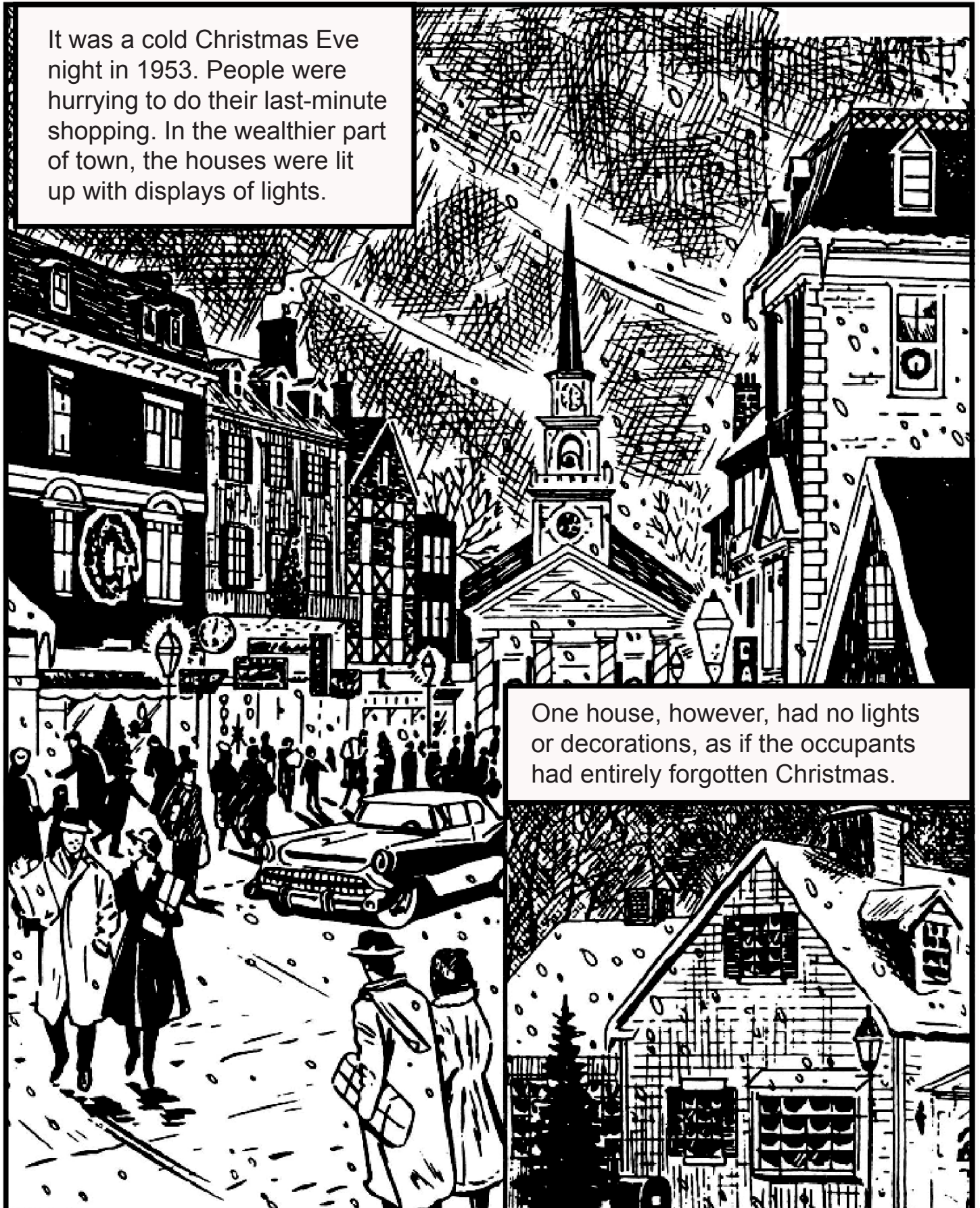




Jimmy's Christmas Homecoming



It was a cold Christmas Eve night in 1953. People were hurrying to do their last-minute shopping. In the wealthier part of town, the houses were lit up with displays of lights.



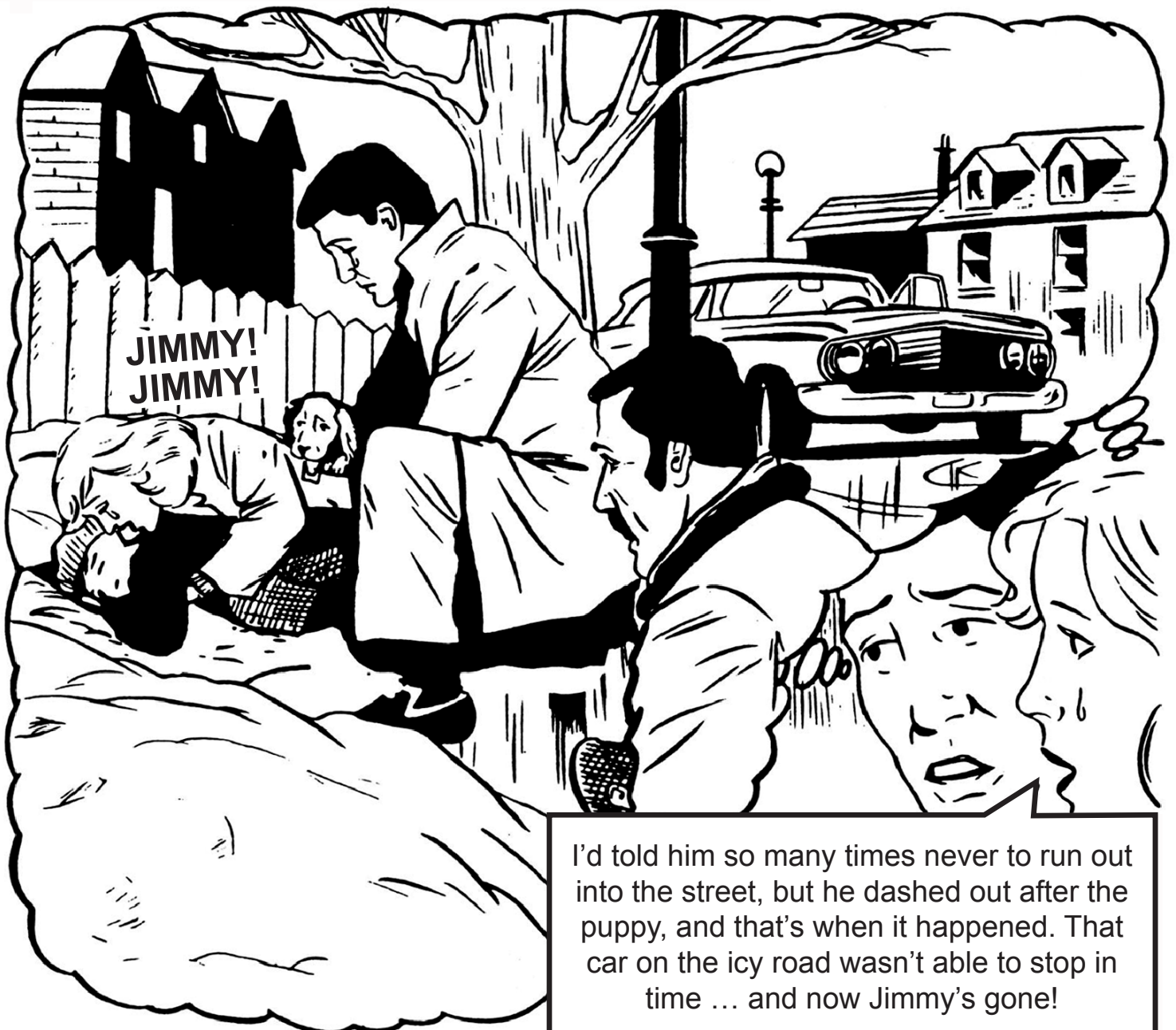
One house, however, had no lights or decorations, as if the occupants had entirely forgotten Christmas.

Please cheer up, Kathy.
All of our tears can't bring
Jimmy back. It's Christmas,
a time to be happy and
thankful.



I know, Greg. But it's so hard
for me to be happy when I keep
remembering last Christmas Eve.

I'll never forget the last
time I saw him. I had
looked out the window at
Jimmy making a snow-
man and playing with his
puppy in the front yard.
Oh, Greg, I should never
have left him alone out
front!



I'd told him so many times never to run out
into the street, but he dashed out after the
puppy, and that's when it happened. That
car on the icy road wasn't able to stop in
time ... and now Jimmy's gone!

We can't go on punishing ourselves like this.

Jimmy went to be with Jesus for Christmas. What greater Christmas could anyone have than that? And I'm sure he's having another wonderful Christmas this year, too. The only thing that would make him sad is seeing us so sad. Come on, sweetheart, let's show Jimmy we're trying to be happy.

He didn't even get to enjoy Christmas Day with us.

Oh, Greg, it's hard to pretend to be happy when I'm not!

Why don't we sing some Christmas carols together?

All right, Greg. I'll try. What do you want me to play?

How about, "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem"?



I just can't play tonight...

Let's go out for the evening. Maybe we just need to get away from the house for a while.



The choir at the church on the corner is singing Christmas carols tonight. We were invited to go, but...



Good, let's go. Come on.




I guess you were right, dear. It's nice to get out for a little fresh air.

In another part of town, where the houses were not beautiful and brightly lit, stood an empty shack. Just two weeks before it had been the home of a small boy and his mother. That little boy now trudged home to the empty dwelling. Cold, dirty, and ragged, he shivered inside his worn-out coat. Sandy, his small brown mutt, trotted along beside him. The boy's thoughts were sad this Christmas as he remembered his mother's last talk with him nearly two weeks earlier at the hospital.


Jimmy, you're getting to be quite a big boy now.

I'm almost eight years old!






The doctor said I will soon go away. Jesus is taking me to His wonderful home in heaven, and I know He's going to take good care of you.




Oh, please don't go, Mommy! Sandy and I will miss you!

I won't be far away, and you can talk to me in your prayers. I'm sure Jesus will help us. I've asked Him to find good parents for you.



Here's a little money I have saved up, which will last until Jesus sends someone to care for you. Remember to always say your prayers.



But Mommy, I don't want anyone but you!

We've walked a long way, Sandy. Let's sit down on this curb and rest. Want to? I'm tired. Brrr! It's cold! I'm sorry, Sandy, but I don't know of a place to go where it's warm. I guess Jesus couldn't find anyone who wanted us. Maybe we could go to Murphy's barn for tonight. At least it's warm in there with the cows. Jesus stayed in a barn on Christmas, you know.



Yes, Mommy, I will.

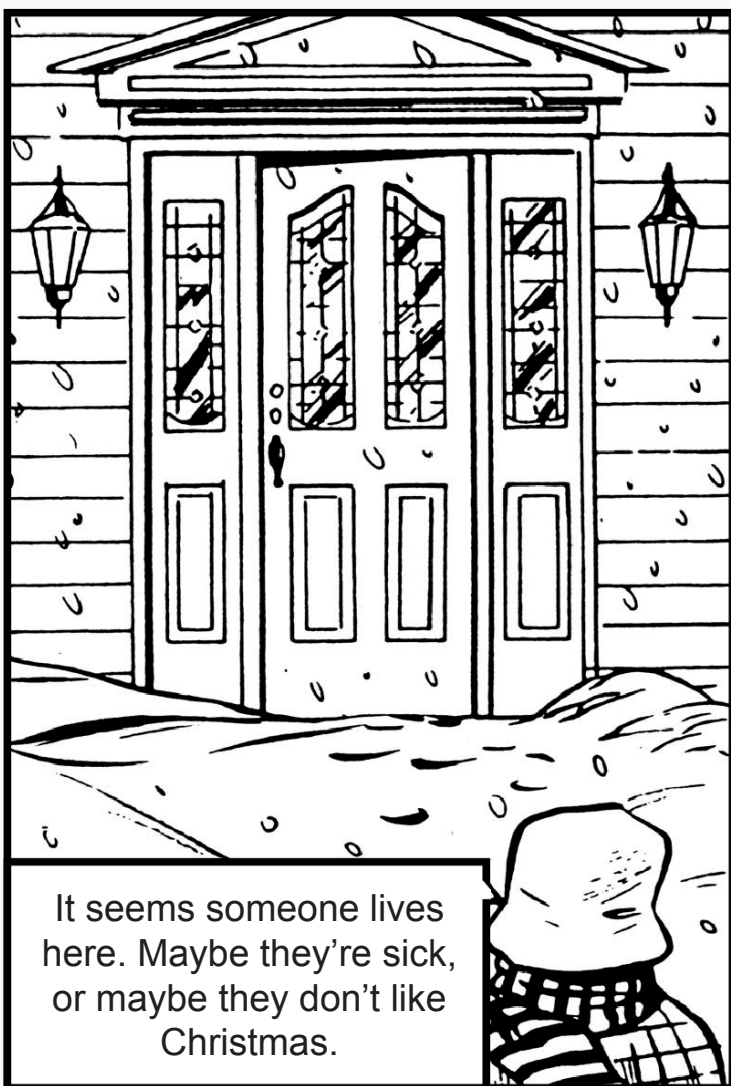
Aren't the Christmas lights on these big houses pretty, Sandy? I wonder why that house over there doesn't have any lights. Maybe no one lives there.



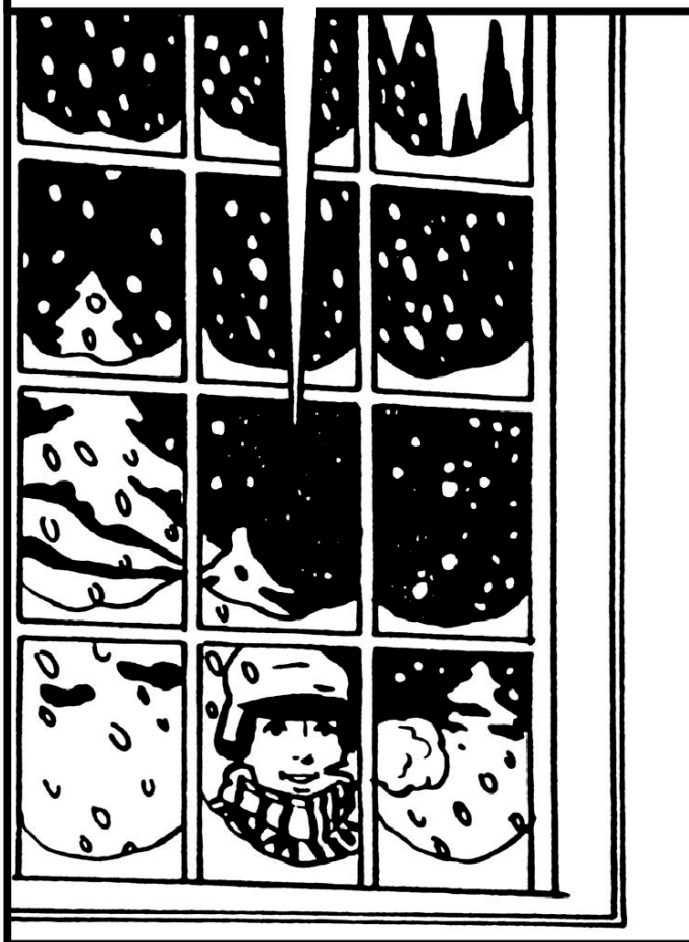
Let's go see.



What a big room! There's even a fireplace with a fire in it. I'm so cold!



It seems someone lives here. Maybe they're sick, or maybe they don't like Christmas.





WHOOOSH

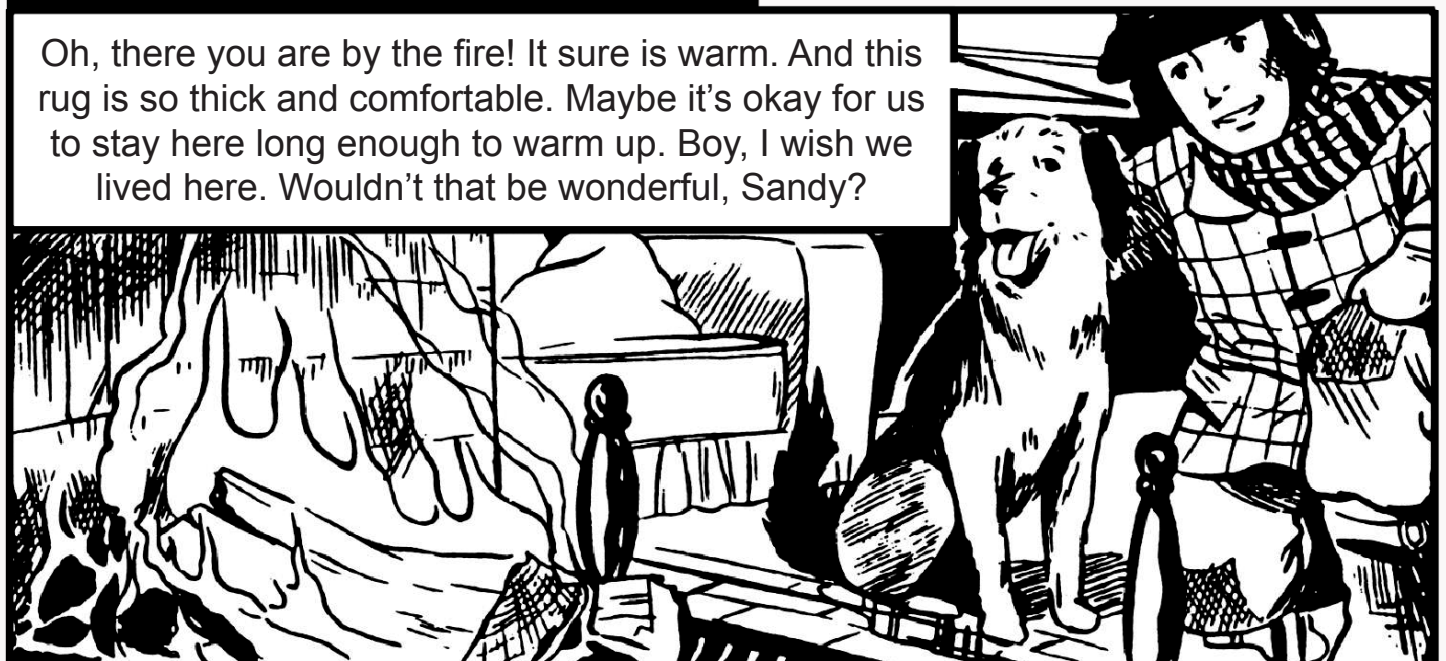
Look! The wind blew the door open. It must not have been closed tightly. No, Sandy! Don't go in there! Oh no!



Hello! Hello! Is anybody home?



That's strange, there doesn't seem to be anyone home. Sandy, where did you go?



Oh, there you are by the fire! It sure is warm. And this rug is so thick and comfortable. Maybe it's okay for us to stay here long enough to warm up. Boy, I wish we lived here. Wouldn't that be wonderful, Sandy?

The choir's songs were beautiful, Greg. Thank you for taking me out. All those wonderful songs about Jesus helped me to remember Jesus' love for us. Although, I still miss our little boy and wish he was with us tonight.

Time is a wonderful healer. Let's trust the Lord that "all things work together for good" for His children.¹



Perhaps we should have Christmas lights. It does look gloomy without them.

That's strange. The front door is partly open. I'm sure I pulled it shut and locked it when we left.

¹ Romans 8:28
KJV

Be careful, Greg, there might be a burglar in there!

Someone's been in here all right. Look, there's a wet spot on the rug in front of the fireplace.

It looks like when Jimmy used to come in from playing in the snow and warm up in front of the fire. The snow from his shoes would melt and get the rug wet.

Let's check the rest of the house. This is strange!





Oh, look, Greg!
There's a light on in
Jimmy's room!

You were in there
today. You might
have left it on.



Look, Jimmy's
toys are on the
floor.

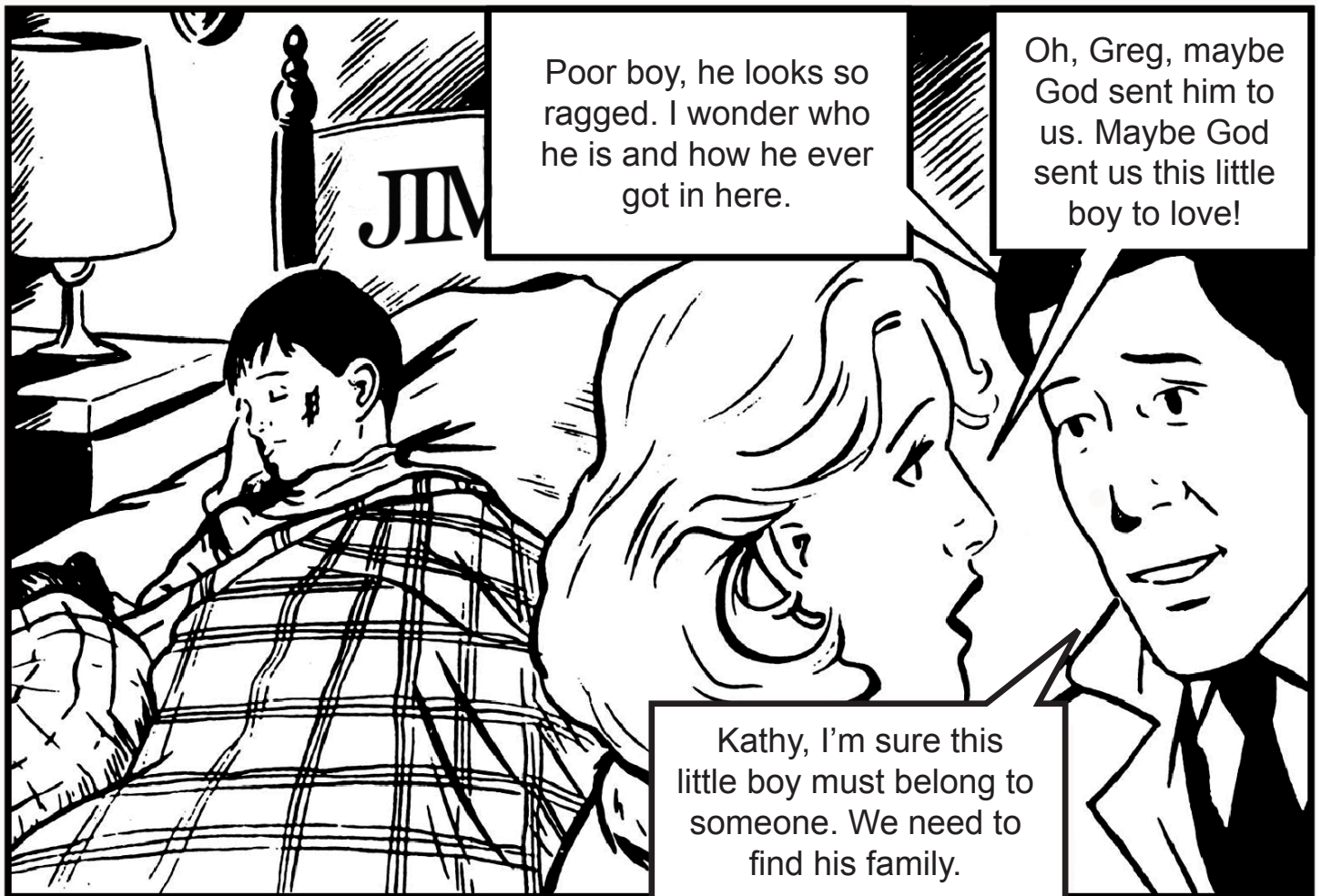


There's someone
in Jimmy's bed!



Why, it's a little boy,
and he's sound
asleep, and so is his
funny little dog.

Oh, Greg, look
at him. Isn't he
darling?



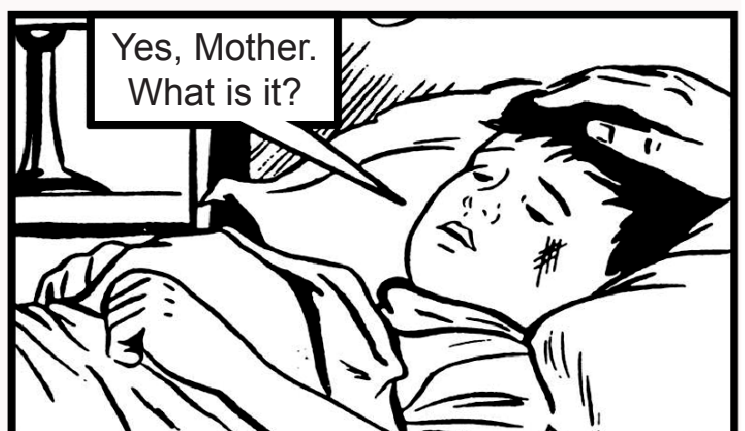
Poor boy, he looks so ragged. I wonder who he is and how he ever got in here.

Oh, Greg, maybe God sent him to us. Maybe God sent us this little boy to love!

Kathy, I'm sure this little boy must belong to someone. We need to find his family.



He reminds me so much of our dear little Jimmy! Jimmy ... Jimmy, Jimmy dear, wake up.



Yes, Mother. What is it?



Oh, I'm sorry! I beg your pardon! Please don't be angry. Sandy, get down from this bed with your dirty paws!

Oh that's all right, dear. Is your name really *Jimmy*?

Yes, Ma'am. Sandy and I were so cold. We just wanted to get warm. Your front door blew open, then Sandy ran in, so I ran in after him.

When we saw no one was here and saw all these toys in this room, I just had to come in. And then I saw this bed. I've never slept in a bed like this! I sleep on the floor. And when I saw my name painted on the bed, I thought that maybe this was the house that Jesus had found for Sandy and me. I'm sorry to have come in without your permission. We'll go now.

Don't worry, that's all right, Jimmy.

Where are you and Sandy going, Jimmy?


I guess we'll sleep in Murphy's barn tonight.

But where are your parents, Jimmy?


My daddy died long ago. And Mommy recently went to be with Jesus, too. She said Jesus would find a family for Sandy and me, but I guess He hasn't found anyone who wants us. I'm sorry for bothering you. We'd better go now.

Don't go yet, Jimmy. We used to have a little boy just about your age, and his name was also Jimmy. Just a year ago he went to be with Jesus!

Your mother and our little Jimmy are both in heaven. So we need a child to care for and love, and you need a mommy and daddy. Would you like to stay with us?




Sandy and me? Both of us? You mean we could stay? And you'd really be my mommy and daddy, and I could live with you?




On, thank You, Jesus!
You did find some-
one for us!—Just like
Mommy said You would!

Yes, Jimmy.



And tomorrow we'll
put up the lights
and get a nice
Christmas tree.
We'll have a very
merry Christmas!

Yes, let's cele-
brate Christmas
together as a
family! You must
be hungry. Let's
go downstairs and
start celebrating
Christmas now.



*It came upon
a midnight
clear...*

Oh, Jesus, thank You for
sending another boy to
be with my mommy and
daddy!

And thank You, Jesus, for
finding such a wonderful
home for my Jimmy!