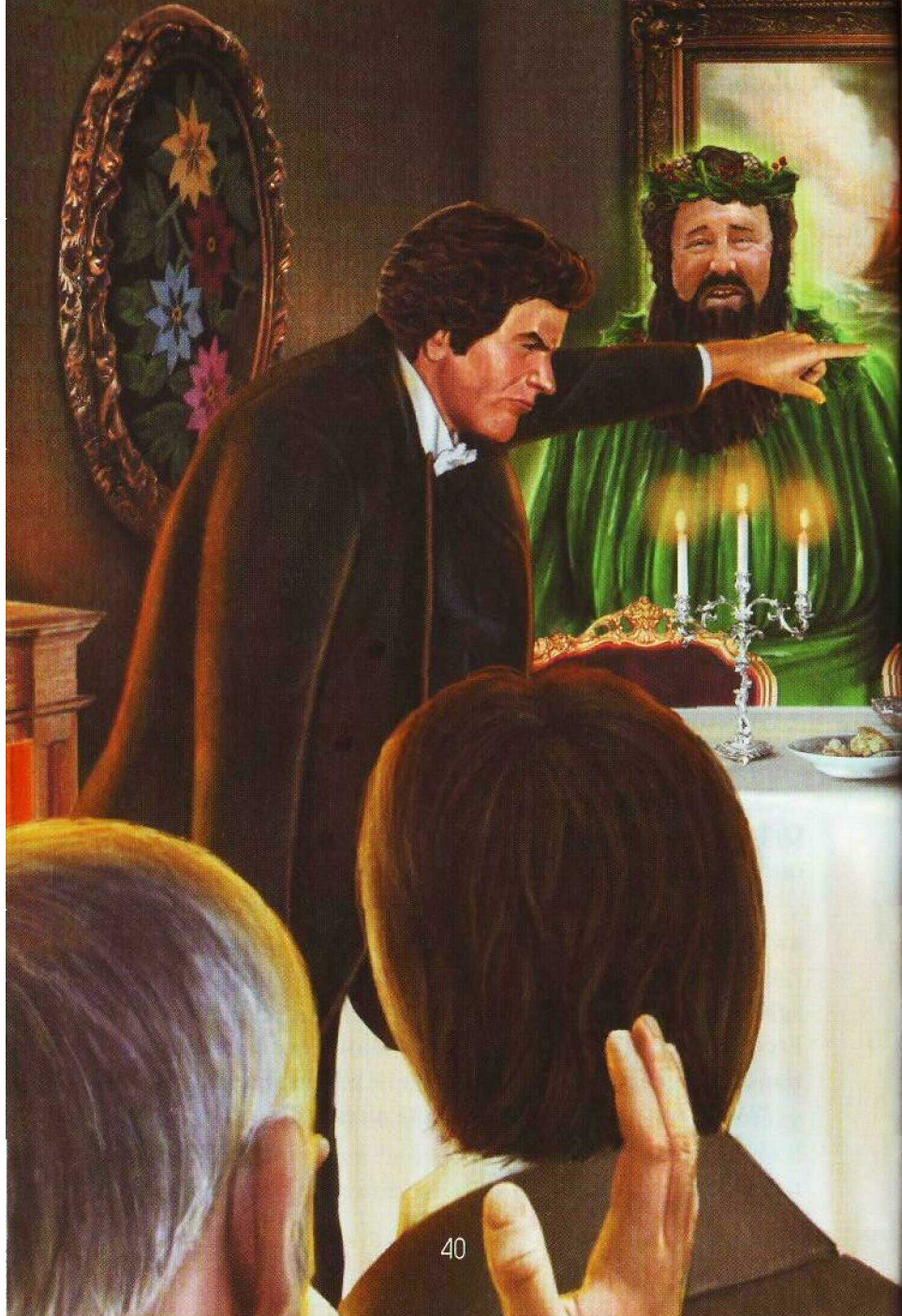
"I know! I know! It's your Uncle Scrooge!"

They all began laughing because that was the right answer. Only Scrooge's nephew stopped laughing long enough to speak once more.

"Well, Uncle Ebenezer, wherever you are, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!"

The ghost took Scrooge by the arm and took him outside again. Scrooge was thinking about the fun everybody had at Fred's party. He felt so happy. He didn't see that the ghost was no longer next to him. The church bells were ringing.

"What time is it? Is it night-time already?"



There was a figure coming towards him. It wore a long black robe with a hood which hid its face. Nothing else could be seen underneath that robe apart from the creature's long thin fingers. Scrooge's legs began to shake.

"Wh... wh... who are you?"

The creature did not speak. It just pointed and Scrooge felt himself moving. This was the Ghost of Christmas Future, and Scrooge suddenly felt *really* afraid.



This ghost was not friendly like the other ghosts, and this made Scrooge feel very nervous.

"Are you the Ghost of Christmas Future?"

The ghost in the black robe did not answer.

"I know that you are here to show me things which will help me. I am ready to see them."

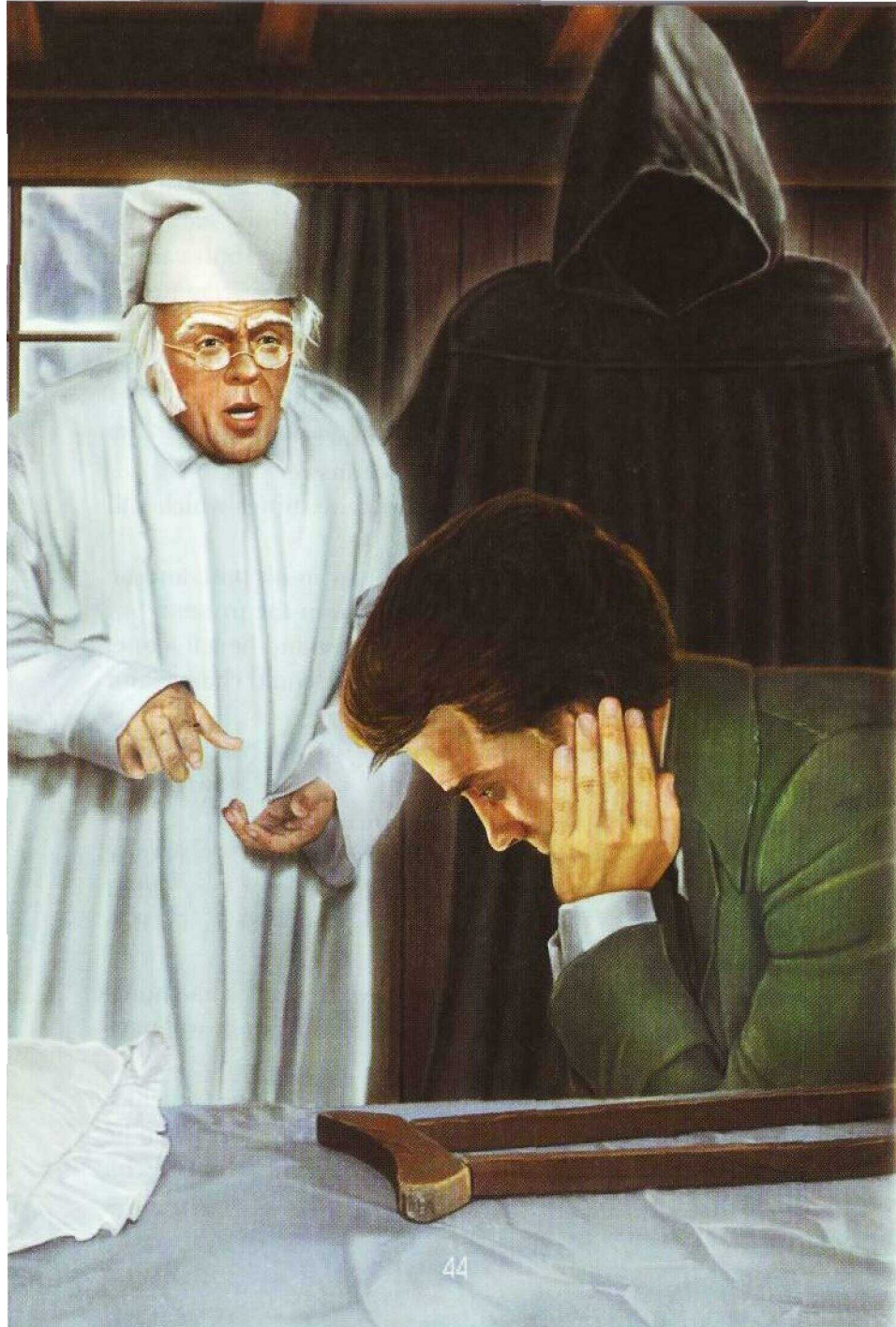
Scrooge felt pain for the things he saw in his past, and he felt sadness and joy for the people he saw in the present, but now he just wanted to get rid of this ghost and be left alone. Scrooge did not really understand that he could change and become a better person.

The dark ghost pointed to show Scrooge where they were going, and they both went into the black night. Slowly, night became day on a future Christmas morning.

They went through the city and arrived at the poor house of Bob Cratchit. They went inside. Mrs Cratchit, her oldest son, Peter, and her two younger children were waiting for Bob Cratchit to come home.

"I know what's going to happen now. Bob will come home with Tiny Tim on his shoulders and then the family will have dinner."

The ghost did not answer. Scrooge looked at the Cratchits. Something was different. They were not as happy as when he saw them with the Ghost of Christmas Present. Mrs Cratchit spoke first.



"Your father is late today."

"He walks much more slowly these days, Mother. There was a time *when* he would walk twice as fast with Tiny Tim on his shoulders."

Everyone was quiet after Peter spoke of Tim. And then Bob Cratchit opened the door. He was not much older, but his face was different. There were dark circles under his eyes because he was not sleeping well. He smiled but there was no light in his eyes.

"I saw Mr Scrooge's nephew on the street today. He said that if there was anything he could do for us, he would be happy to help. He gave me his card. I thought he might be able to get Peter a job. What a good man! He really meant what he said."

One of the children was excited for a moment.

"Oh, Daddy, it would be so nice to see Peter working in an office like you."

Mrs Cratchit did not hide her feelings.

"But with a different employer! I can't believe such a mean old man can have such a kind nephew."

Bob was too tired to say anything. He went upstairs and Scrooge and the ghost followed him. There, in the children's room, was Tiny Tim's small crutch lying on his bed. The bed was empty and did not look like anyone slept in it anymore. Bob Cratchit sat beside it and hid his face in his hands.

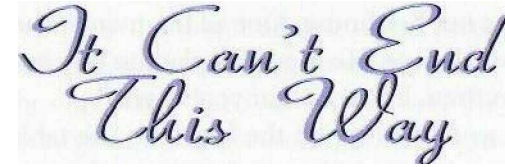
"What does this mean, Ghost? Where is Tiny Tim? Don't tell me he is ... Was it because of his leg?"

The ghost said nothing, but Scrooge knew the answer to his questions. He didn't give the Cratchits help when they needed it. Tears came to his eyes.

"Let us go, Ghost. I cannot look at this scene any longer."

Chapter 9

Scrooge and the ghost left this poor house and went into another part of London. Scrooge did not care where he was. His mind was full of sad and painful thoughts.



*It Can't End
This Way*

Scrooge was still thinking when he realised they were near his office. He looked up and saw two men standing on the corner. They were talking about someone, but he did not know who.

"Did you hear who died?"

"Yes, and there weren't many tears for him."

"Did you go to the funeral?"

"No, did you?"

"I don't think many people did. I wonder who he left his money to."

"He probably tried to take it with him."

They both laughed. Scrooge was confused by their conversation, but he wasn't very interested. He was close to his office, and he wanted to have a look inside. But it was closed and no one was there.

"Of course it's closed! It's Christmas! I don't know why I thought I might find myself inside."

The ghost and Scrooge continued and they were soon in another poor part of London, which Scrooge did not know. They went into a very old building. Inside, there was a woman and three men sitting at a table with a bag of old clothes on it. The woman had long grey hair and a red face. Scrooge knew her.

"She cleans my house! We never spoke much. I suppose this is where she lives."

But it was not her house. One of the men at the table was smoking a small pipe. He used this place to buy stolen goods.

"All right then, let's see what you've got."

The old woman emptied the bag onto the table. Scrooge saw clothes and silver knives and forks, and even some bed curtains. The man with the pipe looked at everything carefully. Scrooge was shocked.

"Those curtains are mine! She's a thief! I'm glad I know this now; wait till I see her again!"

"Did you take his bed curtains, too? Tell me, was he still in the bed?"

"What does he care? He doesn't need 'em anymore. He doesn't need anything anymore."

"And this shirt?"

"They wanted to dress him in that for the funeral, but it's too good for that. I changed it for an old torn one."

Suddenly, Scrooge understood what they were doing with his things.

"She took those things, after I ... after I ... And those men on the corner! They were talking about *me*, weren't they? Is this how it's going to end? People laughing at me and selling my clothes?"

The ghost, of course, did not answer him, but Scrooge felt sure that he was right.

"No! It can't be!"

Scrooge ran out of the house crying,

"No, no! I won't let it happen!"

Scrooge did not know where he was going but soon there were no more buildings around him. It was dark. The Ghost of Christmas Future was still beside him and now they were

in a cemetery. For the first time that night, Scrooge felt cold.

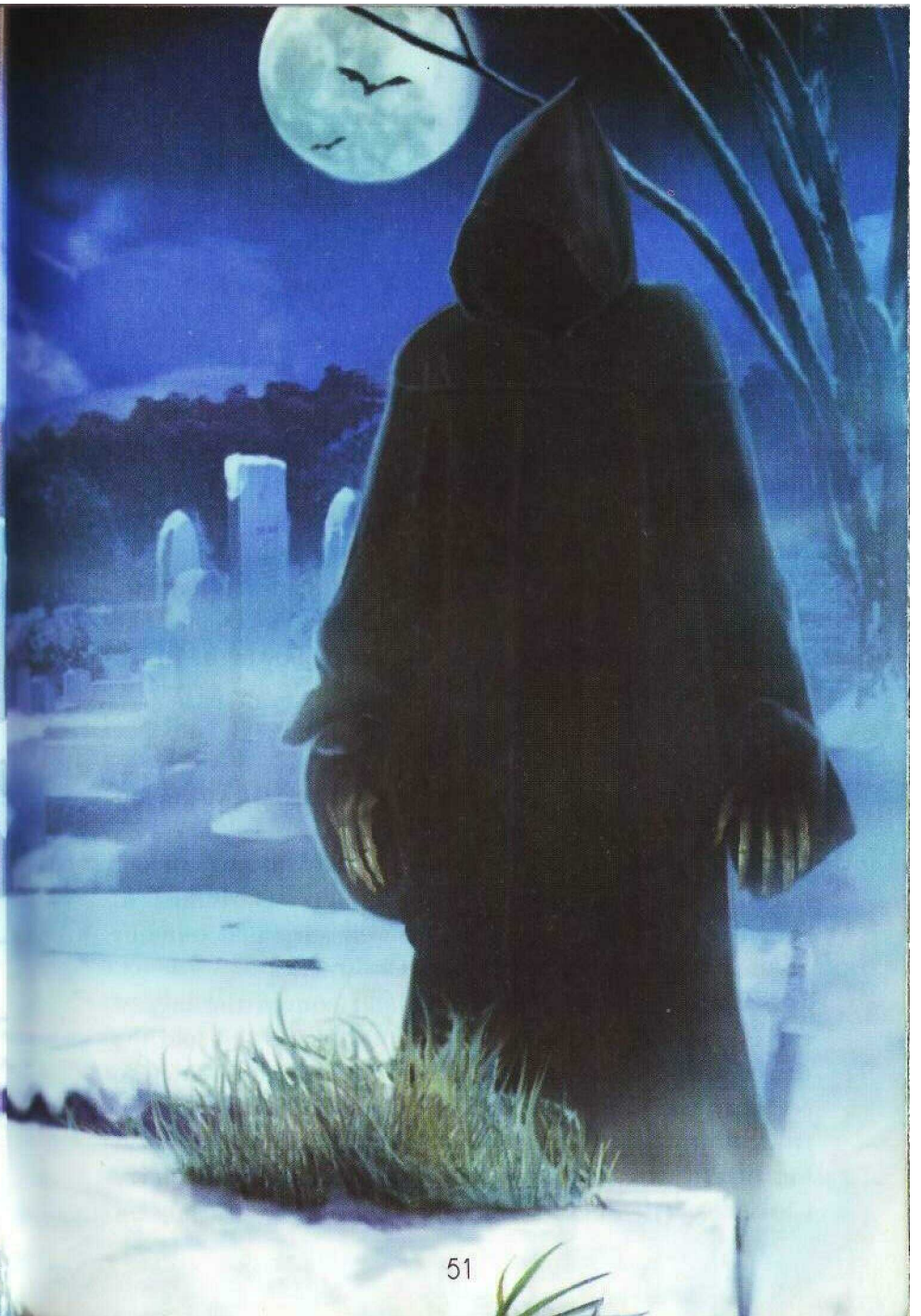
There was a light mist all around and everything was covered in snow. The only things that could be seen were the gravestones. Some were large and some were small. Each gravestone had the name and the dates of when the person buried there lived and died. Some had flowers on them and some were cleaner than others. Scrooge walked, as if in a dream, and the Ghost of Christmas Future was always close beside him.

When they came to a small gravestone, which looked like it was about to fall over, the ghost stopped and pointed. There was so much dirt on that gravestone that Scrooge could not read the name of the person buried there. Scrooge got down on his knees to clean off the stone, and slowly, the letters appeared.

"E - b - e - n ..."

Scrooge's heart beat faster as he cleaned off the rest of the letters. He saw that it was his own name on the gravestone. He covered his face with his hands.

"Oh, no! Tell me it's not going to end this way! What did I do to deserve this?"



Christmas Spirit

Scrooge woke up screaming.

"No! No! I won't let it happen!"

He looked around him. Everything was back to normal. The fire in the fireplace was out. The chairs next to it were empty. He got up and opened the window and the sound of church bells filled the room. He saw people in the streets walking quickly, talking and laughing. Scrooge was not sure if it was still Christmas Day or not. Christmas Eve seemed like a long time ago. He called down to a young boy in the street.

"Hey! You boy! What day is it today?"

The boy looked at him strangely.

"Why, it's Christmas Day, sir!"

"Then I still have a chance! But I must hurry! I've got lots of things to do! Yes, lots of things."

Quickly, Scrooge washed and got dressed. He ran out into the streets, and he said a loud "Merry Christmas" to everyone he passed. His neighbours were surprised, but they all smiled and wished him "Merry Christmas".

Scrooge went to the butcher's and bought the biggest turkey they had. Then he got into a carriage and told the driver to take him to the address of someone he wanted to see very badly. The horse wore bells which tinkled as it trotted through the streets of London. Scrooge put his head out of the window and wished everyone he saw a Merry Christmas. Then he saw the man who came to his shop on

Christmas Eve asking for money for the poor.

"Stop! Stop!"

The driver stopped the carriage.

"Sir, it's me! Ebenezer Scrooge! I want to apologise for my behaviour yesterday. Please call at my office tomorrow. I want to give you a very large gift."

The man's eyes brightened.

"Thank you very much, sir. You are a very good man."

The horse trotted on and this time it didn't stop until they came to Bob Cratchit's house. Scrooge knocked on the door and waited. Bob opened the door and Scrooge found the family sitting together, just as they were when he was with the Ghost of Christmas Present. The Cratchits were shocked to see Scrooge.

"Merry Christmas, Bob. This turkey is for you and your family. I want you to have the best Christmas you have ever had."

All the Cratchits opened their eyes wide at the size of the turkey, which was bigger than Tiny Tim, and didn't know what to say. At last, Bob said,

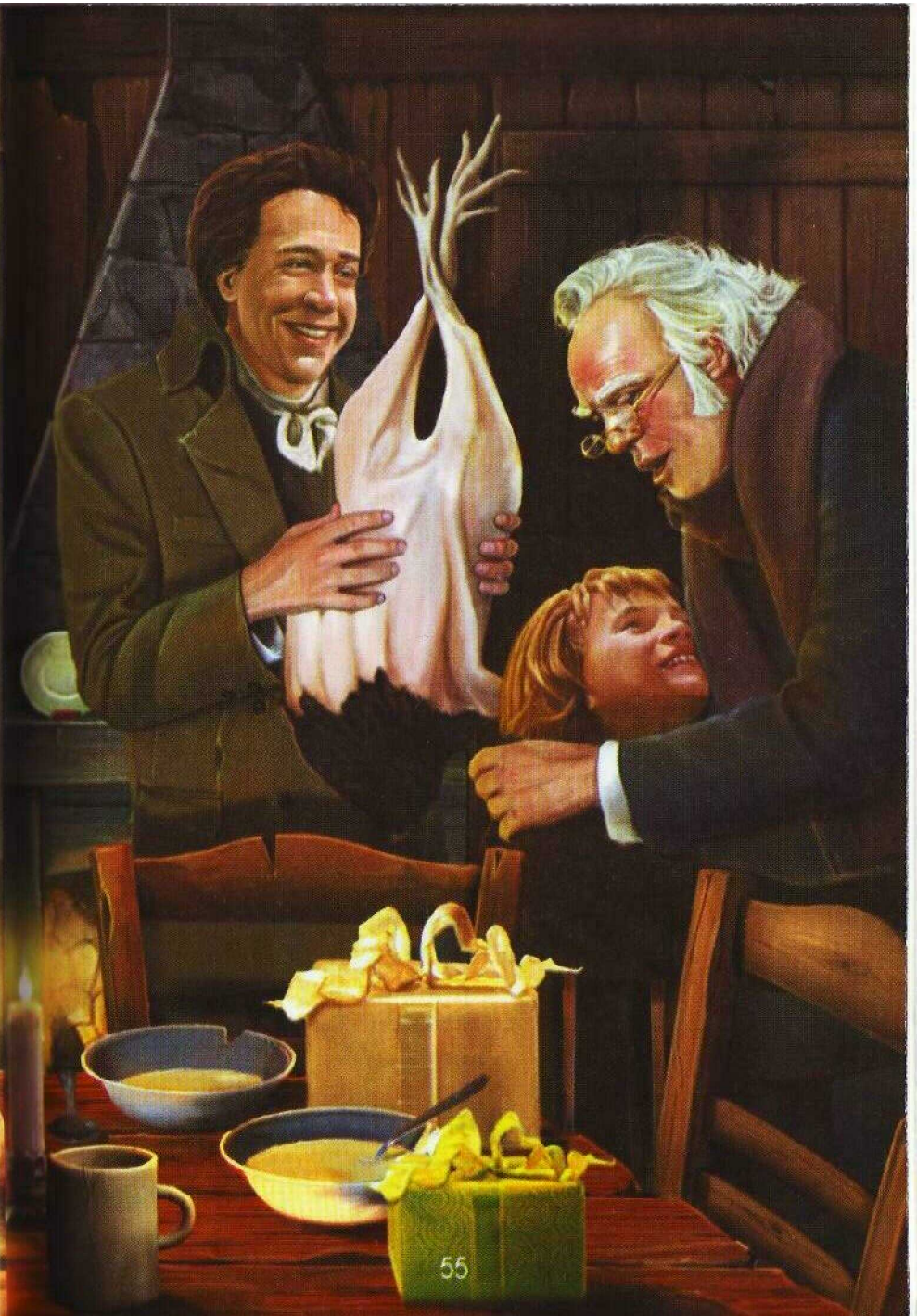
"That's very kind of you, sir. Thank ... "

"Don't thank me! I owe you much more than that. You're a good worker, Bob. Don't come in tomorrow. You can have the day off. And when you return, I'm increasing your salary to three times what it is now."

Scrooge looked at Tiny Tim.

"One more thing! I'm going to get my doctor to see Tim on Monday morning. The sooner he gets help, the better."

Mrs Cratchit put her hand over her heart and tears came into her eyes. Tiny Tim went over to Scrooge and hugged him.



"I knew you were a good man, Mr Scrooge."

Scrooge almost cried.

"Well, I must go now. I have one more visit to make. Merry Christmas everyone!"

"Merry Christmas, Mr Scrooge!"

Scrooge's last stop was his nephew's house. Fred, his wife and their guests were as shocked as the Cratchits to see Scrooge on their doorstep.

"Fred, I would like to spend Christmas with you and your wife if your invitation is still open."

Fred was very surprised and happy. He smiled at his uncle.

"Of course it is, Uncle! I knew that you couldn't really believe that Christmas was humbug."

Scrooge sat with his family and their friends and had a lovely dinner. They ate, they drank, they sang and they laughed. When it was time to play the *Yes-No* game, Scrooge was the one who mimed himself! Everyone laughed and had lots of fun. Nobody could believe that Scrooge was the same man they knew before.

"Uncle, I must say that I'm surprised by your behaviour."

Scrooge looked at Fred's smiling face for a long time.

"Yes, my dear nephew, I know it is. I was not a good uncle to you or your wife. In fact, I was not good at anything except making people miserable. But I saw something last night that changed my life, and I'm so happy I did."

Scrooge thought of Tiny Tim's words and said,

"Merry Christmas, everyone!"



Word List

Chapter 1

a waste of money (phr)
 arrive (v)
 As you wish (phr)
 backwards (adv)
 baker (n)
 be better off (phr)
 bell (n)
 blow (blew-blown) (v)
 butcher (n)
 call (v)
 cancel (v)
 candle (n)
 change (v)
 cheek (n)
 Christmas Eve (n)
 clerk (n)
 coal (n)
 could (modal v)
 crooked (adj)
 curly (adj)
 dark (adj)
 dead (adj)
 desk (n)
 die (v)
 doorway (n)
 except (prep)
 face (n)
 fact (n)
 feeling (n)
 fill (v)
 finger (n)
 fireplace (n)

friendly (adj)
 front door (n)
 frown (v)
 glasses (n, pl)
 ground (n)
 hear (heard-heard) (v)
 heat (n)
 hide (hid-hidden) (v)
 hope (n)
 Humbug! (n)
 hurt (hurt-hurt) (v)
 kind (adj)
 knocker (n)
 leave (left-left) (v)
 leave sb alone (phr)
 let (let-let) (v)
 light (lit-lit) (v)
 line (n)
 look like (phr)
 mean (meant-meant) (v)
 moment (n)
 nephew (n)
 no longer (phr)
 office (n)
 office door (n)
 open one's heart (phr)
 others (pron, pl)
 owner (n)
 partner (n)
 person (n, pl: people)
 point (v)
 red with anger (phr)
 ring (rang-rung) (v)
 round (adj)

seem (v)
 shop window (n)
 simply (adv)
 sing (sang-sung) (v)
 slam (v)
 smile (n)
 snow-covered (adj)
 spend money (phr)
 stand (stood-stood) (v)
 step (n)
 suit (n)
 terror (n)
 the poor (n)
 think (thought-thought) (v)
 through (prep)
 twice as hard (phr)
 uncle (n)
 wife (n)
 wind (n)
 world (n)

Chapter 2

a pot of soup (phr)
 after all (phr)
 alive (adj)
 beat (beat-beaten) (v)
 believe (v)
 care about (v)
 cellar (n)
 chain (n)
 clothes (n, pl)
 depend on (v)

disappear (v)
 floor (n)
 frighten (v)
 furniture (n)
 future (n)
 ghost (n)
 have a chance (phr)
 in pain (phr)
 none (quant)
 on end (phr)
 opposite (prep)
 sound (n)
 sound like (phr)
 still (adv)
 the Earth (n)
 thousands of (quant)
 travel (v)
 unhappiness (n)
 visit (v)
 warm (v)
 wear (wore-worn) (v)

Chapter 3

argue (v)
 asleep (adj)
 at the bottom of (phr)
 awake (adj)
 be born (was/were-been) (v)
 bedclothes (n, pl)
 bridge (n)
 building (n)
 country (n)
 daytime (n)
 deeply (adv)
 dressed (adj)

dressing gown (n)
 even though (phr conj)
 freeze (froze-frozen) (v)
 frightened (adj)
 gentle (adj)
 hold (held-held) (v)
 in the middle of (phr)
 invisible (adj)
 joy (n)
 lead (led-led) (n)
 leave sb (v)
 low (adj)
 neck (n)
 need (v)
 pass (v)
 past (n)
 perhaps (adv)
 set off (set-set) (phr v)
 several (adj)
 soft (adj)
 stone (adj)
 strength (n)
 tear (n)
 turn away (phr v)
 wake up (woke-woke) (phr v)

Chapter 4

as well (phr)
 assistant (n)
 at sb's side (phr)
 awful (adj)
 be interested in (phr)
 beg (v)
 boss (n)
 busy (adj)

carriage (n)
 couple (n)
 cruel (adj)
 death (n)
 force (v)
 forget (forgot-forgotten) (v)
 fruit punch (n)
 get on (got-got) (phr v)
 get out (v)
 handsome (adj)
 heavy (adj)
 huge (adj)
 invite (v)
 laughter (n)
 life (n)
 make sure (phr)
 memory (n)
 miss sb (v)
 neighbourhood (n)
 night-time (n)
 notice (v)
 pale (adj)
 proud (adj)
 remember (v)
 remind (v)
 sadly (adv)
 scene (n)
 shopkeeper (n)
 skin (n)
 sth matters (v)
 the old (n)
 the young (n)
 time (n)
 voice (n)
 What is the point of all this? (phr)

Chapter 5

bright (adj)
 difference (n)
 excited (adj)
 excitement (n)
 feel sorry for sb (phr)
 fog (n)
 get changed (phr)
 gift (n)
 love (n)
 possibility (n)
 present (n)
 present (n)
 scream (v)
 spread (spread-spread)
 (v)
 the rest of (phr)
 upstairs (adv)
 walk past (v)
 warm-hearted (adj)
 worried (adj)

Chapter 6

break the silence (phr)
 buy (bought-bought) (v)
 careful (adj)
 carry (v)
 clear (v)
 crutch (n)
 do one's best (phr)
 enough (quant)
 get paid (phr)
 give thanks (phr)
 hurry (v)

mean (adj)
 mind (v)
 one's heart sinks (phr)
 pay rise (n)
 robe (n)
 shake (shook-shaken)
 (v)
 shoulder (n)
 surprised (adj)
 take away (took-taken)
 (phr v)
 tiny (adj)
 turkey (n)
 unkind (adj)
 weak (adj)

Chapter 7

actually (adv)
 afraid (adj)
 by magic (phr)
 change one's mind (phr)
 creature (n)
 feel the same way about
 sth/sb (phr)
 figure (n)
 glow (v)
 goodness (n)
 hood (n)
 intelligent (adj)
 joyfully (adv)
 may (modal v)
 once more (phr)
 pudding (n)
 roof (n)
 share (v)
 some kind of (phr)

that's the sad part
 (phr)
 wherever (conj)

Chapter 8

be able to (phr-modal)
 both (det)
 card (n)
 circle (n)
 follow (v)
 get rid of (phr)
 might (modal v)
 mind (n)
 nervous (adj)
 painful (adj)
 sadness (n)
 thought (n)
 twice as fast (phr)

Chapter 9

as if (phr-conj)
 buried (adj)
 cemetery (n)
 confused (adj)
 continue (v)
 conversation (n)
 corner (n)
 date (n)
 deserve (v)
 dirt (n)
 dress (v)
 empty (v)
 fall over (fell-fallen)
 (phr v)
 funeral (n)

Chapter 10

apologise (v)
 back to normal (exp)
 badly (adv)
 behaviour (n)
 brighten (v)
 call at a place (phr)
 guest (n)
 have the day off (phr)
 hug (v)
 increase (v)
 knock (v)
 mime (v)
 miserable (adj)
 owe (v)

return (v)
 salary (n)
 size (n)
 spirit (n)
 strangely (adv)
 sure (adj)
 the invitation is still open
 (phr)
 the sooner... , the better
 (exp)
 tinkle (v)
 trot (v)
 visit (n)