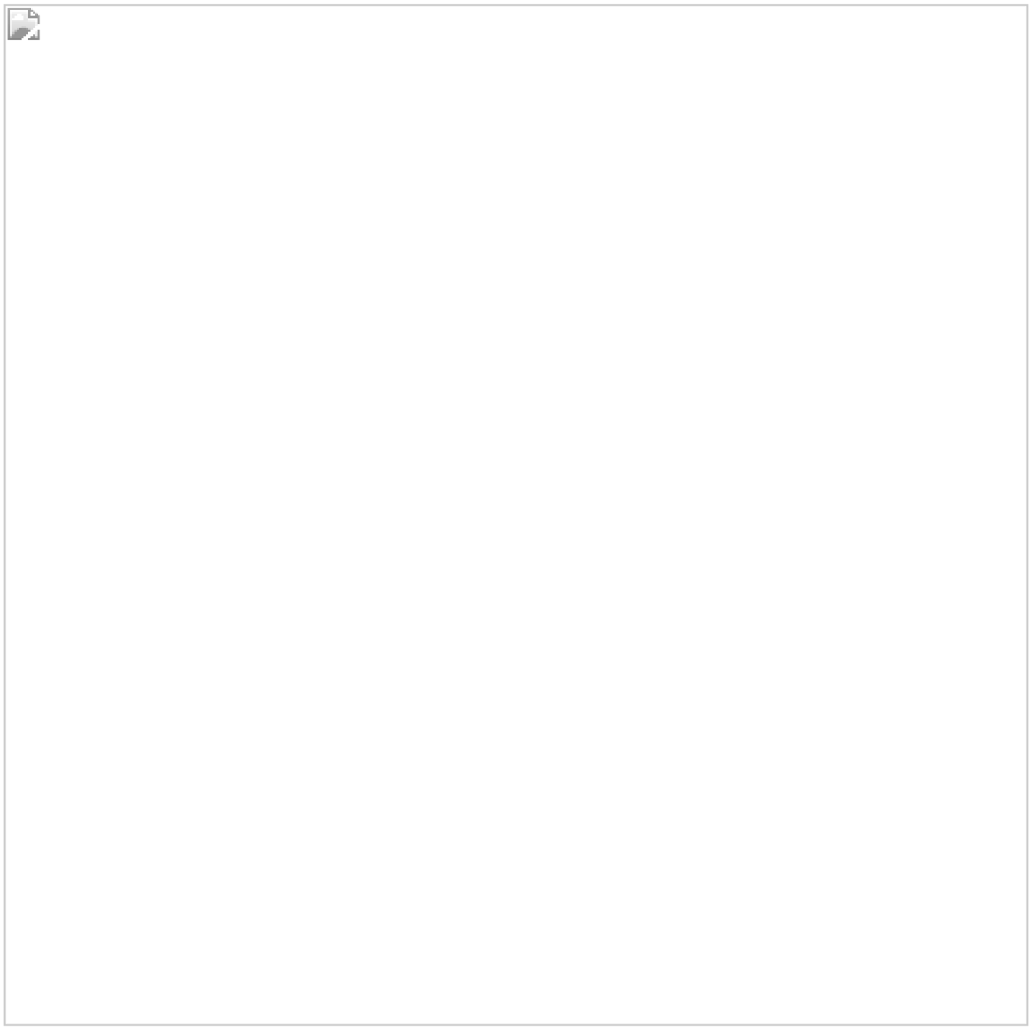
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Chimes

A Goblin Story of Some Bells That Rang an Old Year Out and a New Year In



Toby Veck was a poor old messenger who stood all day in a cold doorway, waiting for someone to hire him. Everyone called him Trotty, because of the way he trotted along.

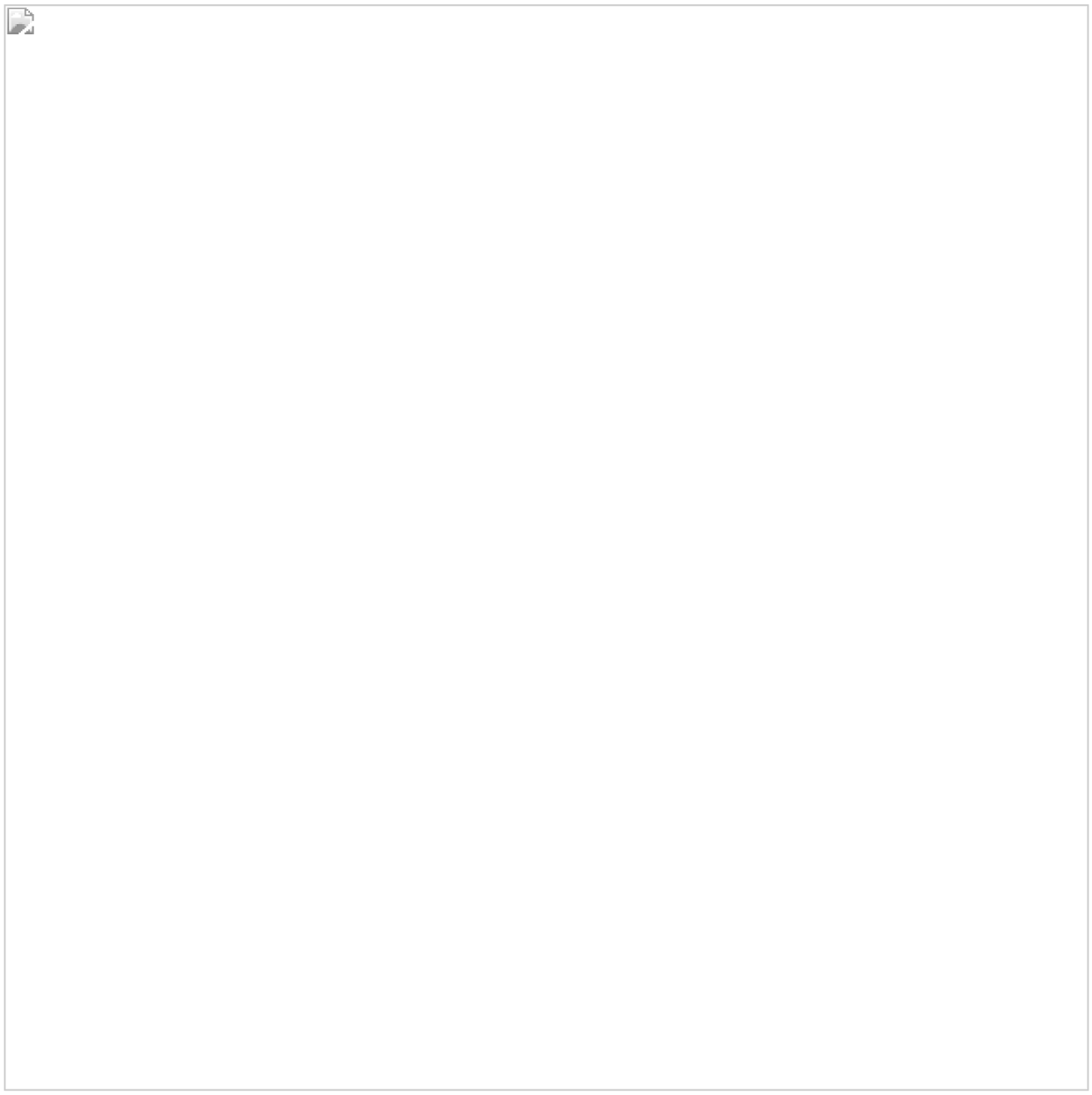
He loved the church bells above him. They seemed to ring to him: “Toby Veck, Toby Veck, keep a good heart, Toby!”

TALK ABOUT IT

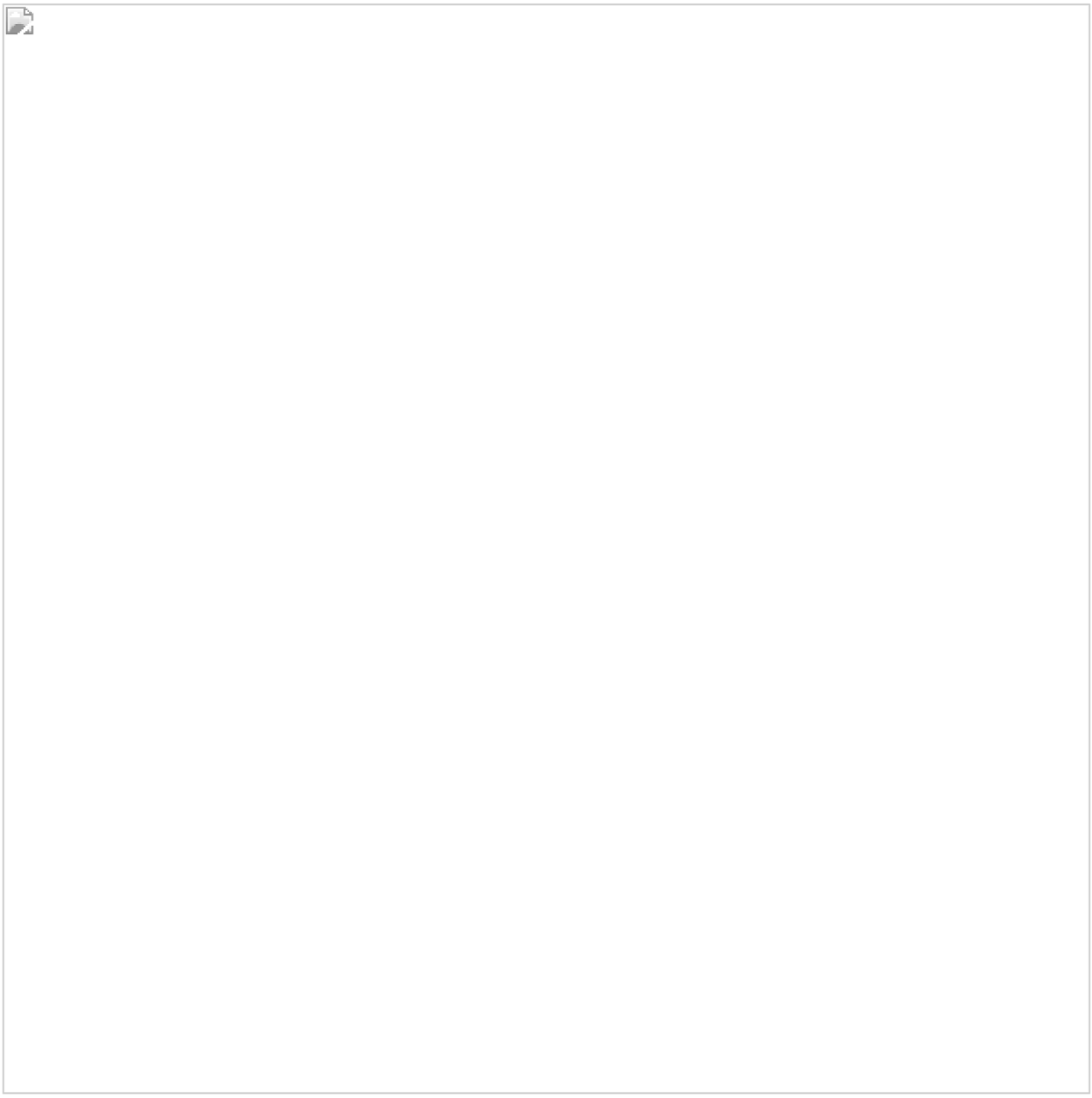
Trotty heard the bells say “keep a good heart.” What do you think it means to keep a good heart on a cold, hard day?

This book belongs to _____

The Chimes · another picture



Meg Brings Dinner



On the last day of the Old Year, Trotty's daughter Meg came running with his dinner wrapped in a cloth. It was hot tripe, and Trotty was so glad he nearly danced.

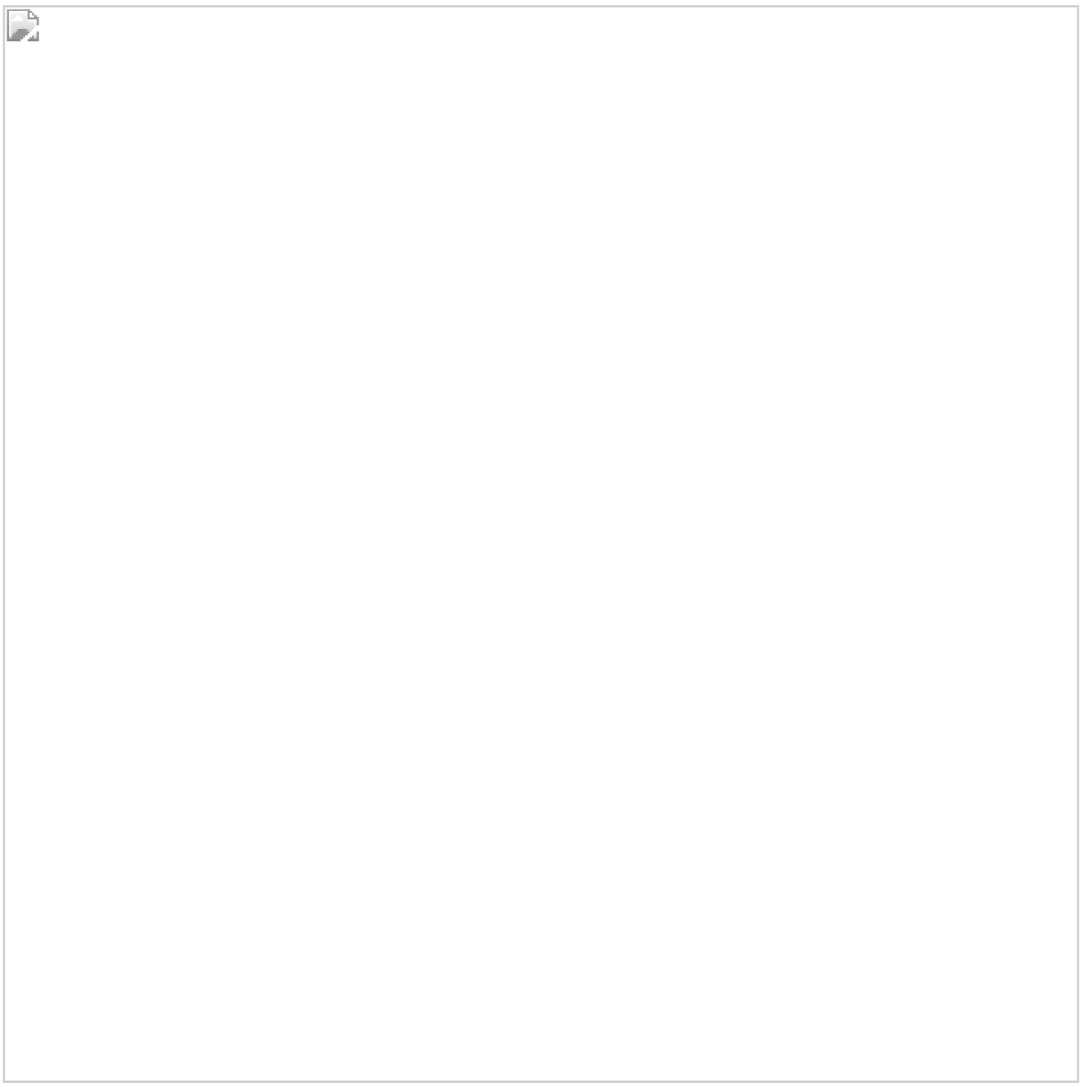
Then Meg's friend Richard came by. He said he and Meg had waited long enough. They would be married on New Year's Day!

Trotty shared his dinner, and the three of them were as happy as could be.

TALK ABOUT IT

Trotty, Meg and Richard did not have much money. What made them so happy anyway?

Meg Brings Dinner · another picture



Think about it

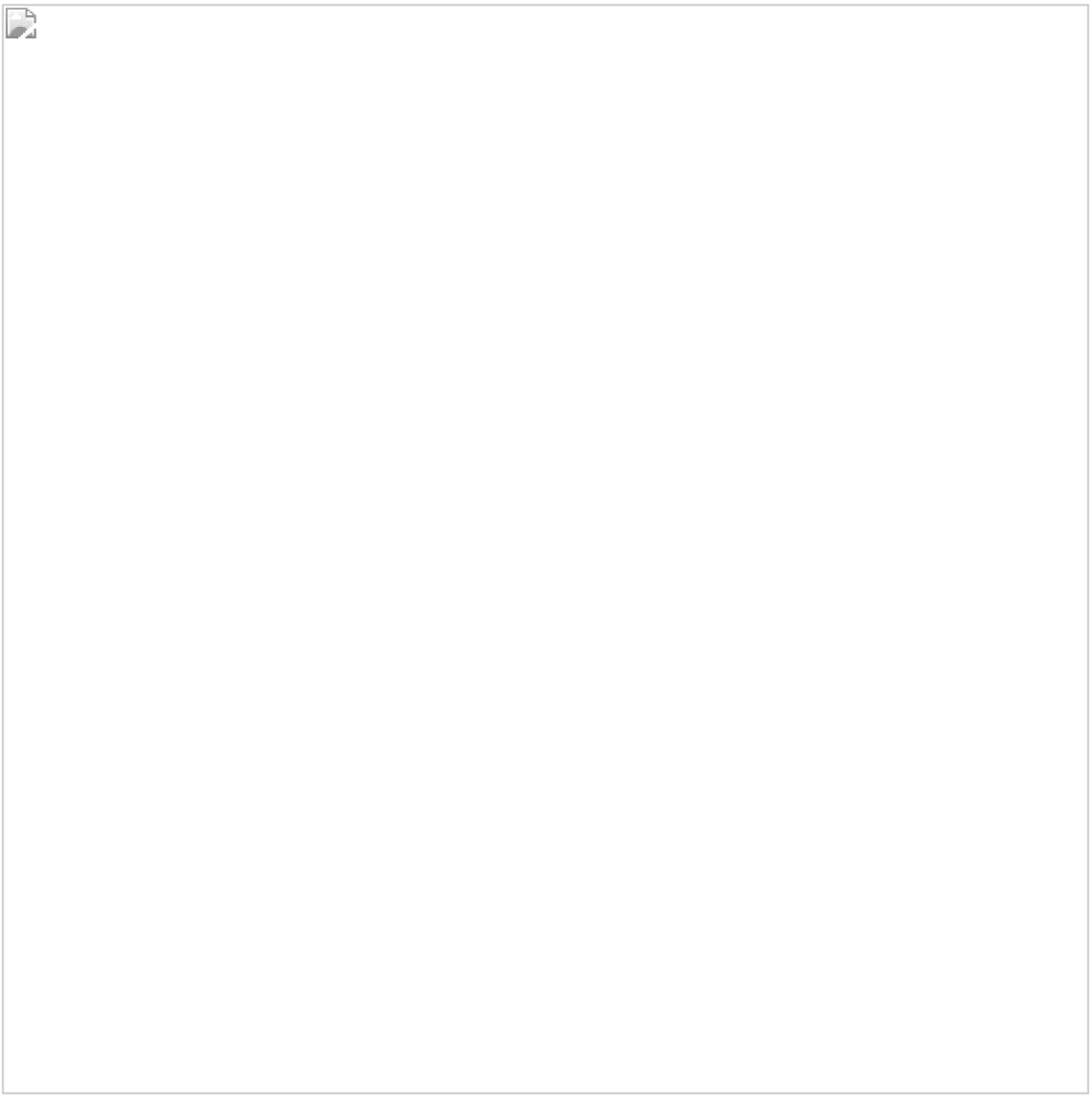
1. What did Meg bring her father?

- ○ A warm hat
- ○ His hot dinner
- ○ A letter

2. What did Richard say he and Meg would do on New Year's Day?

- ○ Go on a trip
- ○ Get married
- ○ Ring the bells

The Gentlemen Who Knew Best



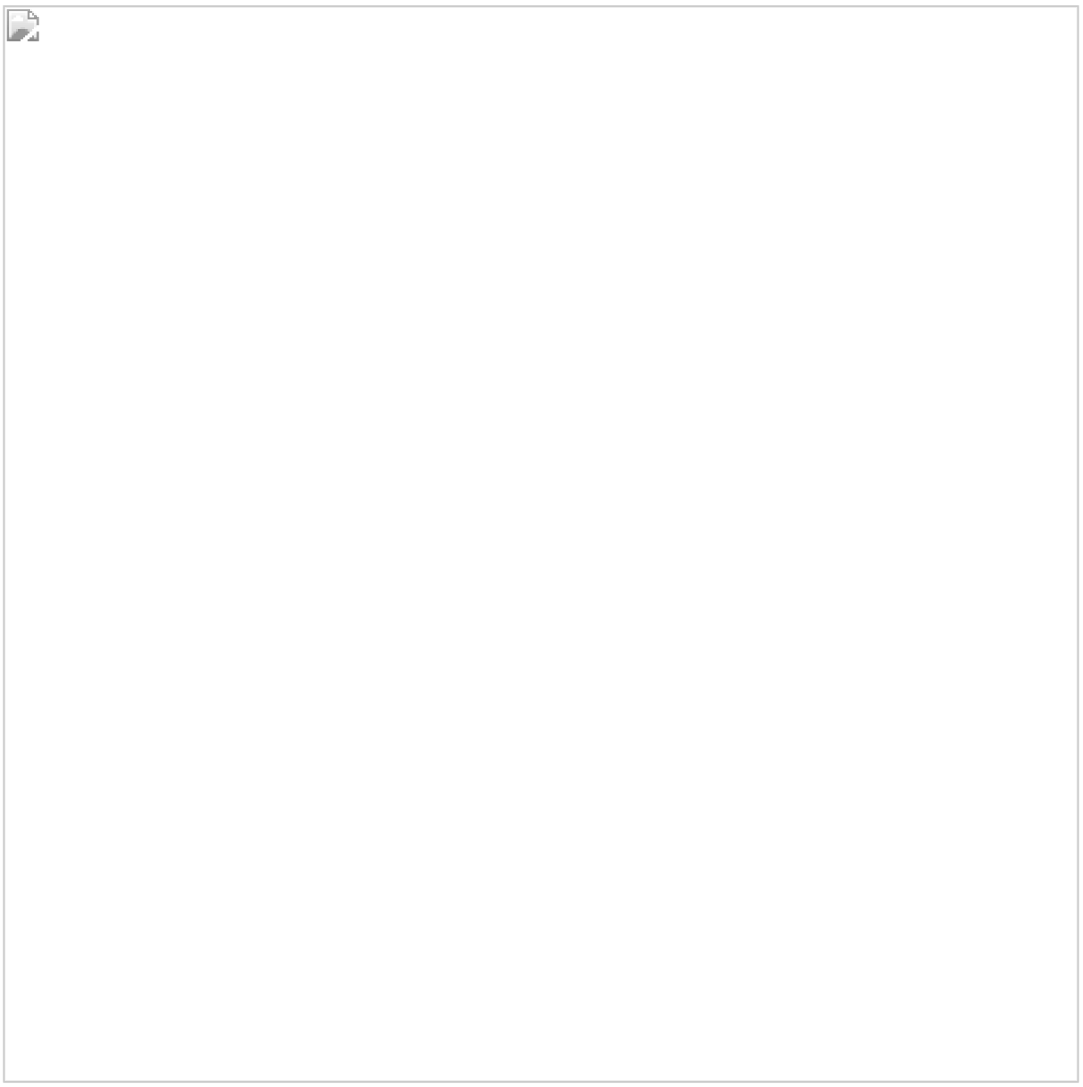
Then some grand gentlemen came along. One was Alderman Cute, a man who loved to say he would “Put Down” whatever he did not like.

The gentlemen told Trotty that poor people were bad from the day they were born. Alderman Cute said Meg and Richard were foolish to marry, and that young people like them ought to wait.

Meg and Richard walked away very sad. The wedding was put off, and Trotty could only watch them go. All the while the bells rang out: “Put 'em down, Put 'em down!”

TALK ABOUT IT

The gentlemen said Meg and Richard should not marry. How do you think Trotty felt, watching them walk away? Why do you think he felt that way?

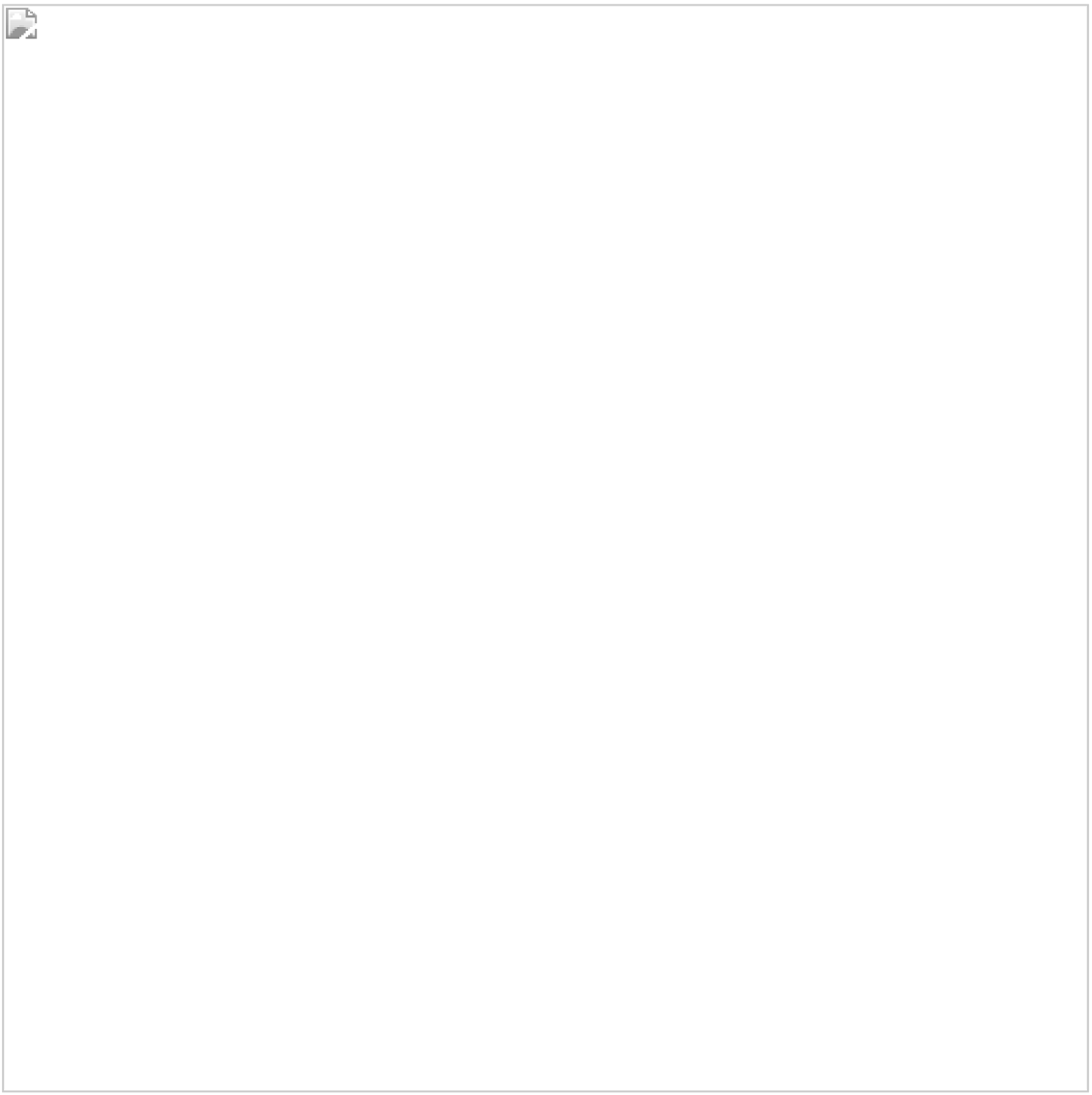


Think about it

1. What did the gentlemen say about poor people?

- ○ They were born bad
- ○ They were very clever
- ○ They were the best workers

Will Fern and Lilian



Trotty took a letter to a rich man, Sir Joseph Bowley, who called himself the poor man's friend and father. The Alderman's letter asked whether Sir Joseph would like a man named Will Fern “put down.” His only crime was looking for work in London and sleeping in a shed.

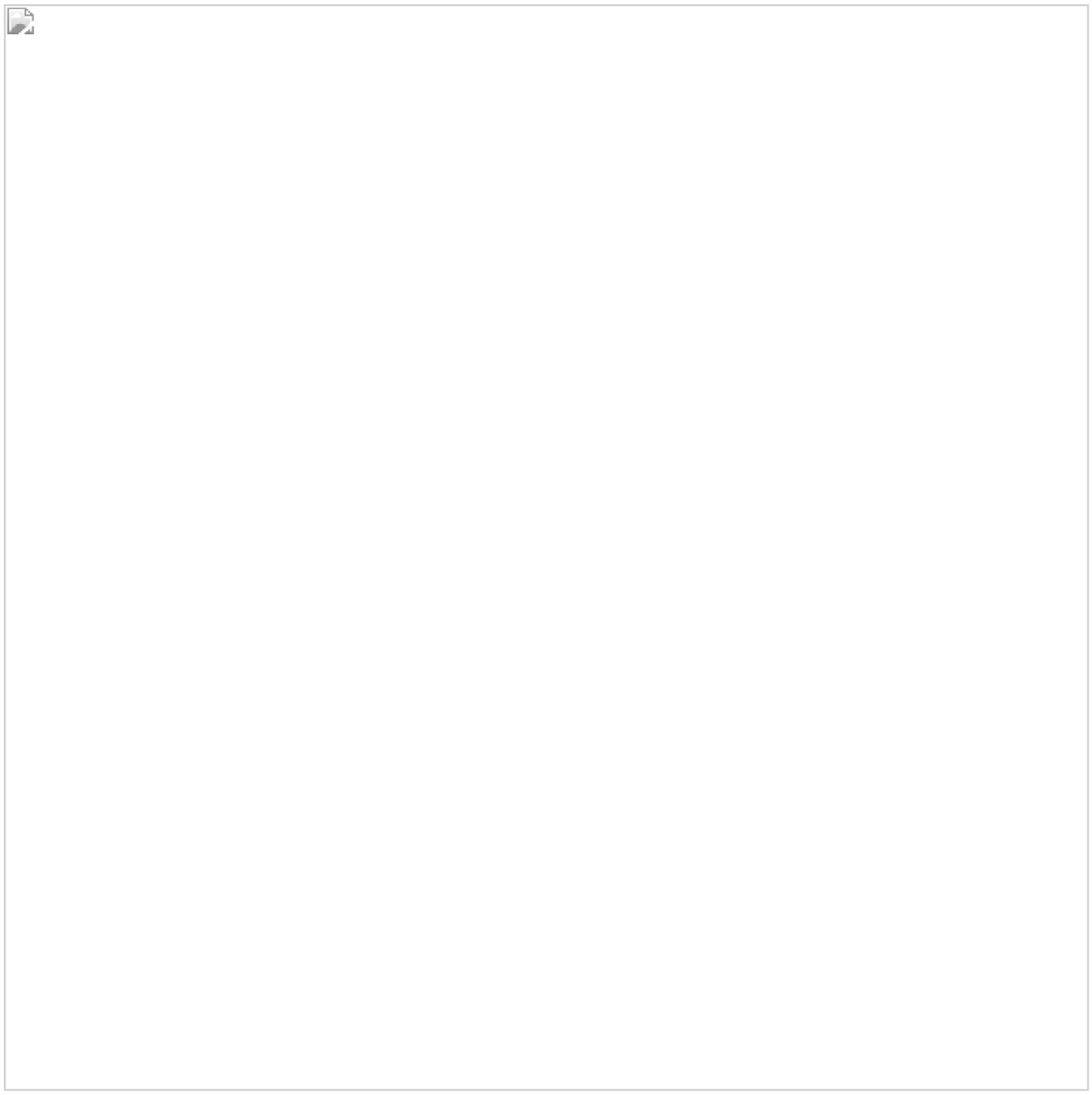
Right outside, Trotty met that very man: Will Fern, a farm worker who had come a long way, carrying his little niece Lilian, tired and hungry.

Will told Trotty, “I only want to live like one of the Almighty's creeturs.” Trotty warned him to stay away from the gentlemen. Then he said, “Come home with me!”

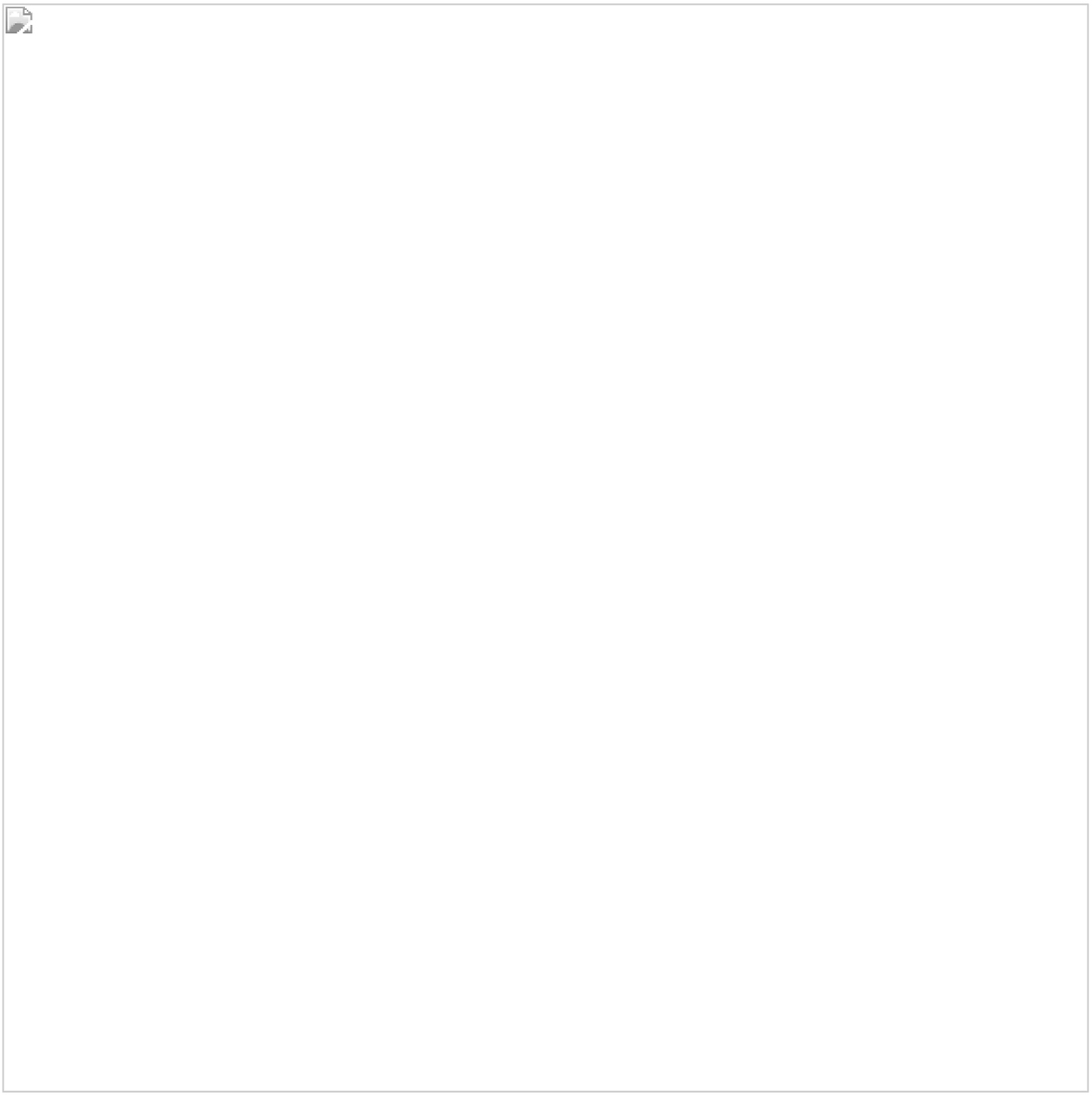
TALK ABOUT IT

Trotty was poor too, and he still asked Will and Lilian home. Why do you think he did that?

Will Fern and Lilian · another picture



Sixpence for Supper



At Trotty's little room, Meg warmed Lilian's cold feet by the fire.

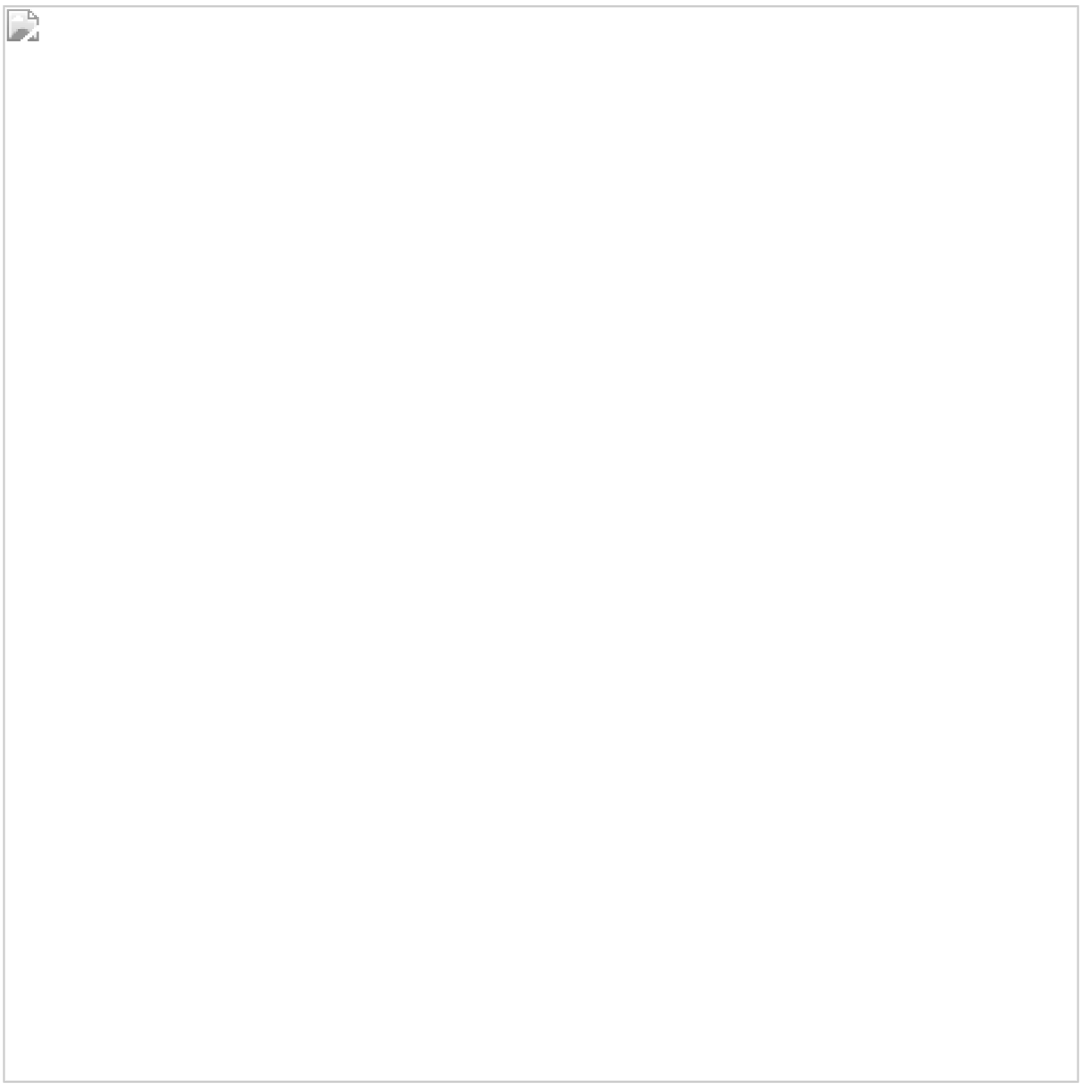
Trotty had one sixpence from the letter. He spent it on tea and bacon for his guests, then said he was not hungry at all.

Before she went to sleep, Lilian prayed for Meg, who had been kind to her. She asked what Trotty's name was, so she could pray for him too.

TALK ABOUT IT

Trotty gave away his supper and said he was not hungry. What do you think about that?

Sixpence for Supper · another picture

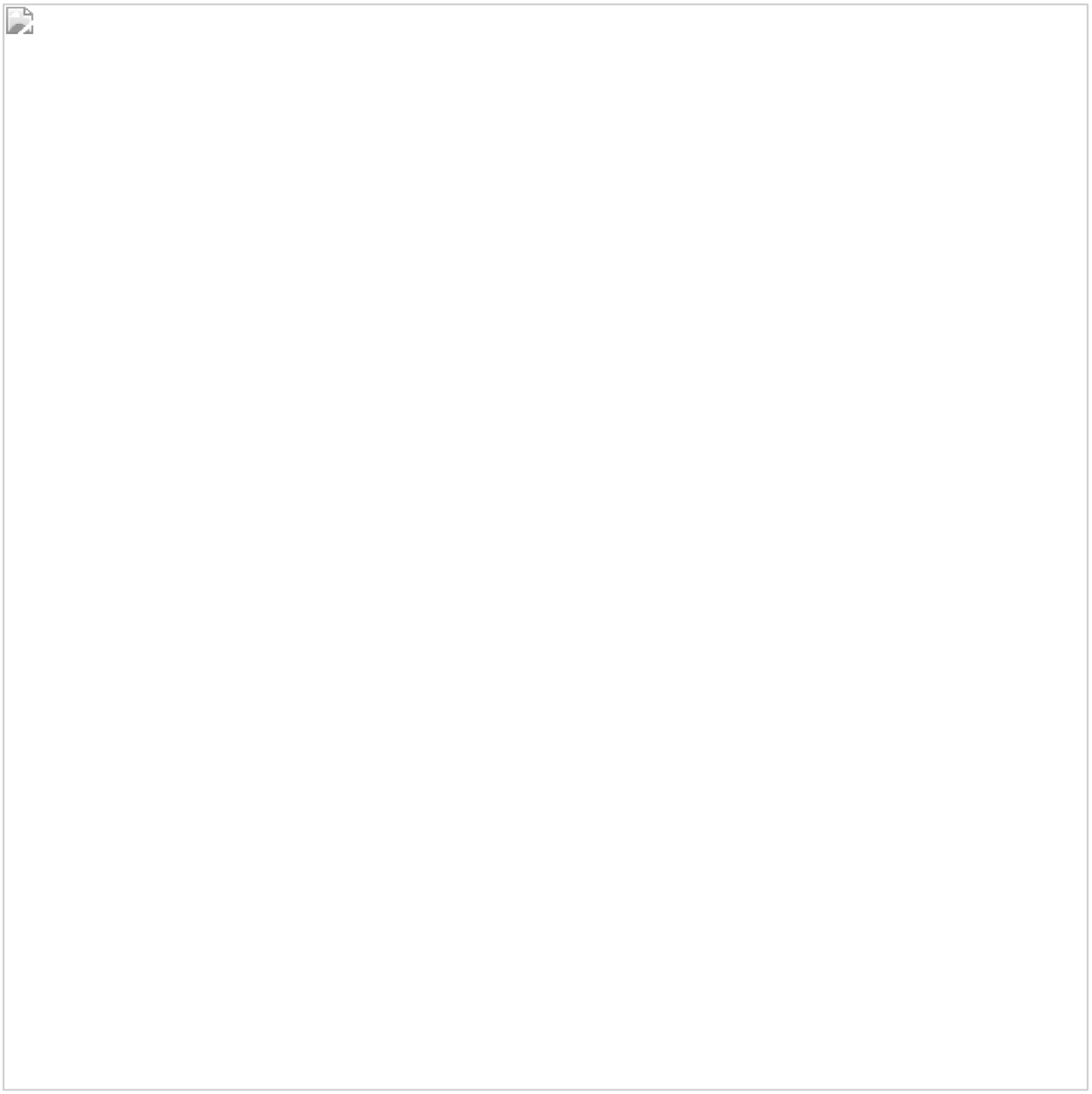


Think about it

1. What did Trotty buy with his sixpence?

- ○ A new coat
- ○ Tea and bacon for his guests
- ○ Candles for the bells

“We're Bad!”



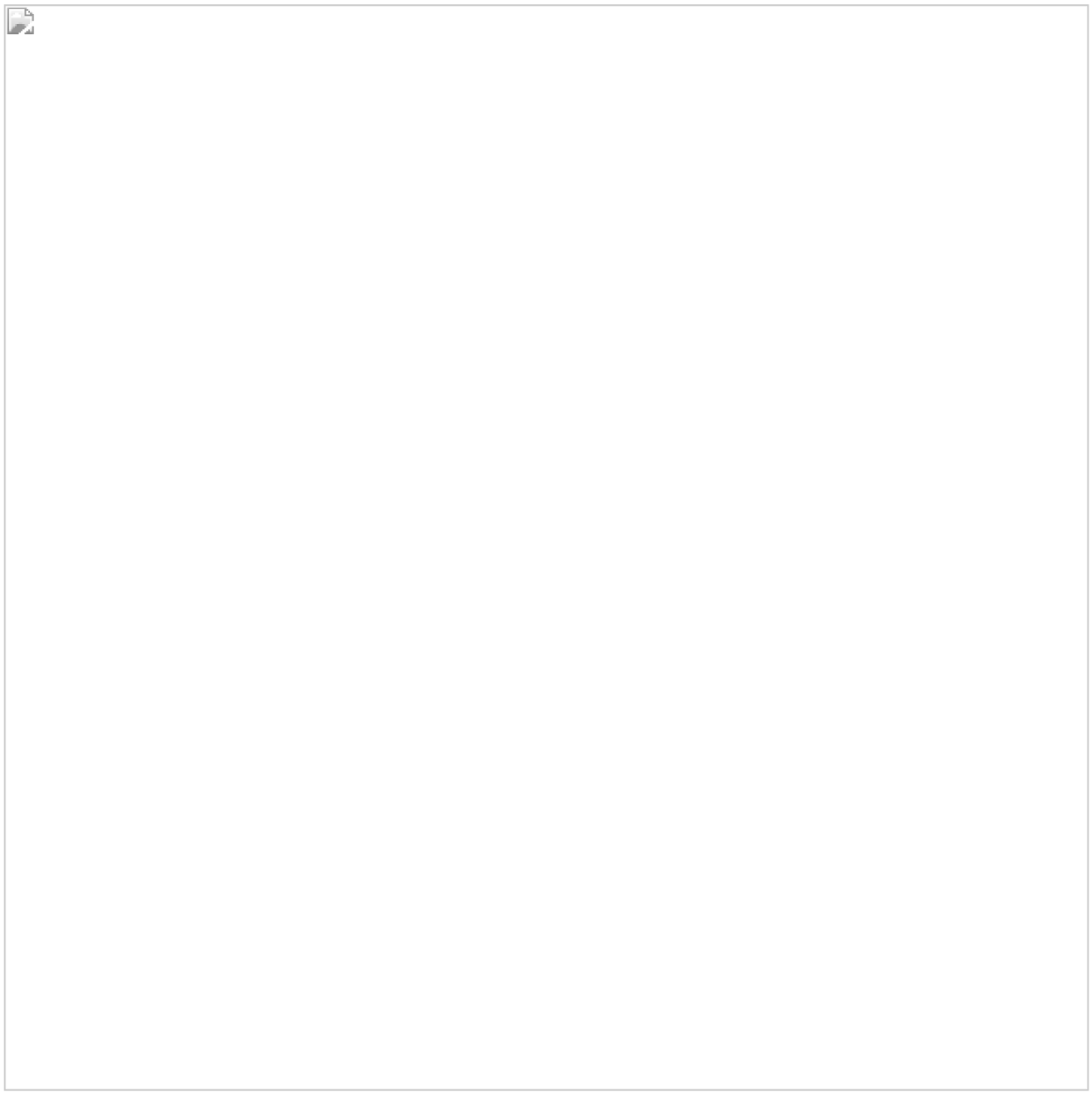
That night Trotty read the newspaper. It told a sad story about someone who had done something wrong, and Trotty began to think the gentlemen were right.

He put his head in his hands. “We're Bad!” he cried.

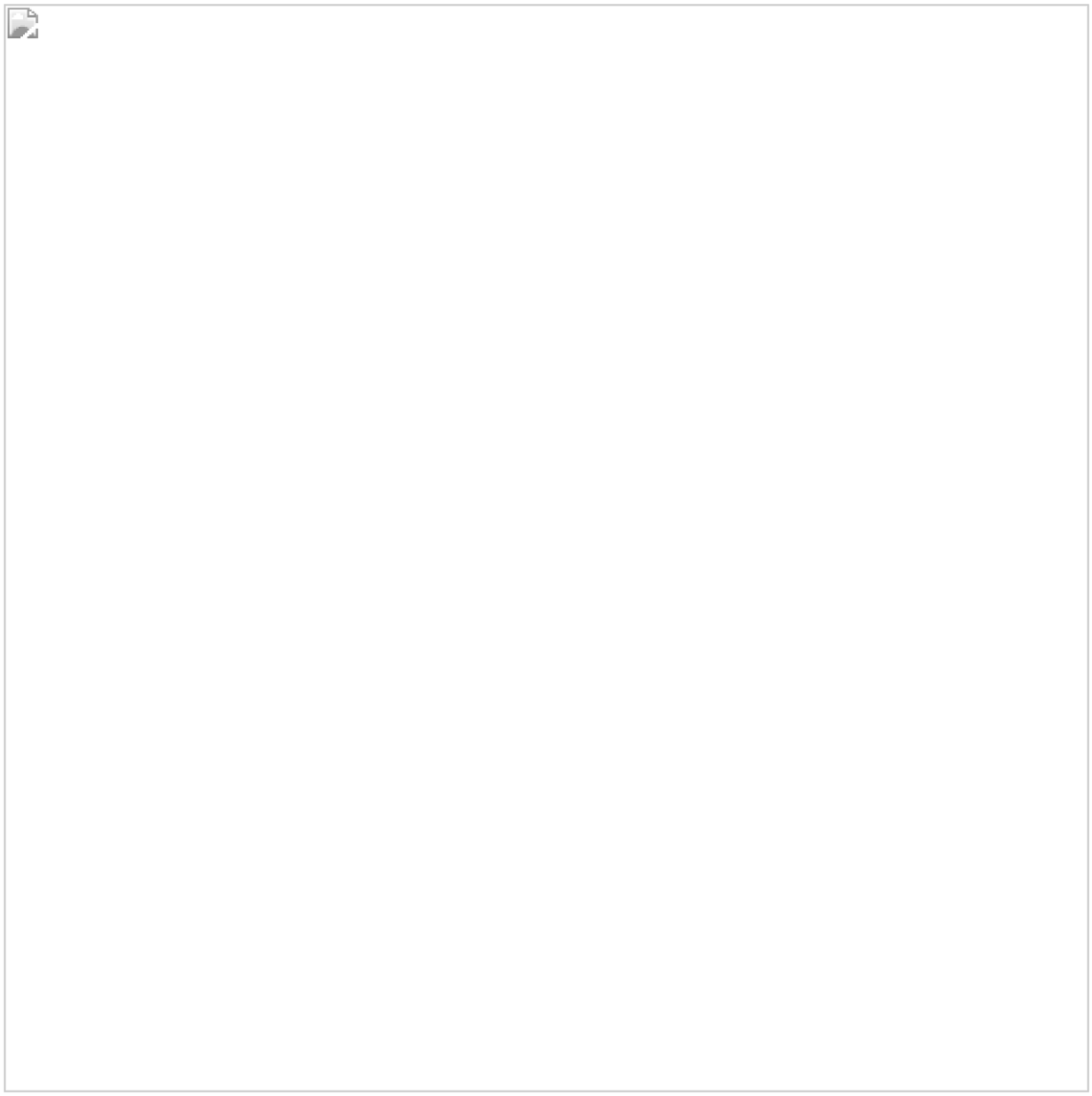
The bells heard him. They rang so loud and so fierce that Trotty felt they were calling him. He took his hat and went out into the dark to the church tower.

TALK ABOUT IT

Trotty gave up hope for a moment. What do you think made him feel that way? Have you ever felt like giving up?



The Goblins of the Bells



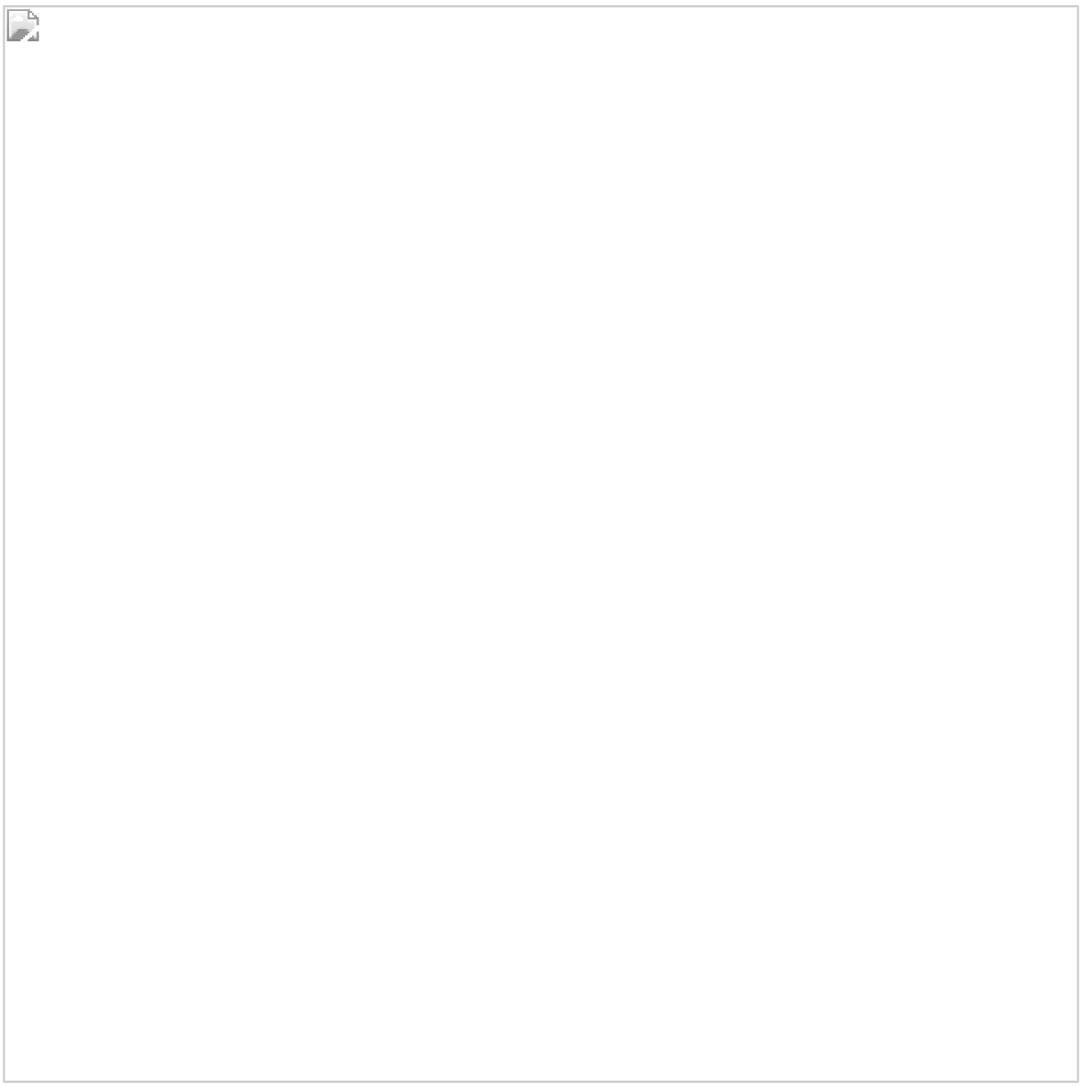
Trotty climbed the dark tower stairs. At the top he fainted. Then he saw the goblins of the bells, a huge crowd of them, and the Great Bell most of all.

The Great Bell scolded him. Trotty had stopped believing in the good in people, and the bells would show him something to teach him.

Trotty looked down and saw his own body at the foot of the tower, no longer alive. Had it been a year ago? “Nine years ago!” said the bells. From here on, the bells showed him a frightening dream of what might come, if people gave up hope.

TALK ABOUT IT

From here on, the bells show Trotty a dream of what might happen. Why do you think the bells wanted him to see it?

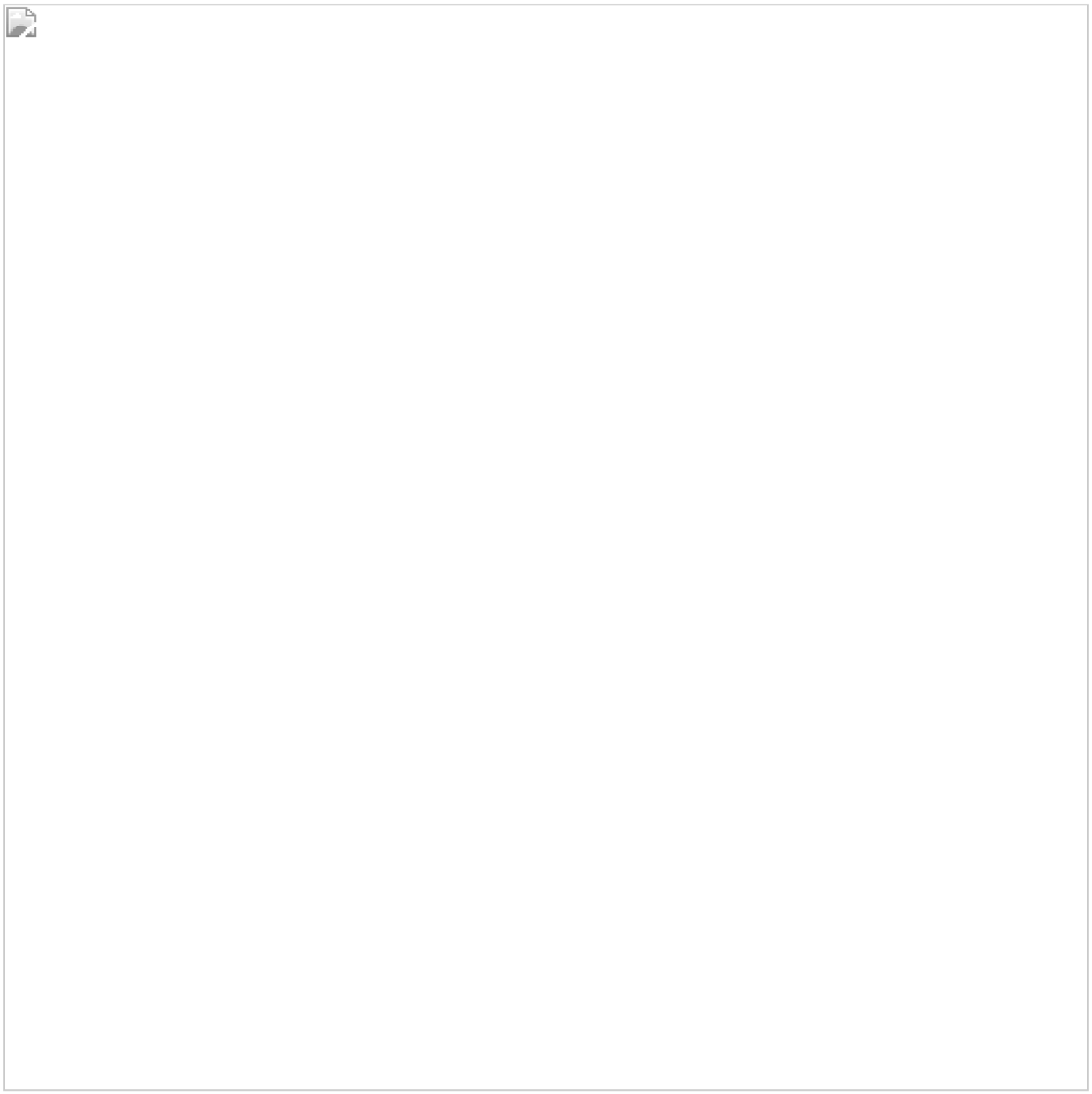


Think about it

1. What did the bells show Trotty?

- ○ A dream of what might happen
- ○ Where treasure was buried
- ○ A map of the city

Meg and Lilian



A child spirit of the Chimes, who looked like little Lilian, led Trotty to see Meg, years later. Meg was sewing in a poor, bare room. Beside her sat Lilian, now grown up.

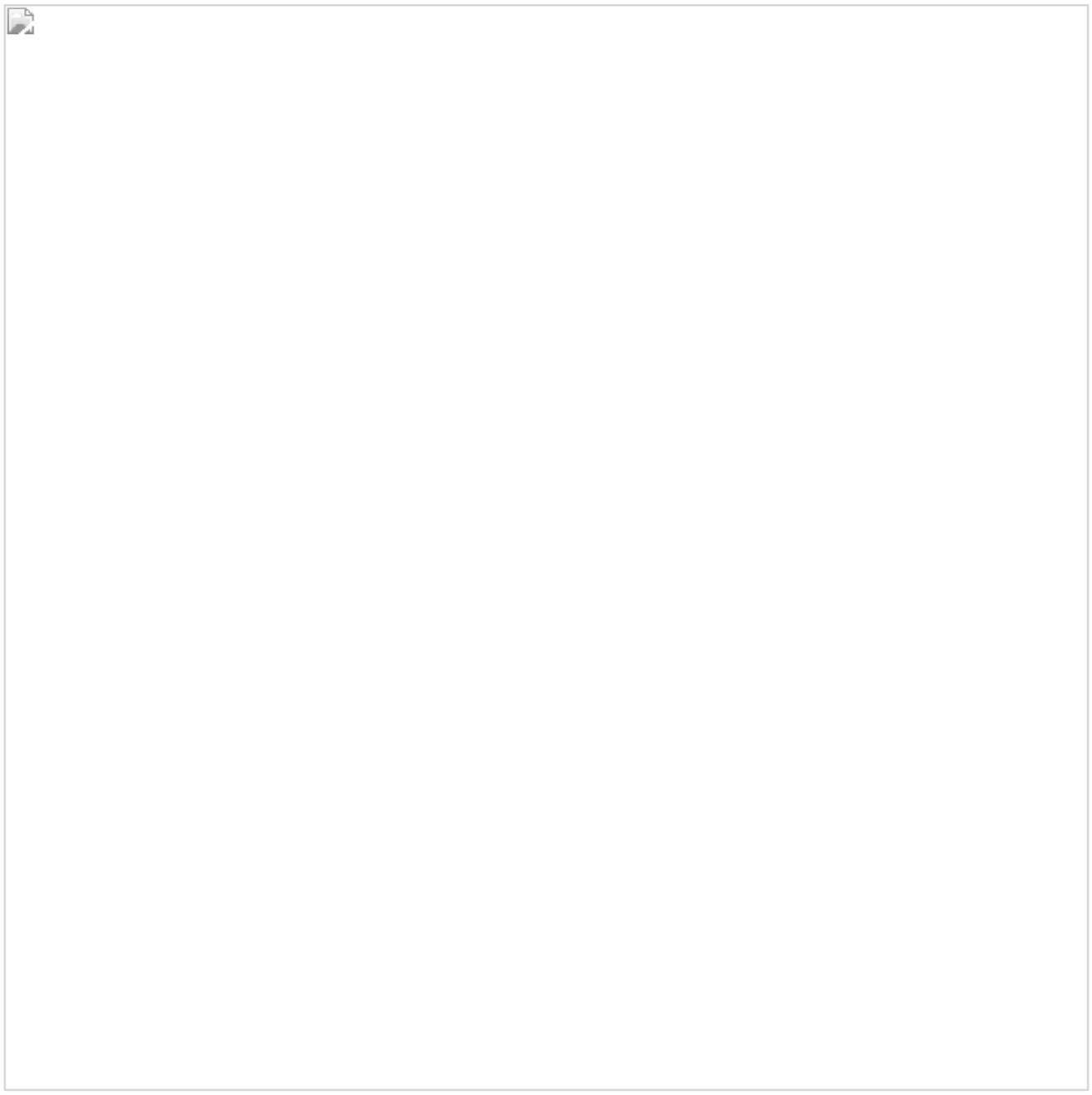
They worked all day and half the night, only to earn bare bread. Trotty wanted so badly to hold his daughter, and he could not.

Lilian said Meg had been the only thing that made life worth living. Still, she was frightened by how hard and hopeless it all was.

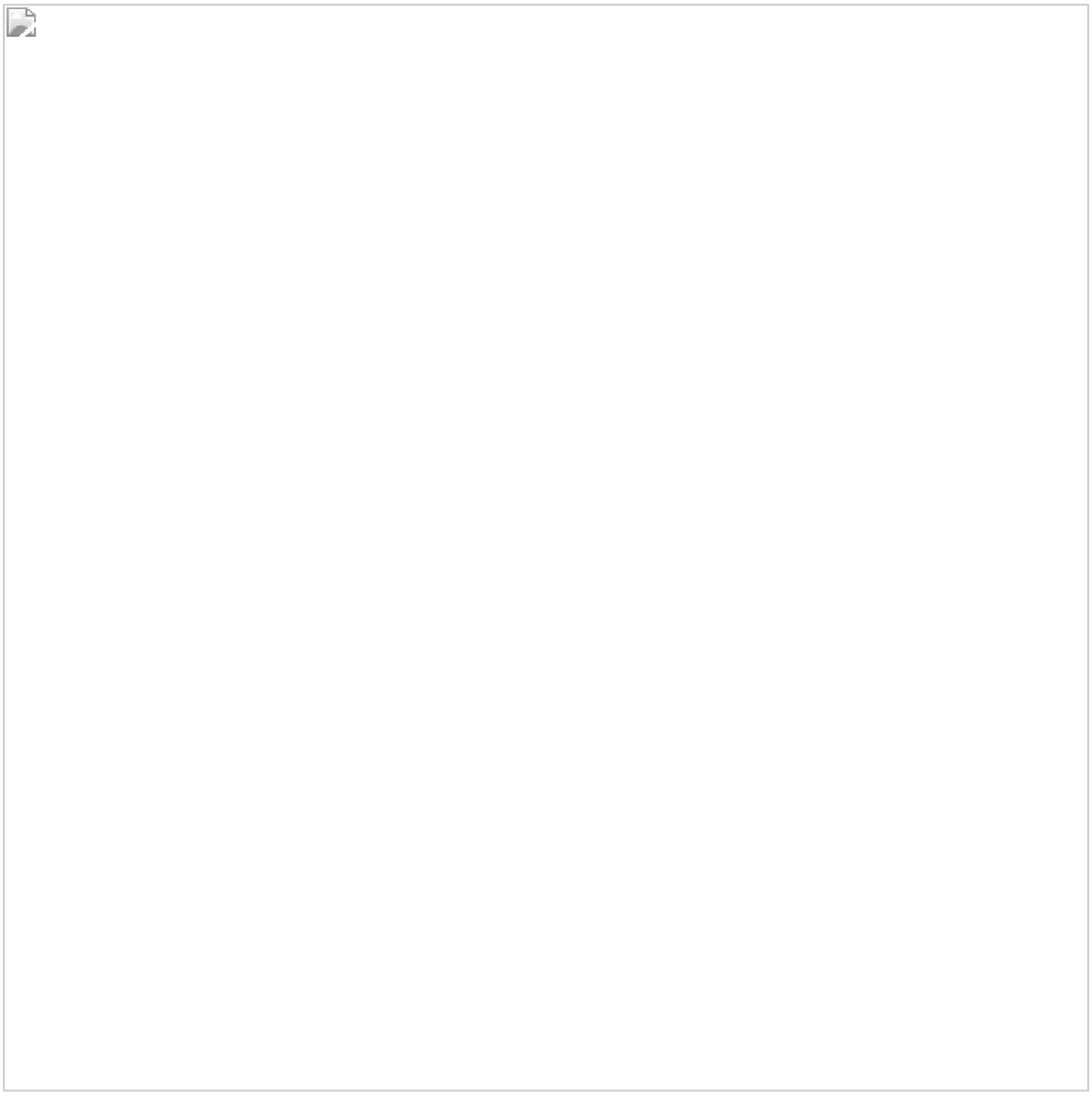
TALK ABOUT IT

Trotty could see Meg but could not touch her or talk to her. How do you think that would feel?

Meg and Lilian · another picture



Sir Joseph's Feast



The bells took Trotty to Sir Joseph Bowley's great hall. It was a grand New Year's party. The people were dressed in fine clothes and ate rich food.

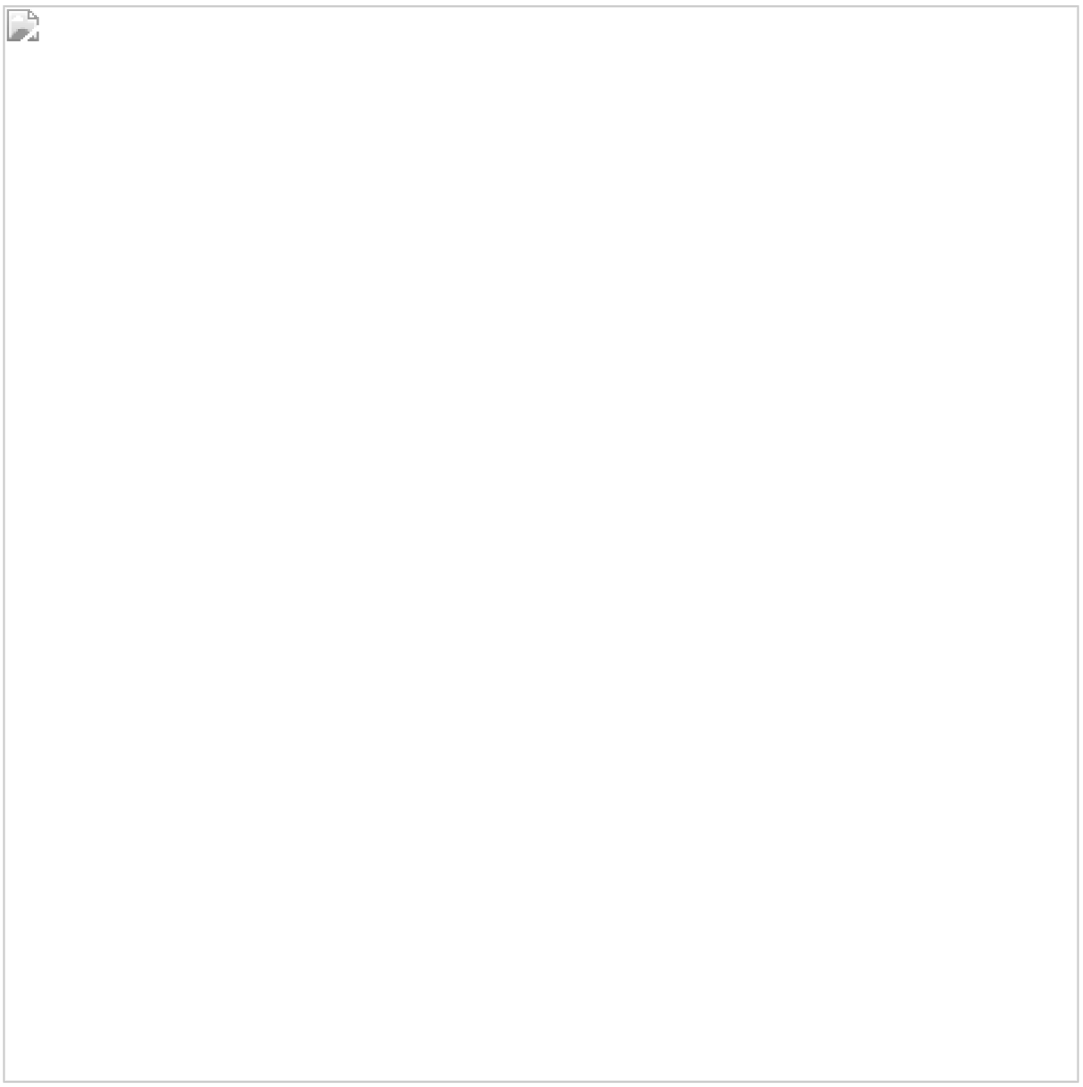
Will Fern walked in, thin and worn. He had been in jail. He spoke to the whole room, and he said that a poor man's good heart can be lost if no one cares for it. “Bring it back, gentlefolks, bring it back!”

No one listened to him. He was shut away again. Trotty watched, and he could not help.

TALK ABOUT IT

Will Fern asked the rich people to bring back a poor man's good spirit. Why do you think they did not listen?

Sir Joseph's Feast · another picture

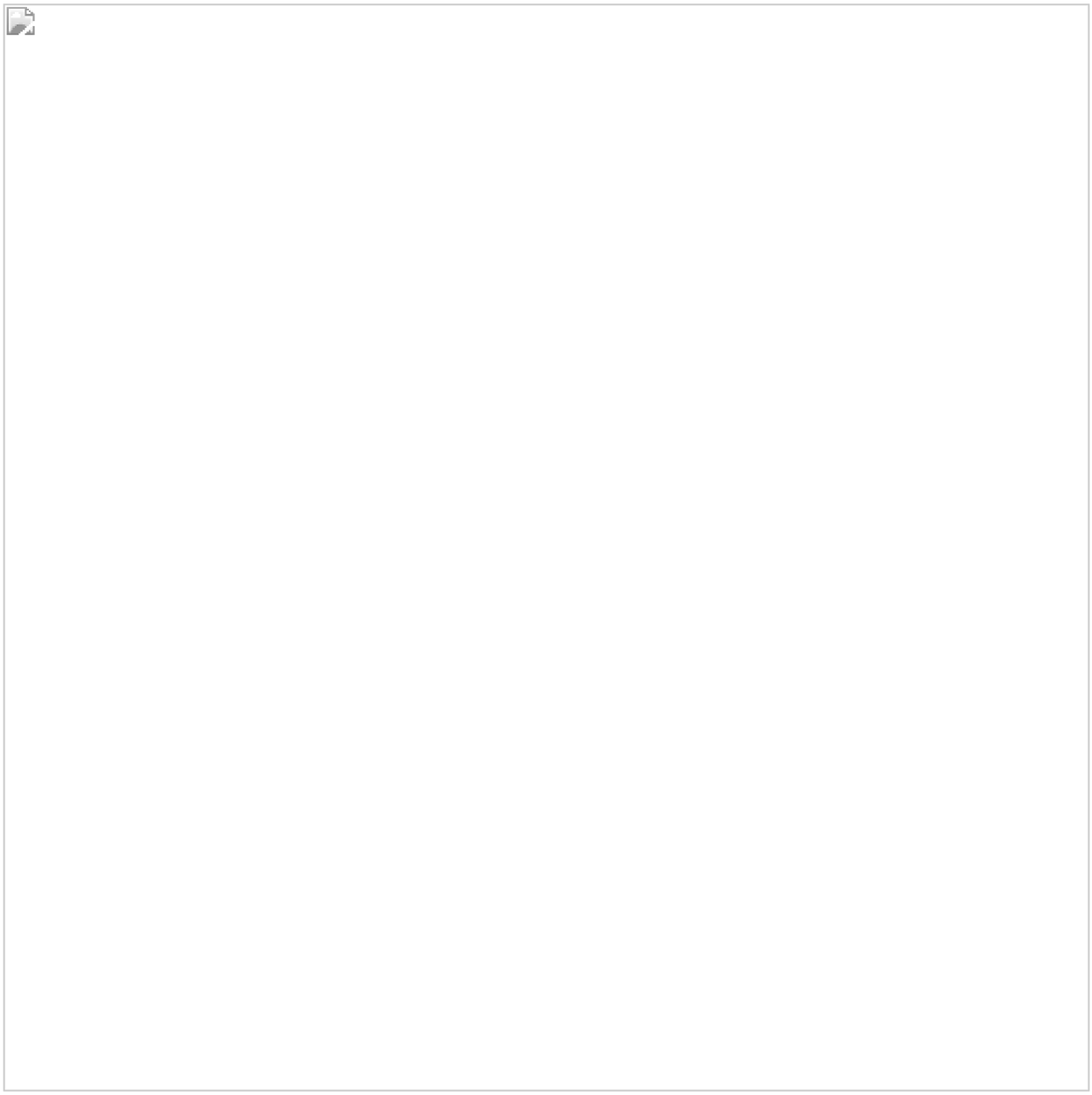


Think about it

1. What did Will Fern ask the rich people to do?

- ○ Give him a feast
- ○ Bring back a poor man's good spirit
- ○ Send him to jail

Richard Falls Low



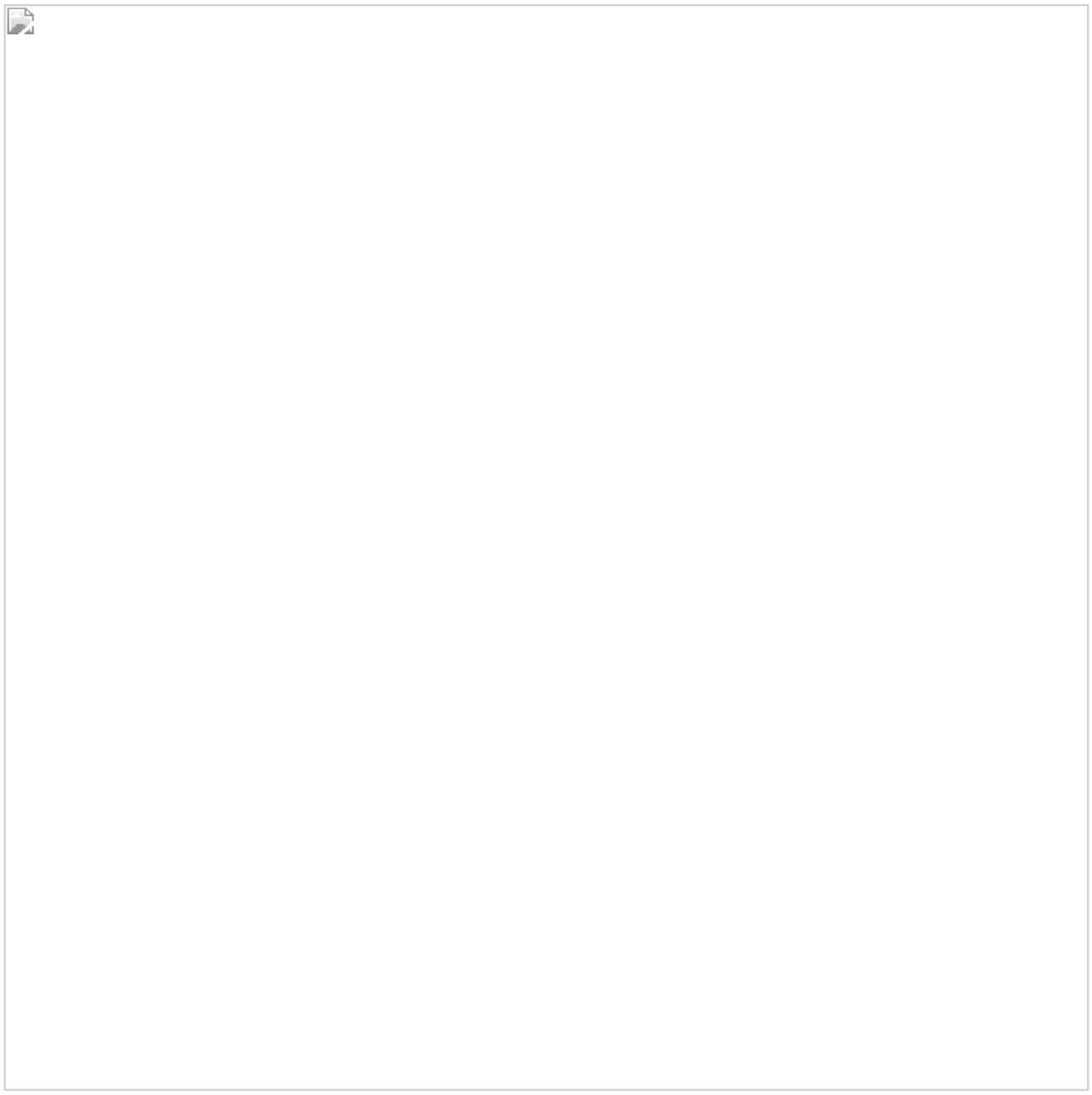
Next, Trotty saw Richard. Richard had once been so cheerful. Now he had lost his way. He had been drinking and had lost everything, and nobody wanted to hire him.

Richard told Meg that Lilian had come to him again and again, wanting to send Meg a little money and to ask how Meg was. Meg said she loved Lilian with all her heart, but she could not take the money.

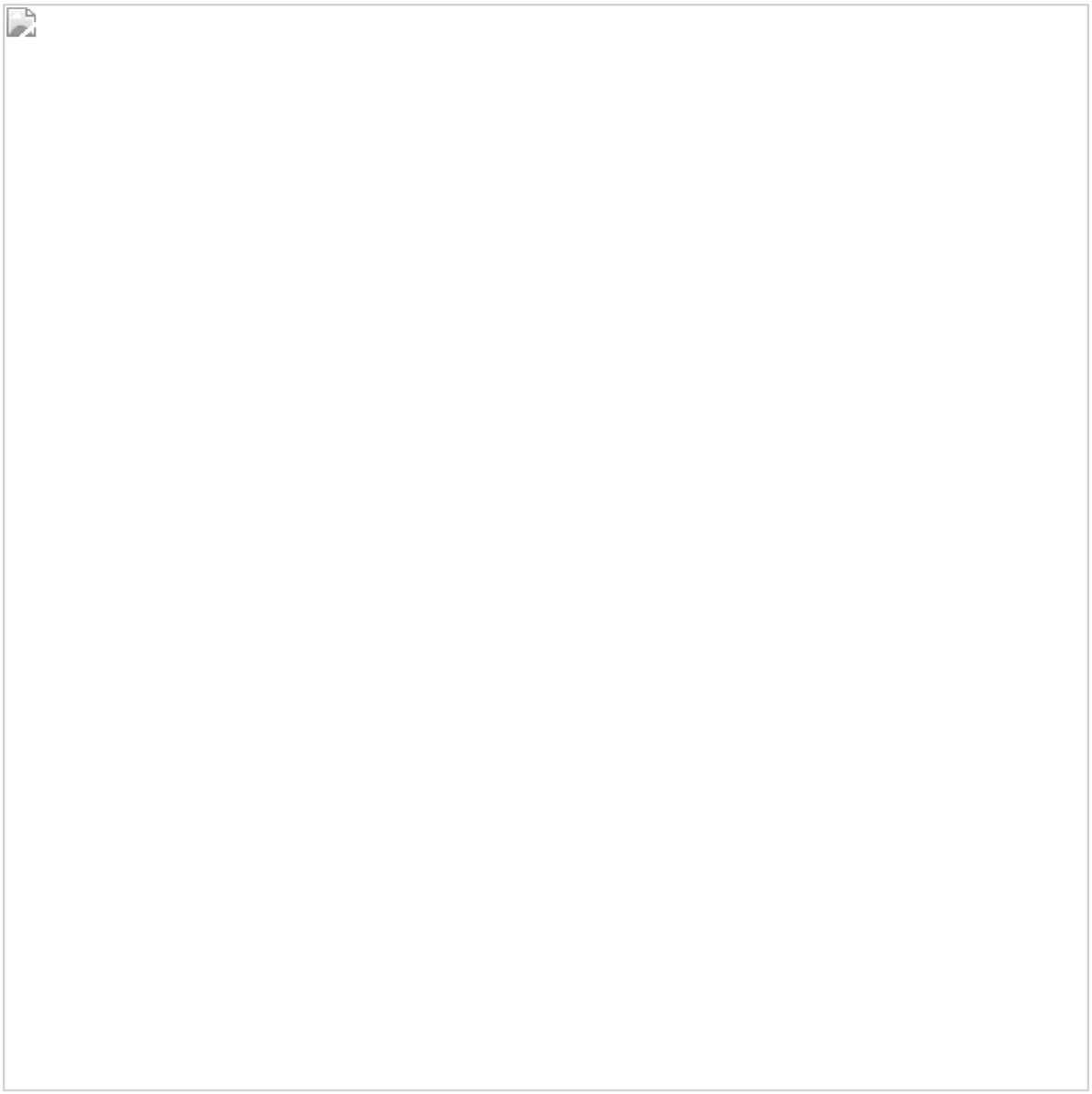
TALK ABOUT IT

Meg could not take the money, but she still loved Lilian. How do you think love and being proud can both be in one person?

Richard Falls Low · another picture



Lilian Comes Back



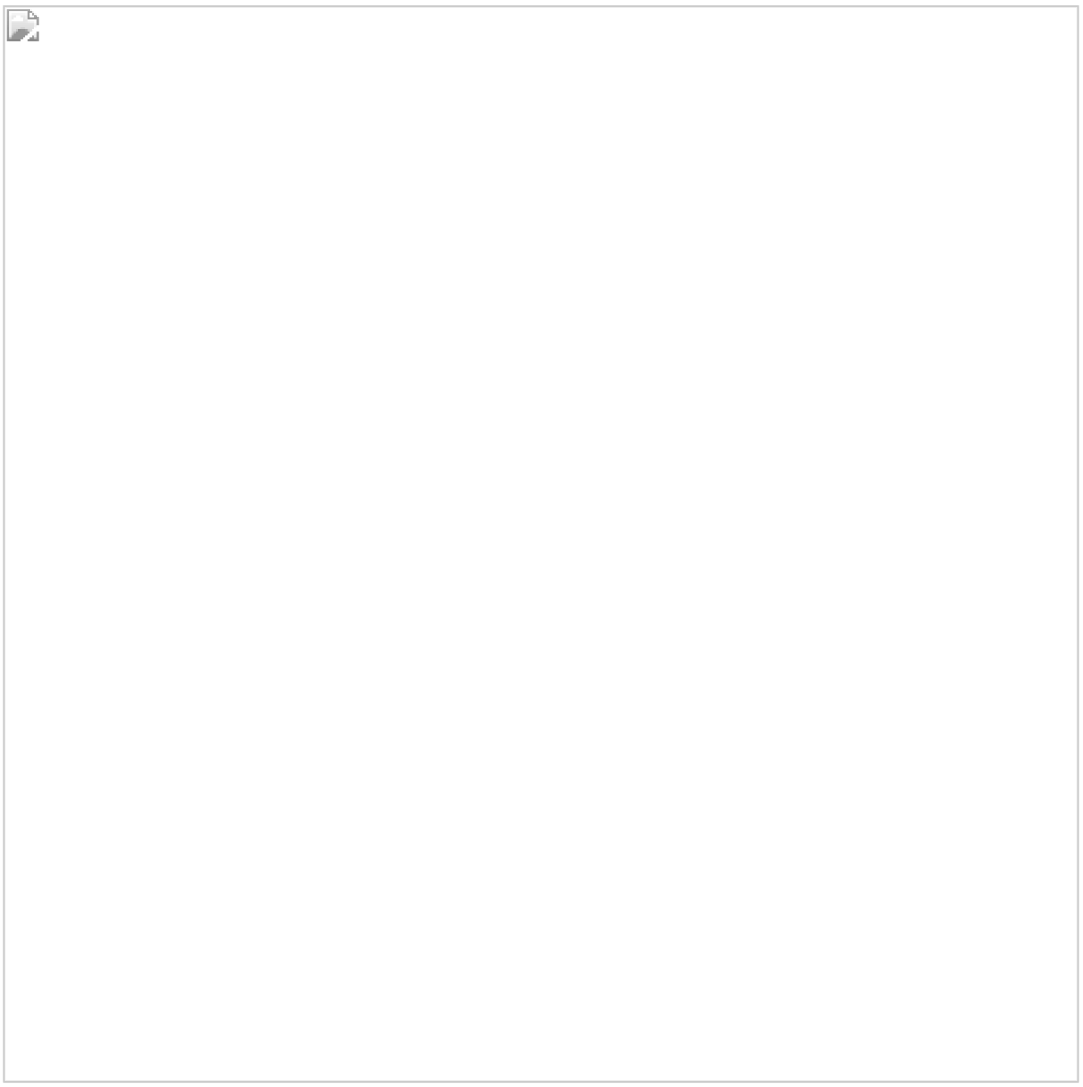
Lilian, worn out by hopeless work, had gone away from Meg and into sorrow. The book does not say more than that, and neither will we.

One night she crept home. She fell on her knees before Meg and held on to her dress.

Meg held her close and said they would live together. But Lilian said she had come home to die. “Forgive me, Meg!” she whispered, and Meg did, and Lilian died in her arms.

TALK ABOUT IT

Lilian came back to the one who loved her most. Why do you think she wanted to be with Meg at the end?

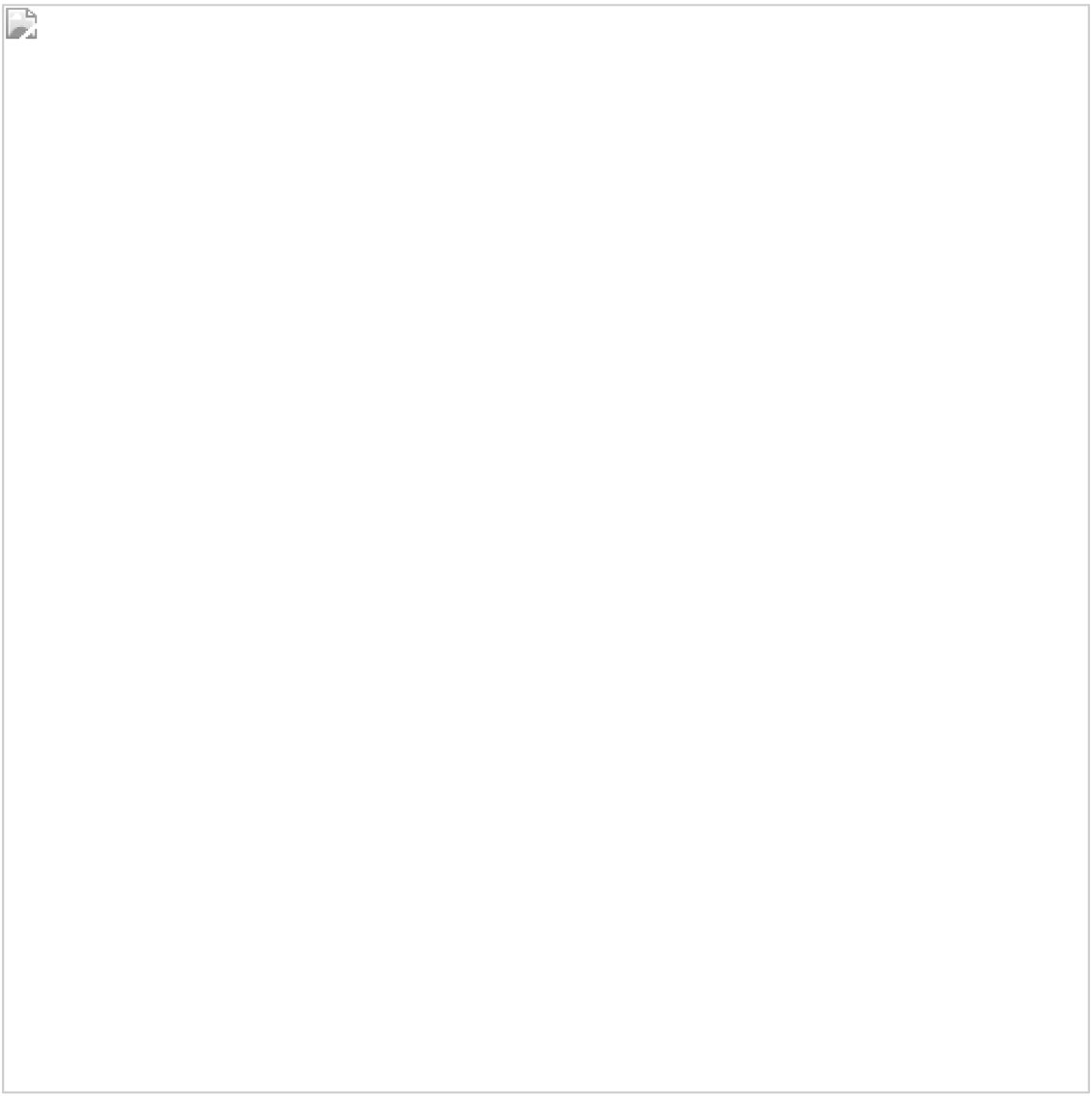


Think about it

1. What did Meg do when Lilian asked to be forgiven?

- ○ She said yes and held her close
- ○ She walked away
- ○ She shut the door

Meg Alone



Later, Trotty saw Mrs. Chickenstalker, now Mrs. Tugby. She told a gentleman how Meg had married Richard, hoping to save him, for the love of Lilian and of Richard.

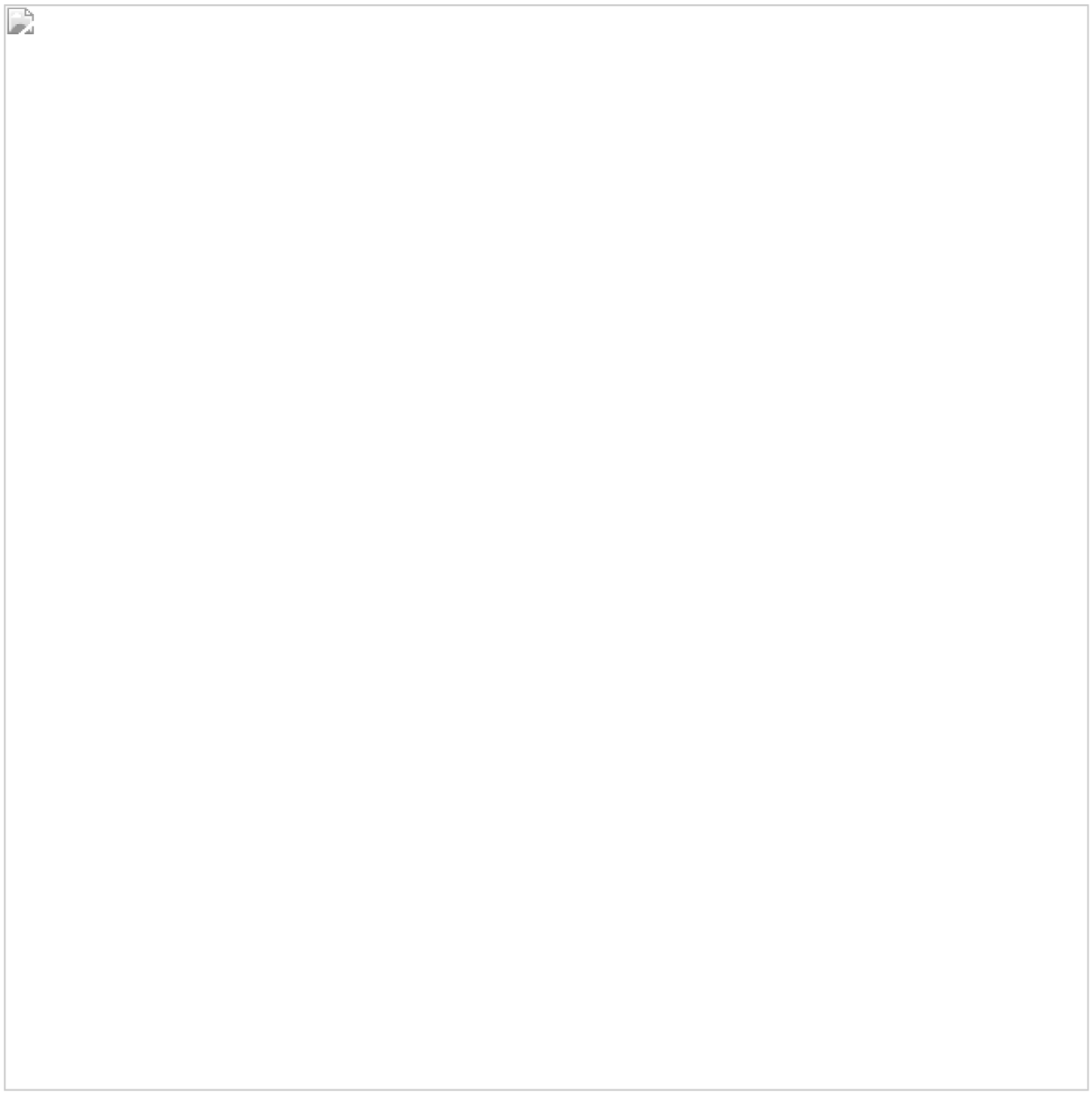
Richard grew ill and died. Meg had a baby girl. She loved the baby with all her heart, but she had no work and no money.

Then one night Will Fern came to her door, hunted and in despair. He held the baby a moment and gave her back. “It's Lilian's,” he said. She had the very face Lilian had, when Will held her as a little child. Meg held her baby tight, very frightened.

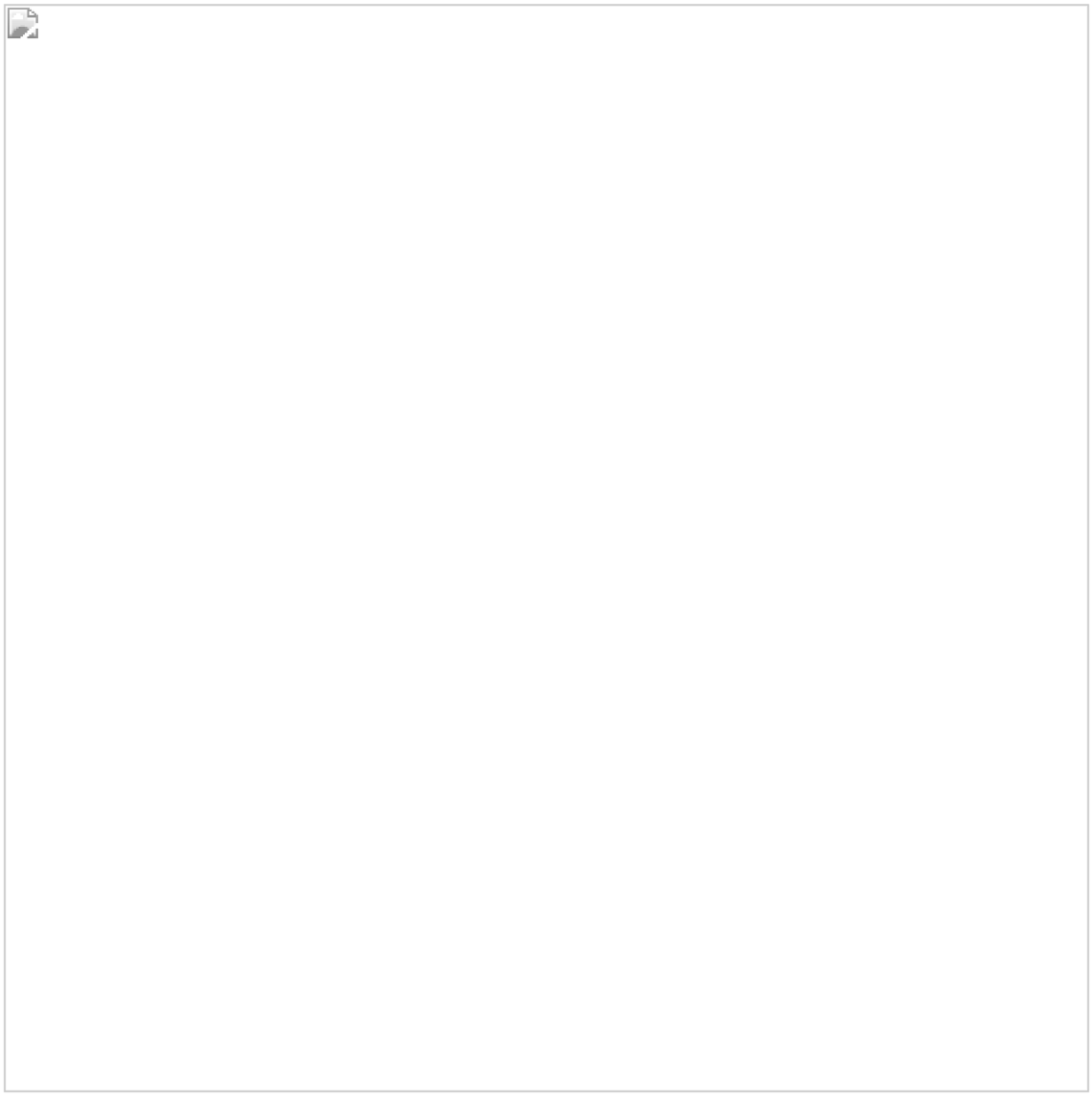
TALK ABOUT IT

Meg tried to help Richard because she loved him and Lilian. What do you think it cost her?

Meg Alone · another picture



The Last Night of the Year



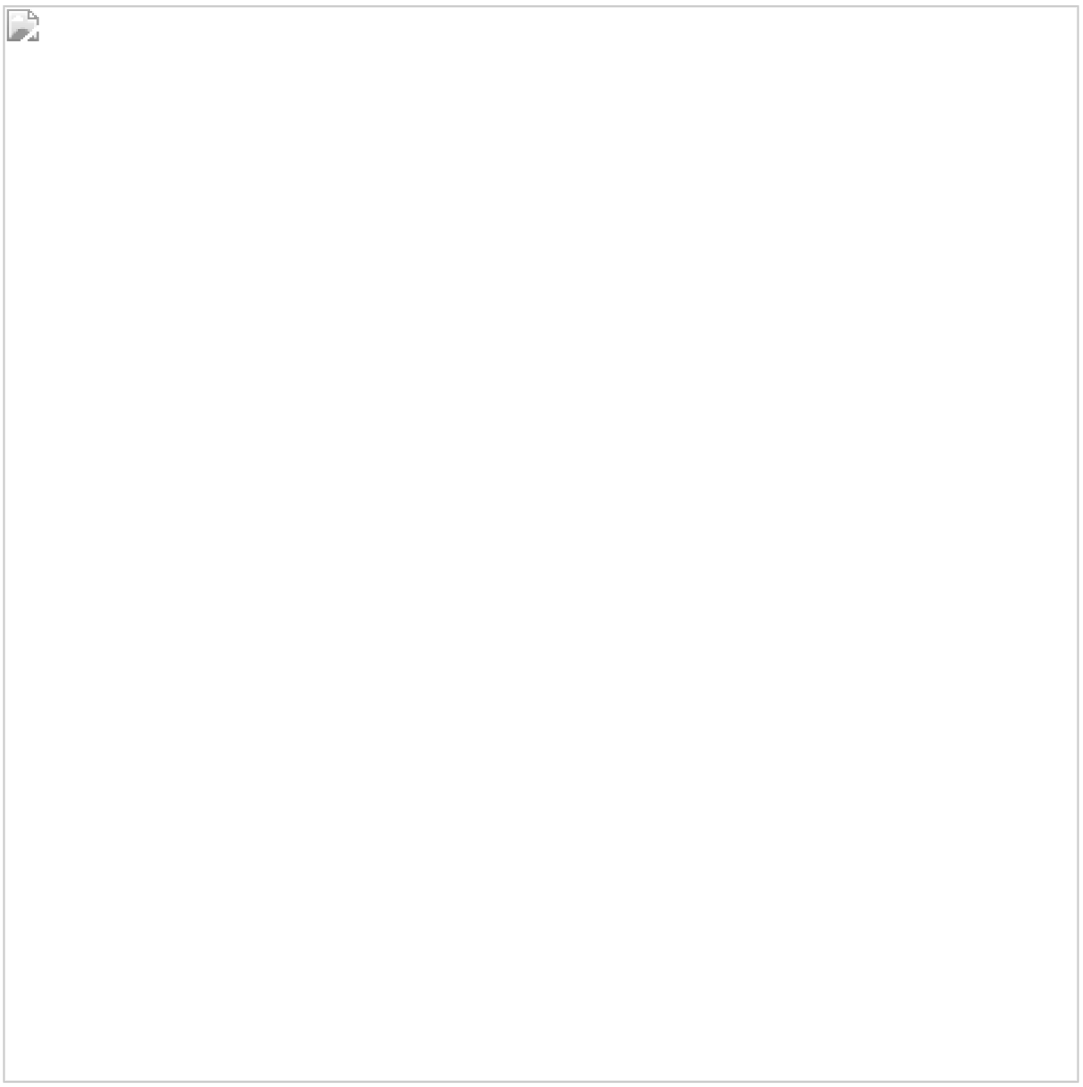
On the last night of the Old Year, Mr. Tugby, the shopkeeper, would not let Meg and her baby back inside. She had nowhere to go. Hopeless, she hurried through the dark streets toward the river, holding the baby close.

Trotty ran after her, but she could not feel him or hear him. “But, it is Love,” said Trotty. “It is Love.” Even now, it was her love for her child that drove her.

He called out to the spirits: “I have learnt it!” He said, “we must trust and hope, and neither doubt ourselves, nor doubt the good in one another.” And he held on to Meg.

TALK ABOUT IT

Trotty was only a watcher in the dream, but at the end he held on to Meg. What do you think made the difference?

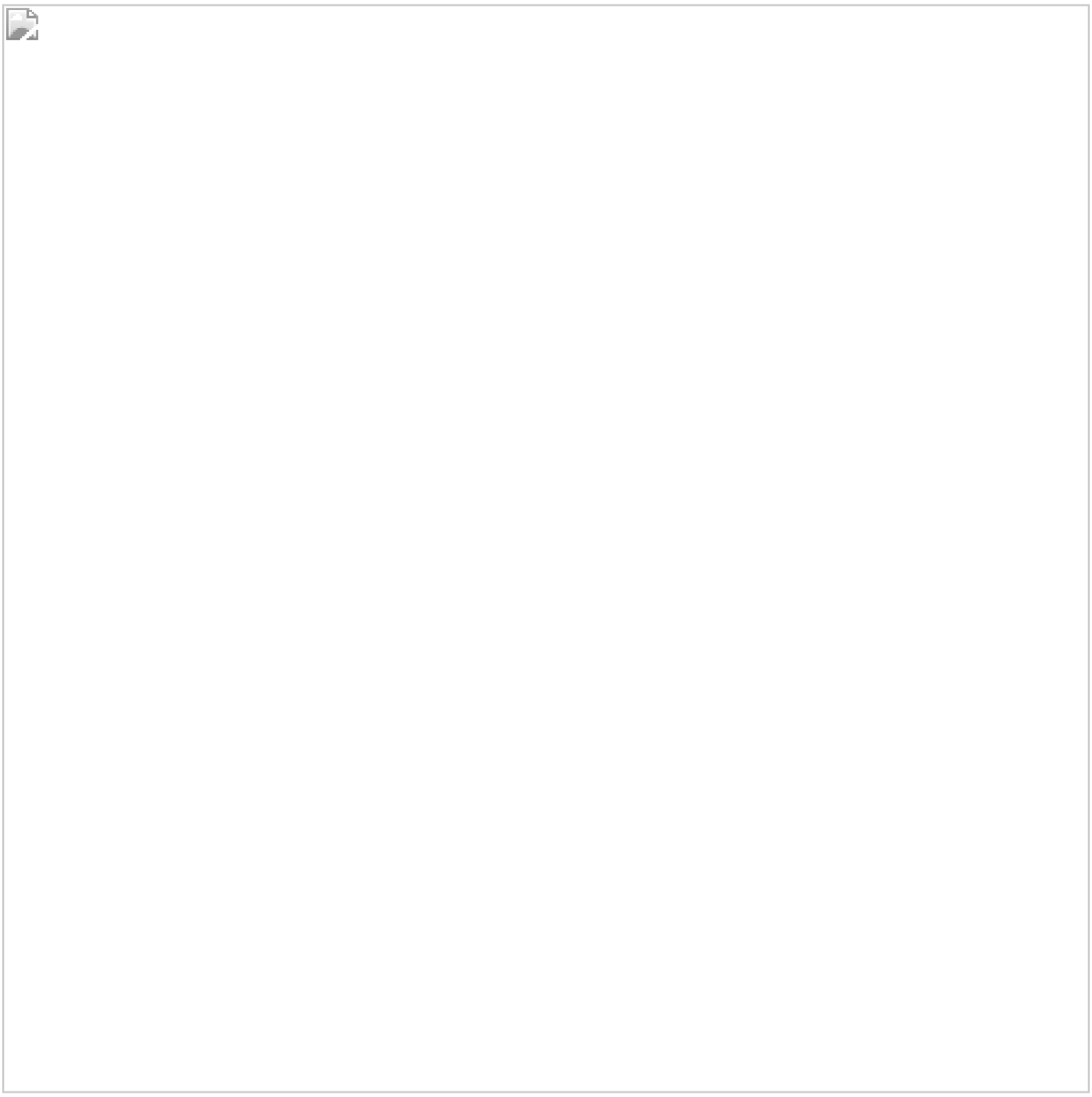


Think about it

1. What did Trotty say he had learnt?

- ○ To trust and hope, and to see the good in one another
- ○ To keep away from towers
- ○ To carry a letter faster

A Happy New Year



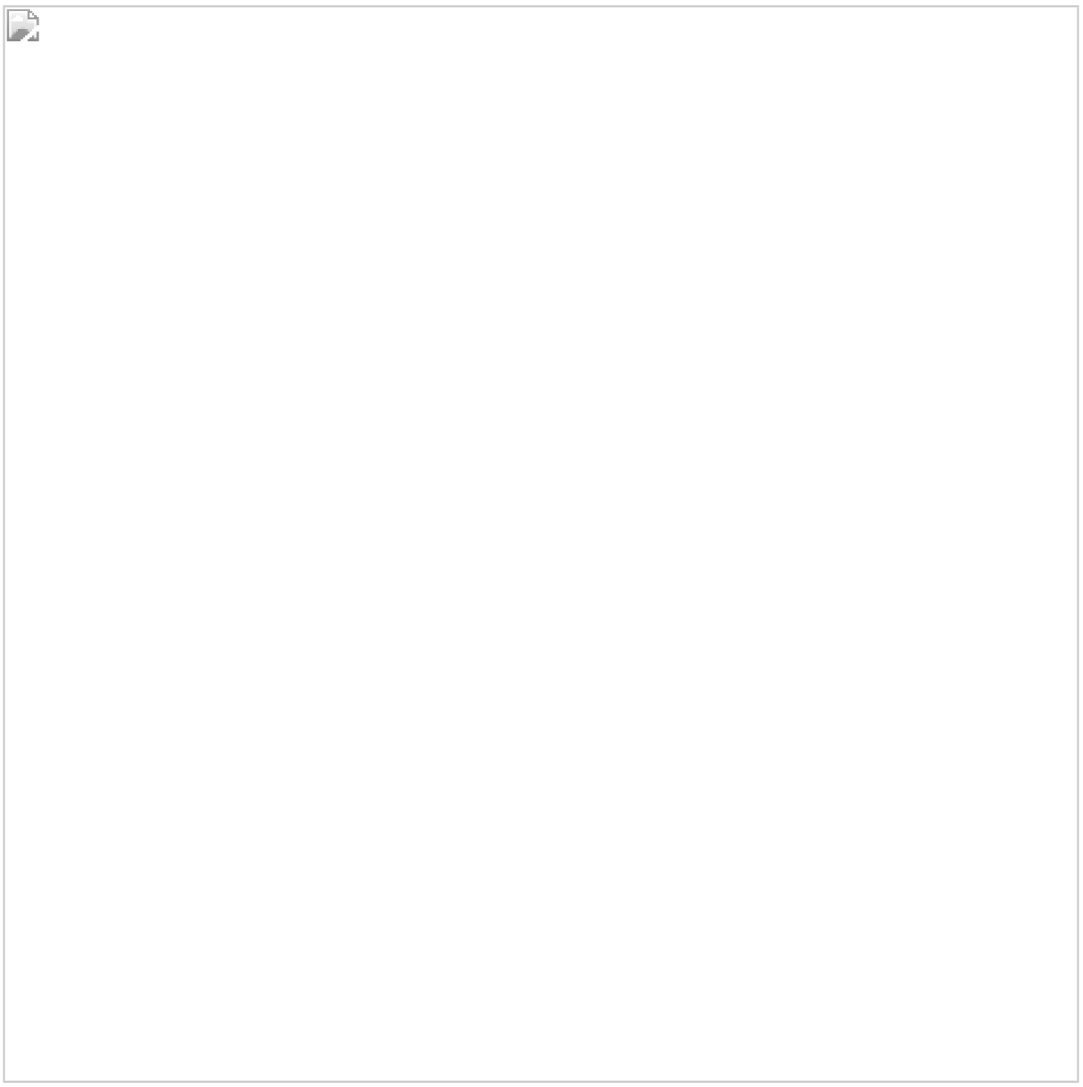
The Chimes began to ring the joy-bells of the New Year, and Trotty woke up. He was home. Meg was alive and sewing ribbons for her wedding, and her cheeks were pink and bright.

Richard rushed in. “The first kiss of Meg in the New Year is mine.” The neighbours came with a band. Mrs. Chickenstalker came too, and she turned out to be the very friend Will Fern had come to London to find. She took little Lilian into her arms.

Trotty led the dance, in a step he had made up himself. “Here we are and here we go!”

TALK ABOUT IT

Trotty woke up and the dream had not come true. What might he do differently now that he has seen it?



Think about it

1. What was Meg doing when Trotty woke up?

- ○ Sewing ribbons for her wedding
- ○ Sleeping by the fire
- ○ Ringing a bell

2. Trotty gave Will and Lilian a place to stay when they had nowhere to go. Who could you welcome in this week?

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

— Yeshua HaMashiach

Free to read, color, and print in the Book Library

Made with love by Love is a Habit