SADDLEBACK
EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING
Saddleback's
Illustrated Classics™
A Christmas Carol
CHARLES DICKENS

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.

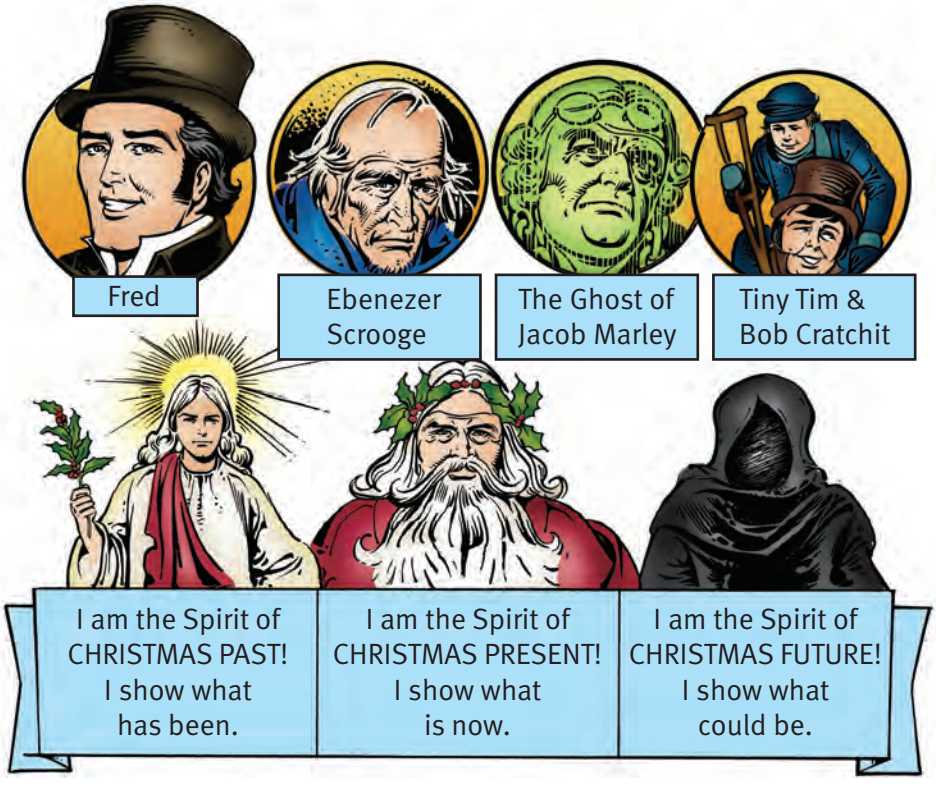
Dickens wrote of people as he saw them, and because of his concern for social conditions in England, created some of the most memorable, timeless characters in literature. At 31 years old, in order to pay some pressing debts, he wrote *A Christmas Carol*, a wonderful, intriguing, joyful mystery about 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.

Charles Dickens

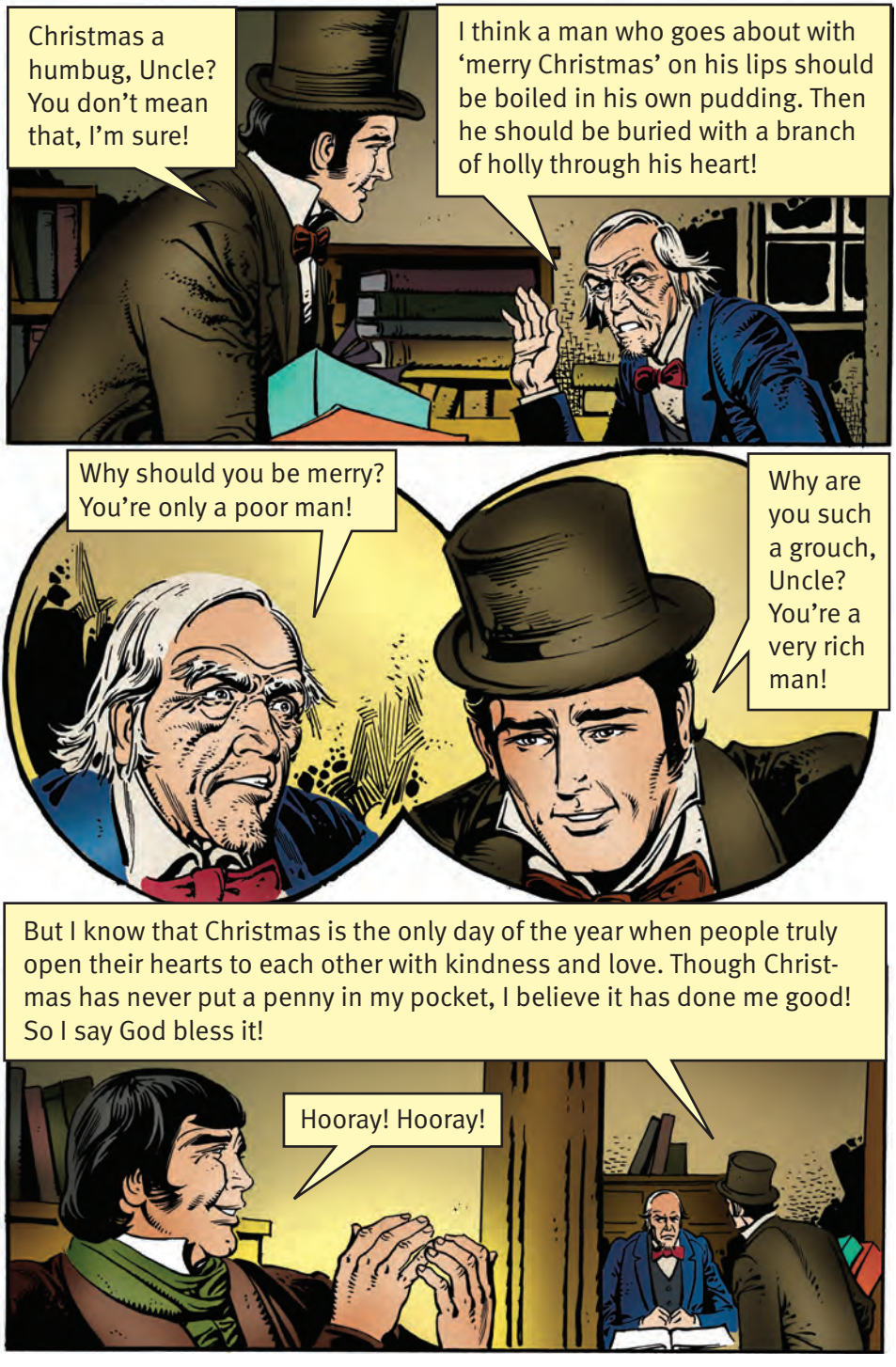
A Christmas Carol



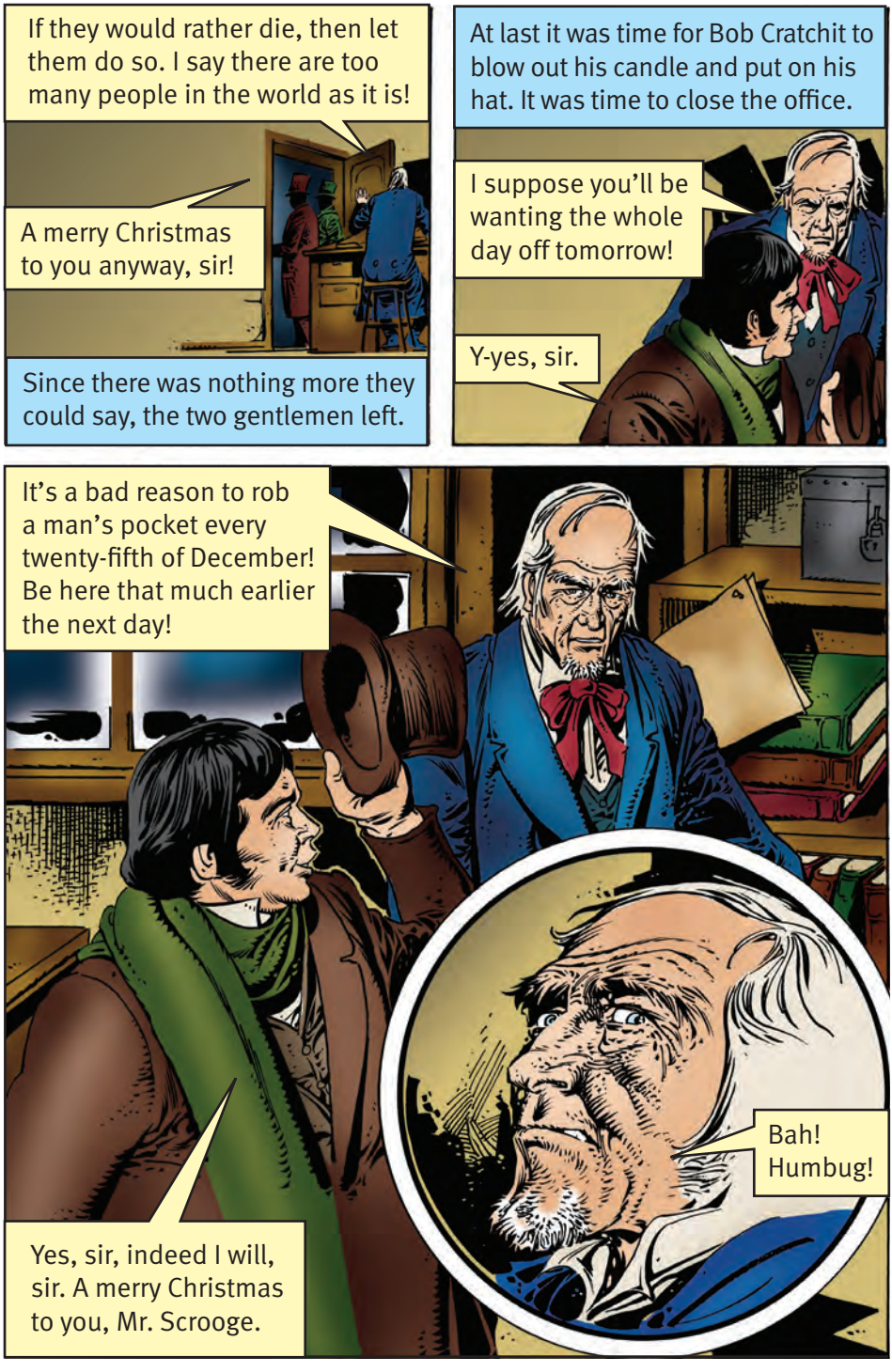
Ebenezer Scrooge and Jacob Marley had been business partners for years. However, when our story opens on this cold Christmas Eve in eighteenth-century London, Jacob Marley had been dead for the last seven. Since money had always been the most important thing in the world to them, the sign outside the 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.
You didn't put more coal on the fire, did you Cratchit?
No, sir.
Good! And keep your eye off that clock, too!
Will this day never end? There's so much I have to do tonight!
A little later, as Scrooge sat at his desk, counting coins, a young man appeared in the doorway. It was his nephew, Fred.
A merry Christmas, Uncle!
Bah! Humbug!


Christmas a humbug, Uncle? You don't mean that, I'm sure!
I think a man who goes about with 'merry Christmas' on his lips should be boiled in his own pudding. Then he should be buried with a branch of holly through his heart!
Why should you be merry? You're only a poor man!
Why are you such a grouch, Uncle? You're a very rich man!
But I know that Christmas is the only day of the year when people truly open their hearts to each other with kindness and love. Though Christmas has never put a penny in my pocket, I believe it has done me good! So I say God bless it!
Hooray! Hooray!

Another sound from you, Cratchit, and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your job!
Don't be angry, Uncle. Come and have Christmas dinner with us tomorrow.
I will not! Christmas is a lot of humbug! Goodbye!
Goodbye, Uncle, and a happy holiday to you anyway!
As the nephew left, two gentlemen came into Scrooge's office.
We are collecting money for the poor, sir. Those with no homes and little food could use some extra cheer on Christmas!
I don't make merry myself at Christmas, sir, and I can't afford to make lazy people merry! Why not send the poor to the debtor's prisons where they belong!
Many people would rather die than go there!


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

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!

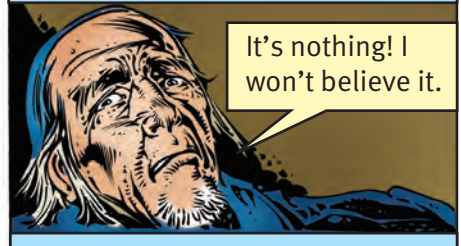
Once inside, he lighted a candle, locked the door, and started up the stairs.

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.

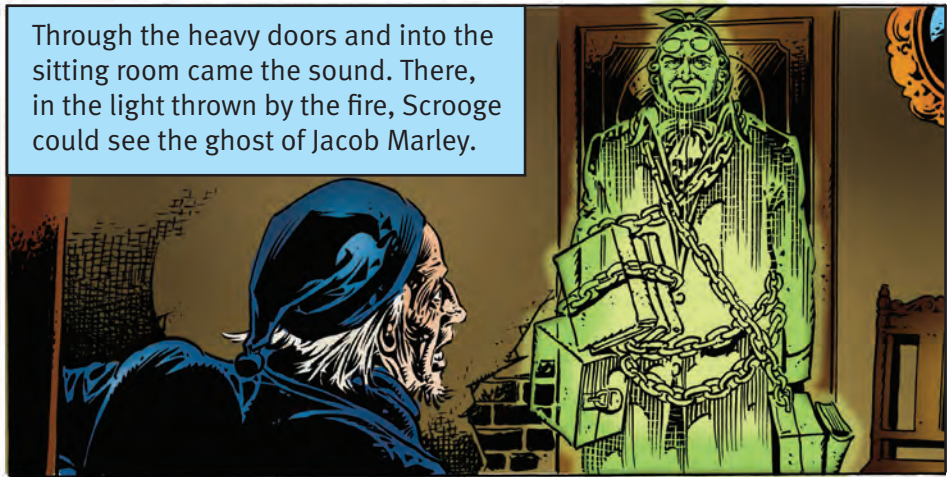
As he sat there, a small bell in the room began to ring. It started softly, then grew louder and louder. Other bells in the house began to ring as well.

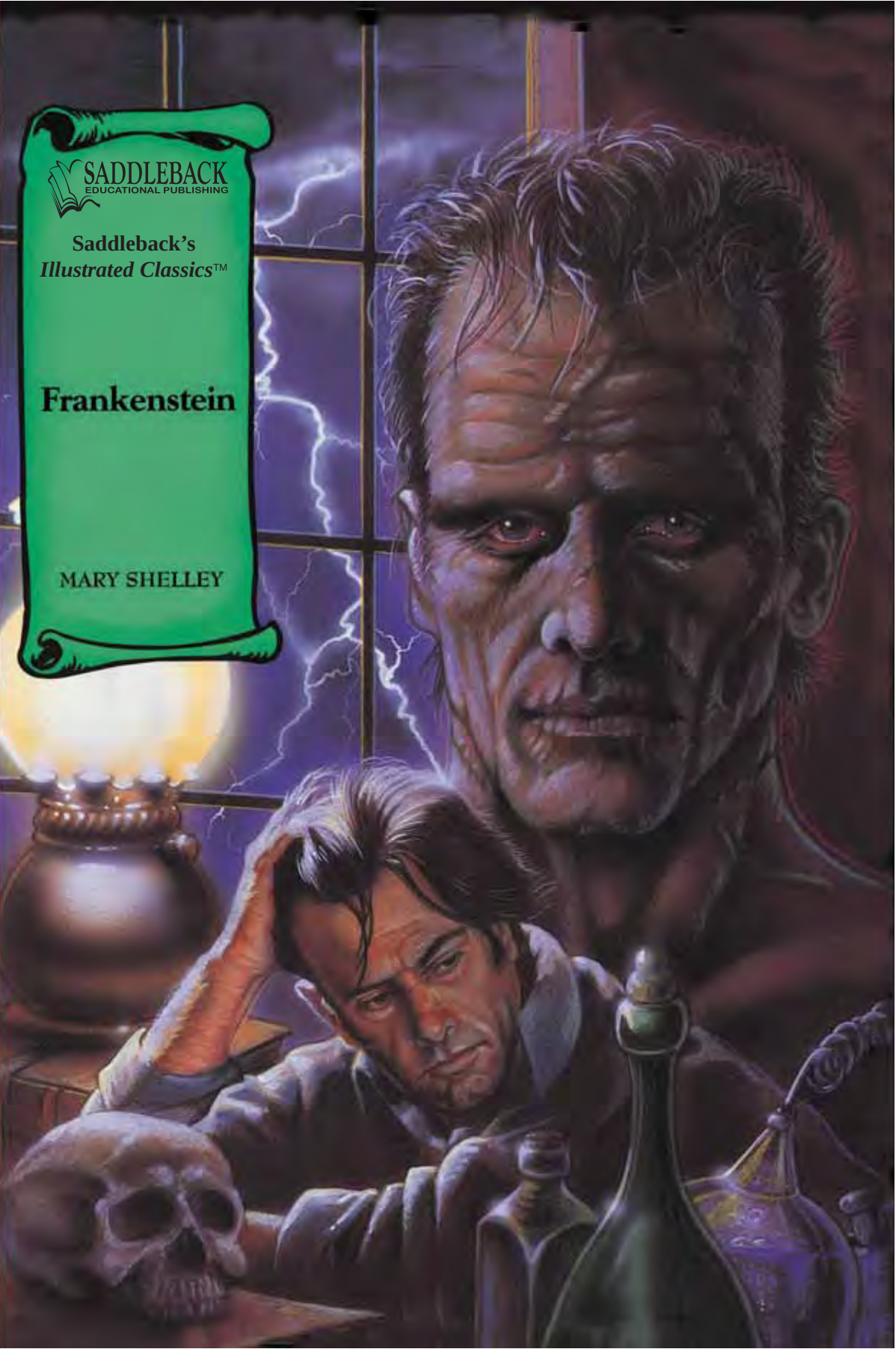
Suddenly the bells stopped, and a new sound began.



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.




SADDLEBACK
EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING
Saddleback's
Illustrated Classics™
Frankenstein
MARY SHELLEY

Mary Shelley

Mary Shelley, an English author, was born in 1797. Her father, William Godwin, was a well-known philosopher. Her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, was one of the very first to champion equal rights for women.

When she was 16 years old, Mary met the famous poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. Though he was married and she was just a young girl, they ran away together. The couple married several years later, after Shelley's first wife died.

Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein,* has been the basis for many horror movies. She got the idea for the book while she and her husband were visiting the poet Lord Byron. Byron suggested that they all write a ghost story, and later the idea for the tale came to Mary in a dream. The novel explores the dreadful consequences to a scientist who creates a human being.

After her husband drowned in a sailing accident, Mary Shelley supported herself and her children by writing novels and travel books and editing her husband's poetry.

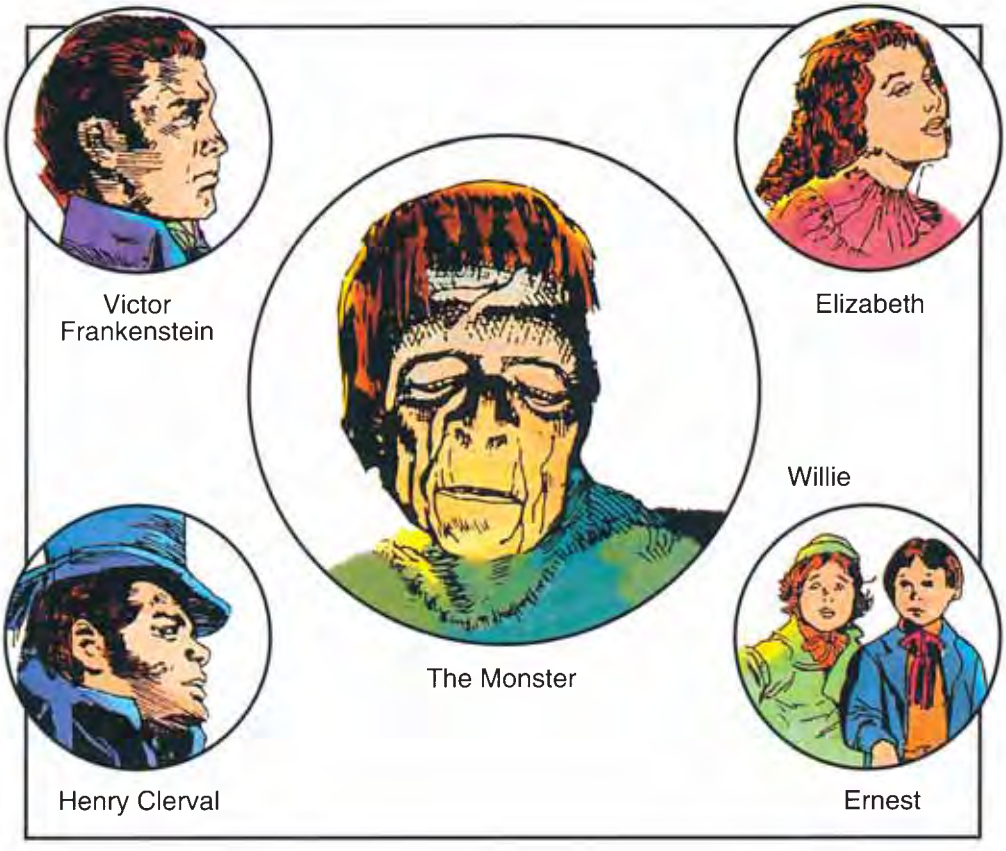
She died in 1851.

Saddleback's *Illustrated Classics*™

Frankenstein

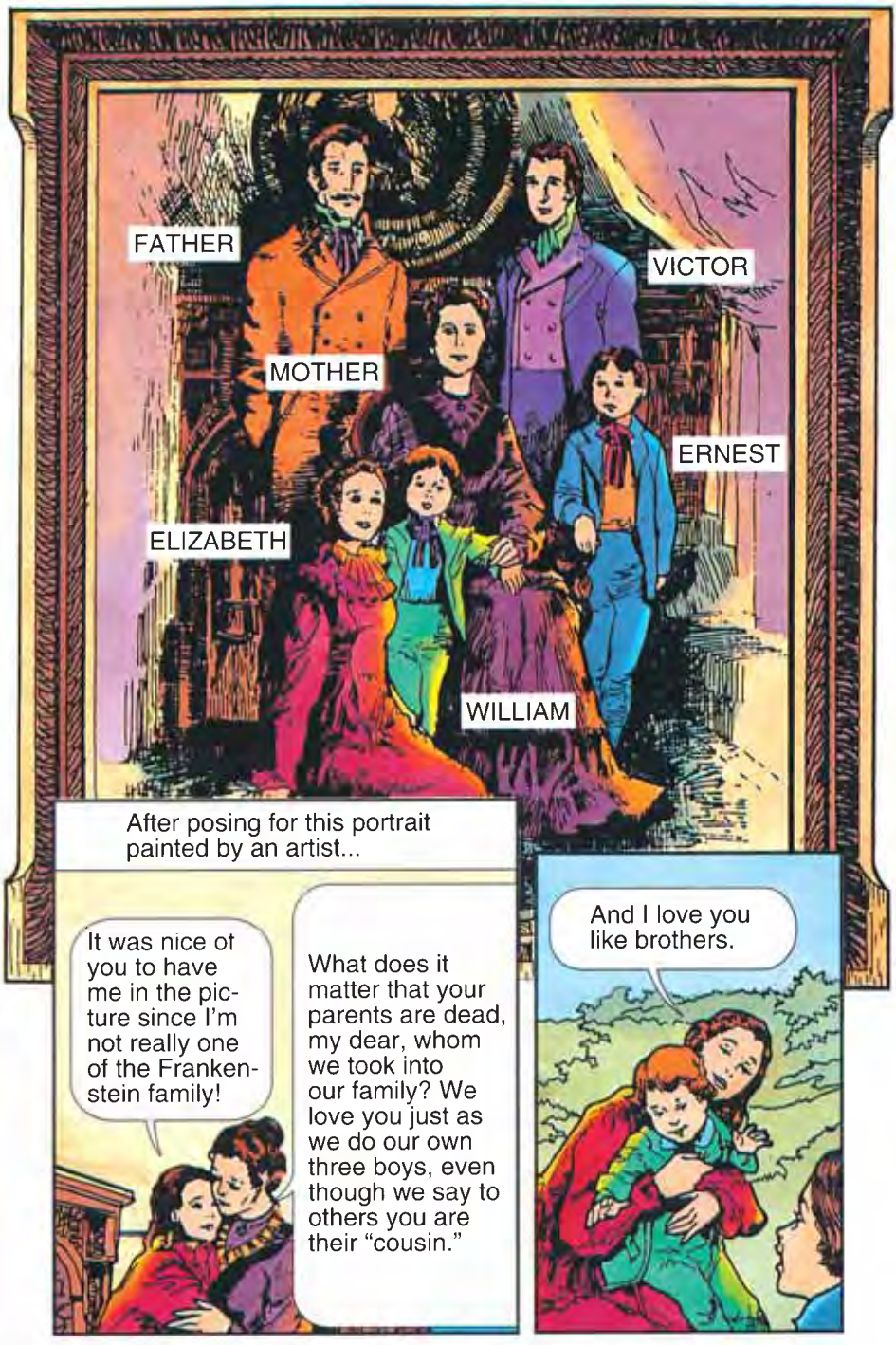
MARY SHELLEY

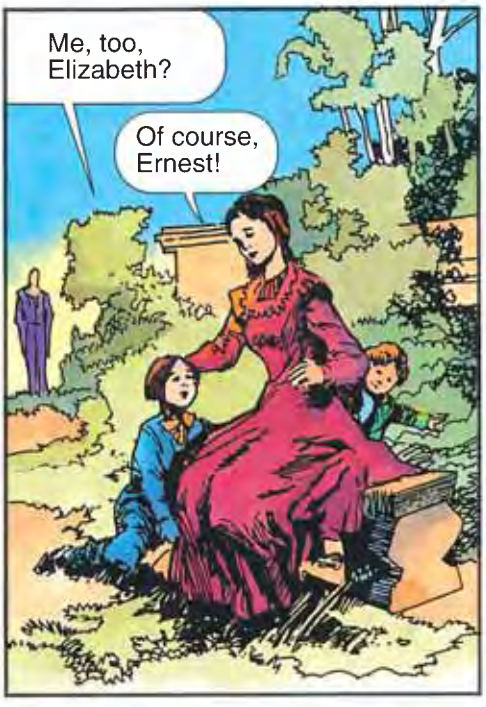
THE MAIN CHARACTERS

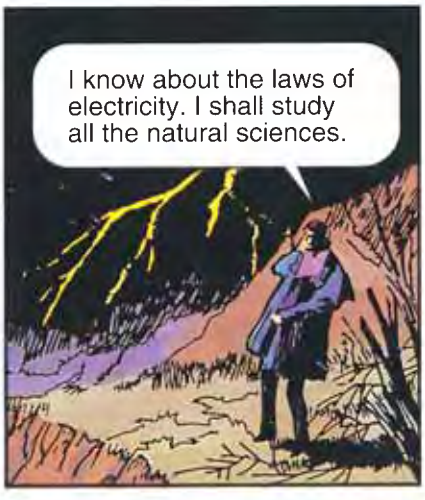


Frankenstein wanted fame as a scientist. He wanted to find the secrets of life so that all people could live without the fear of death. But something went wrong— his creation was a monster, ugly and strong. Even Frankenstein could not look on his creation with love— but only with fear. No one gave the monster a chance. All he looked for was friendship until he found that no one would love him. Then he wanted revenge....

There lived a happy family in Geneva, Switzerland, in the mid-1700s.





Then one terrible day, Madame Frankenstein became ill and died.

After his mother died, young Victor Frankenstein's thoughts were filled with the idea that he would soon go to college.