



At long last, it was time to shut the office. Scrooge got down from his stool and told his clerk to leave the gloomy cell. The clerk immediately blew out his candle and put on his hat.

'You'll want the whole day off tomorrow, I suppose?' said Scrooge.

'If it's all right, sir.'

'It's not all right,' said Scrooge, 'and it's not fair. I have to pay you a day's wages for no work.'

'It's only once a year,' said the clerk.

'Well, make sure you get here early the next morning,' muttered Scrooge.

The clerk promised to be early and Scrooge walked out with a growl. Quickly the clerk closed the office. Then he ran home to Camden Town.

Scrooge lived in Jacob Marley's old apartment. It was very rundown. And it was so gloomy that nobody else wanted to live there. The rest of the rooms were offices.

Glossary

- **at long last:** finally
- **fair:** right
- **growl:** angry sound (dogs make this noise when they are angry)
- **rundown:** old and in bad condition
- **wages:** money you get for working; salary
- **whole:** all; complete

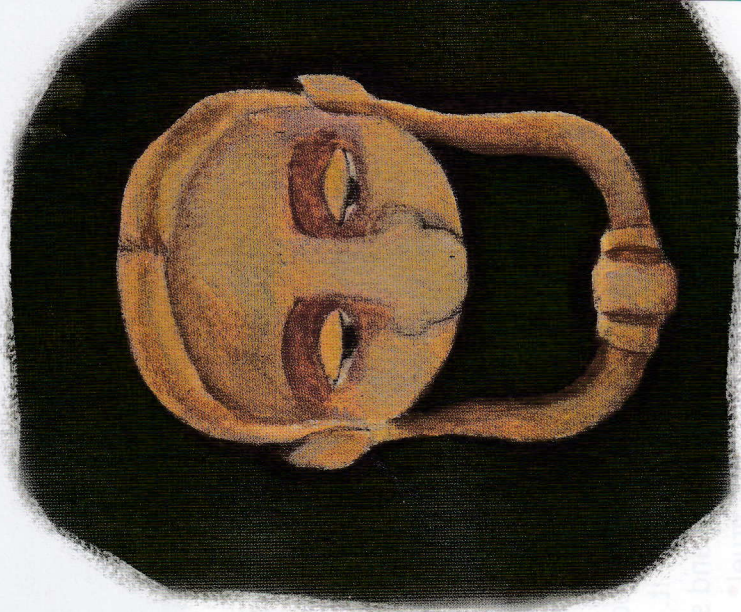
A Christmas Carol

That evening, the fog and frost hung over the black gateway to the house. And the yard was so dark that Scrooge had to feel his way along with his hands.

Now, there was nothing strange about the knocker on the door of the house. Scrooge saw it every night and every morning. But tonight, when Scrooge put his key in the lock, he saw Marley's face instead of the knocker.

It was definitely Marley's face. Scrooge stared at the face. And it became a knocker again.

Scrooge was scared but he put his hand on the key again. He quickly turned it. Then he walked inside and lit a candle. After that he closed the door with a bang.



- **feel his way:** touch in order to be sure of the way
- **knocker:** metal object on a door (see picture)