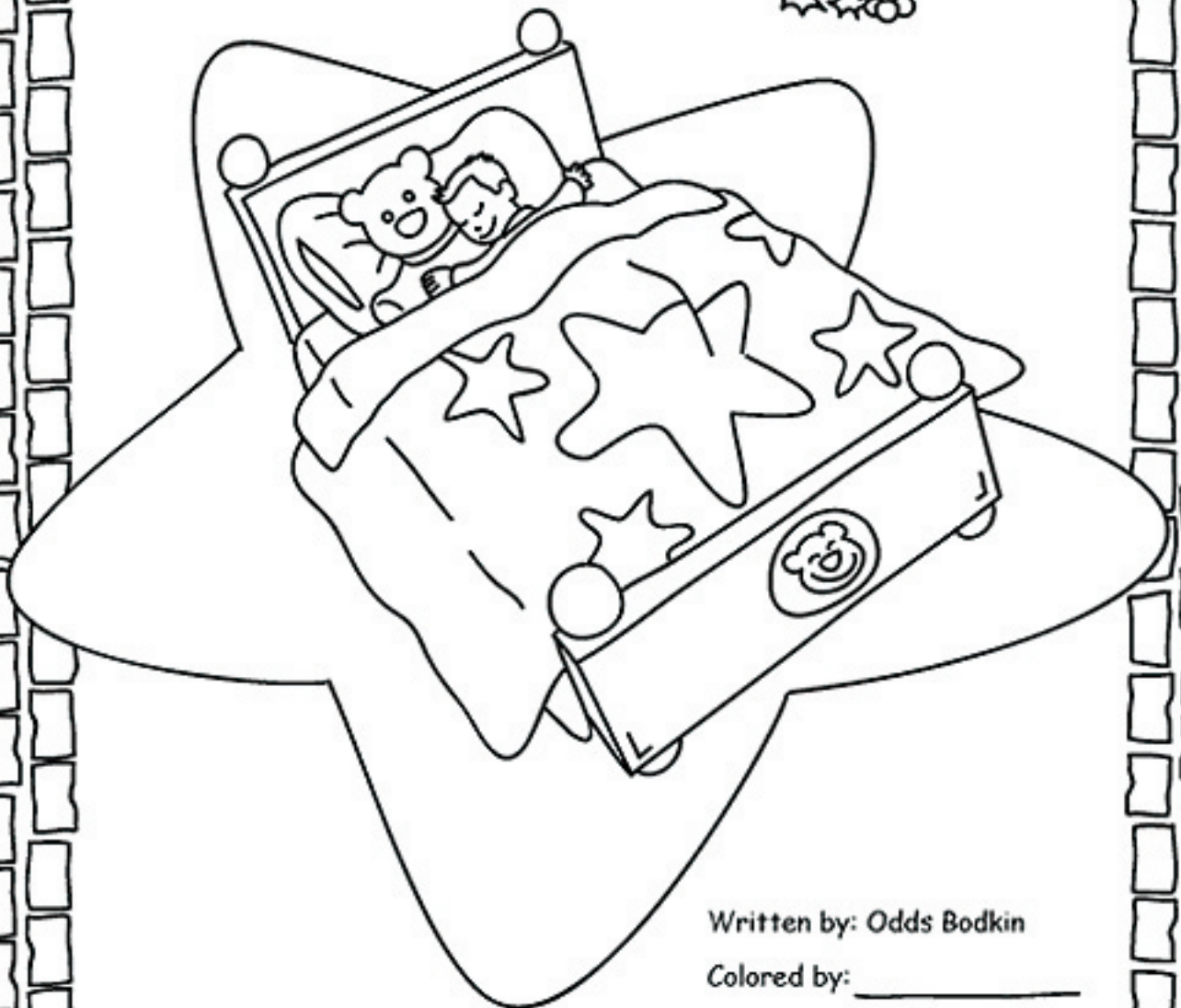




The Christmas Tooth



Written by: Odds Bodkin

Colored by: _____

The Christmas Tooth



Chapter One

Alfred Peter Wannamaker's tooth came out on Christmas Eve.

"Mommy," he asked, "does the Tooth Fairy use the chimney, too?"

"That's a mystery," answered his mother.

"I think I should put some extra cookies and milk out," said Alfred.

"I think that's a good idea," agreed mother.

Alfred stood on a kitchen chair and made sure everything was ready.

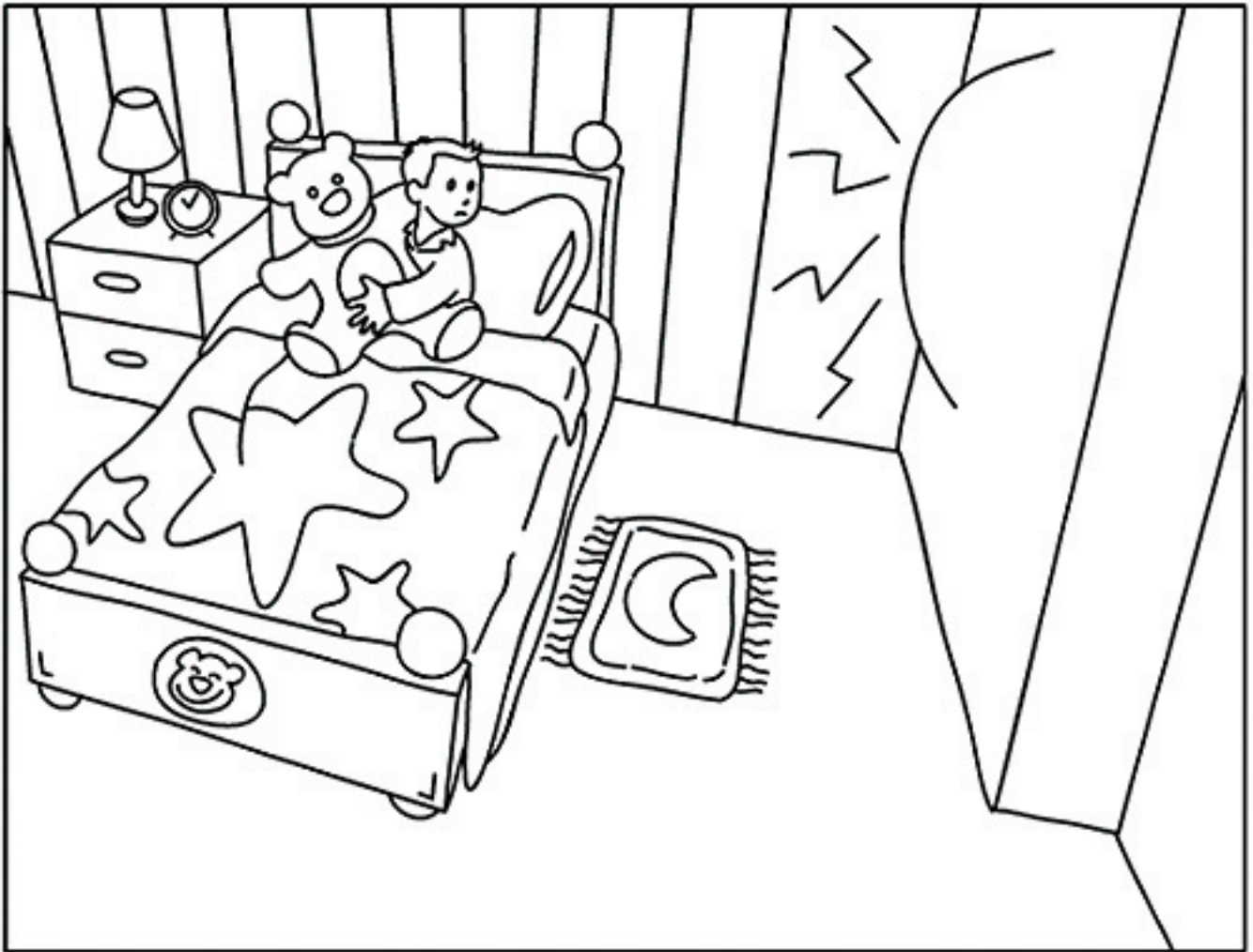
"Mommy," he asked, "do you think they know each other?"

"who?" asked his mother.

"Santa and the Tooth Fairy."

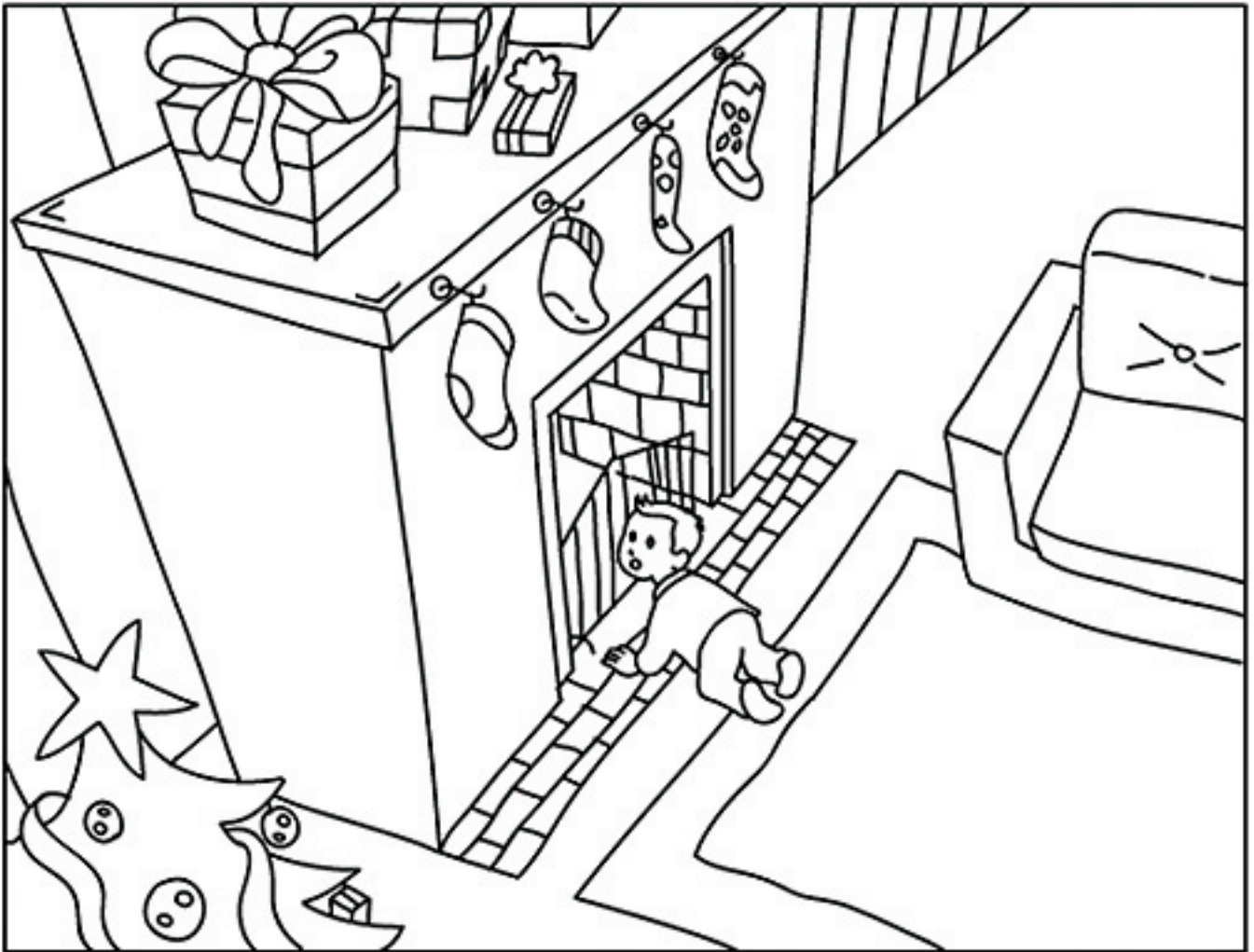
"I don't see why not. They both visit children at night."

The Christmas Tooth



Later that night, Alfred tucked his tooth under his pillow and fell asleep. He woke up a short time later. He heard something. Thumping. Faint and faraway. From in the wall. He sat up. Only his night light shone. No, it wasn't the wall. The thumping was coming from the big bulge in the wall. Alfred tried to remember what that big bulge was doing there. Then he remembered Daddy had said it was the chimney. Alfred jumped up and ran downstairs. Voices. They grew louder as Alfred did his fastest bump slide down the stairs. Two voices. Adults. Alfred ran over to the fireplace. It had been his idea never to light logs on Christmas Eve. Now he was glad, because somebody was inside the chimney.

The Christmas Tooth



Chapter Two

“Well, how was I to know?” asked a grump voice from up in the darkness.

“By being sensitive,” answered a lovely, laughing voice. “Why are you so grouchy?”

Alfred peeked up inside. It was dark. “Hello?” called Alfred.

The lovely voice in the dark said, “It’s little Alfred. I’m here for his tooth.”

“I know exactly who he is.”

Alfred peered harder into the dark.

“Santa, Tooth Fairy, is that you?” he called.

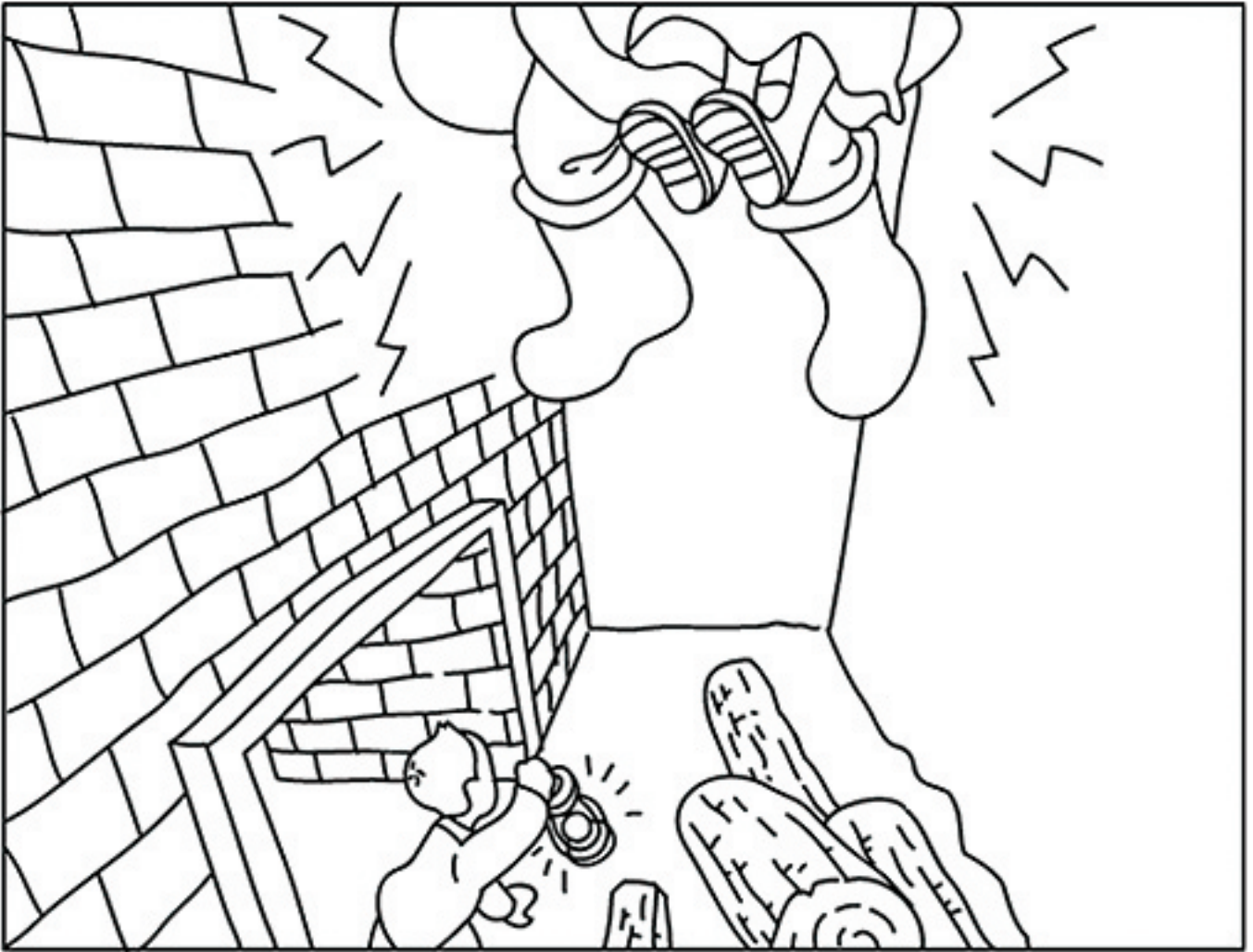
“Yes, Alfred, it’s us.” Santa sounded very unhappy.

“Are you all right?” Alfred was concerned.

“Somehow,” giggled the Tooth Fairy, “we both arrived at the same moment. I’m afraid we’re... stuck.”

“Don’t worry,” called Alfred. He was very excited. “I’ll save you!”

The Christmas Tooth



Alfred ran upstairs. He put his tooth in his pajama pocket and grabbed his little red lantern. Back in the fireplace, he switched it on and looked up. He could see them. They were squashed together about fifteen bricks up.

“Can you see us no, Alfred?” asked the Tooth Fairy.

“Yes. Hi,” gasped Alfred. “I’ve always wanted to see you.”

He dragged a chair into the fireplace and stood on it. Alfred reached up his hand.

“Beauty before wisdom,” grumbled Santa.

“In this case,” replied the Tooth Fairy, “it’s slenderness that counts.”

The Christmas Tooth



Chapter Three

Alfred tugged the Tooth Fairy’s glowing hand and out she nudged, away from Santa. She floated out of the fireplace and landed on her feet. A moment later, Santa stood there, a sooty cloth wrapped around his head and jaw. Alfred didn’t know what to say.

“Would you like some cookies and milk?”

“Cookies? Anything but cookies!” groaned Santa.

“What’s wrong?” asked Alfred.

“Bad tooth,” said Santa, wincing as he drank some milk.

“I thought as much,” said the Tooth Fairy. “Let me see.”

“I have children to visit!” grumbled Santa as the Tooth Fairy pried open his mouth.

“This tooth has to come out,” she said.

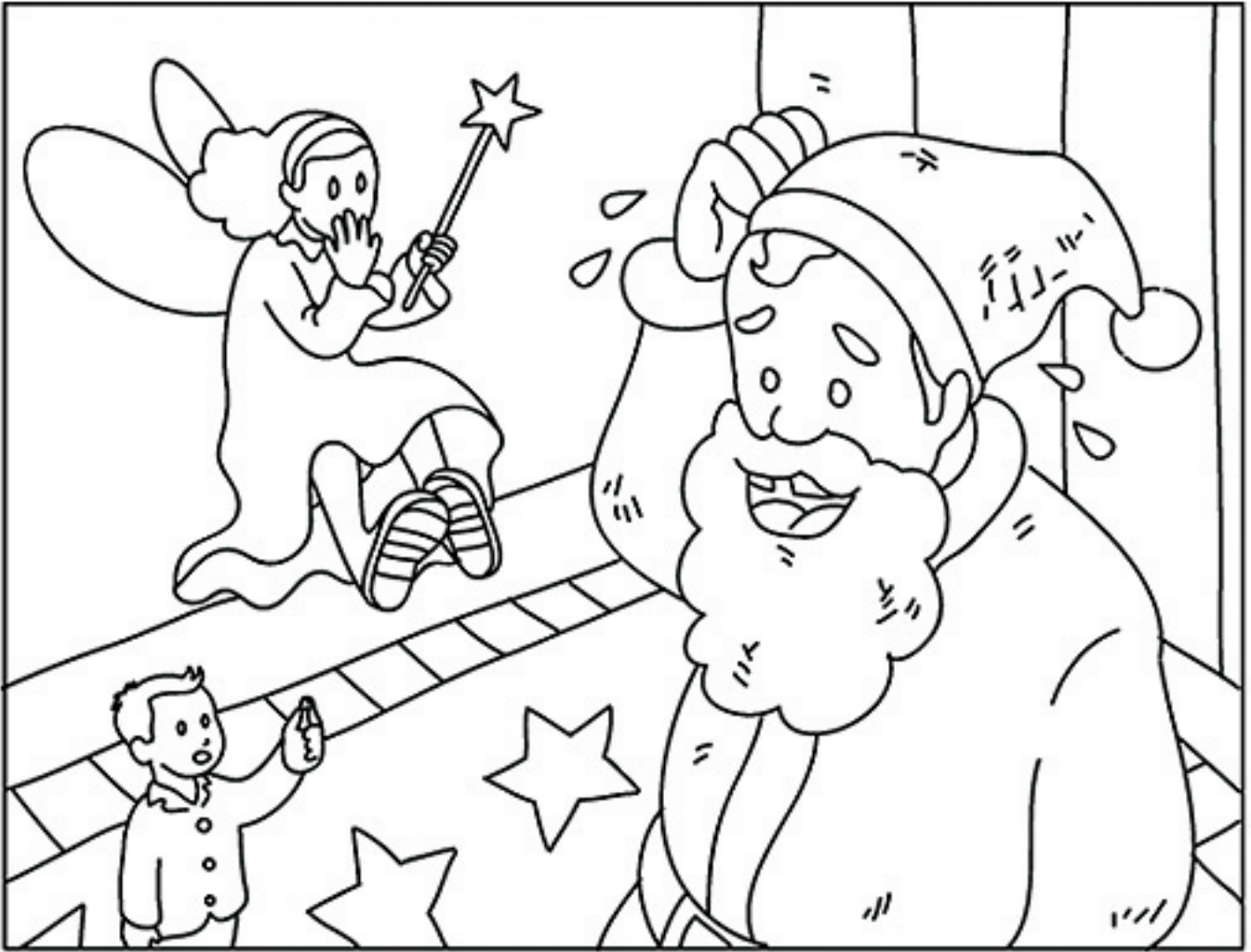
“I know, I know,” grumbled Santa.

“How long has it been since someone looked at these?” she asked.

“Oh, I don’t know. A hundred years, give or take,” sighed Santa. “I’m very busy, I’ll have you know.”

“Well, we’re going to take care of it right now,” she said, “or it will only get worse.”

The Christmas Tooth



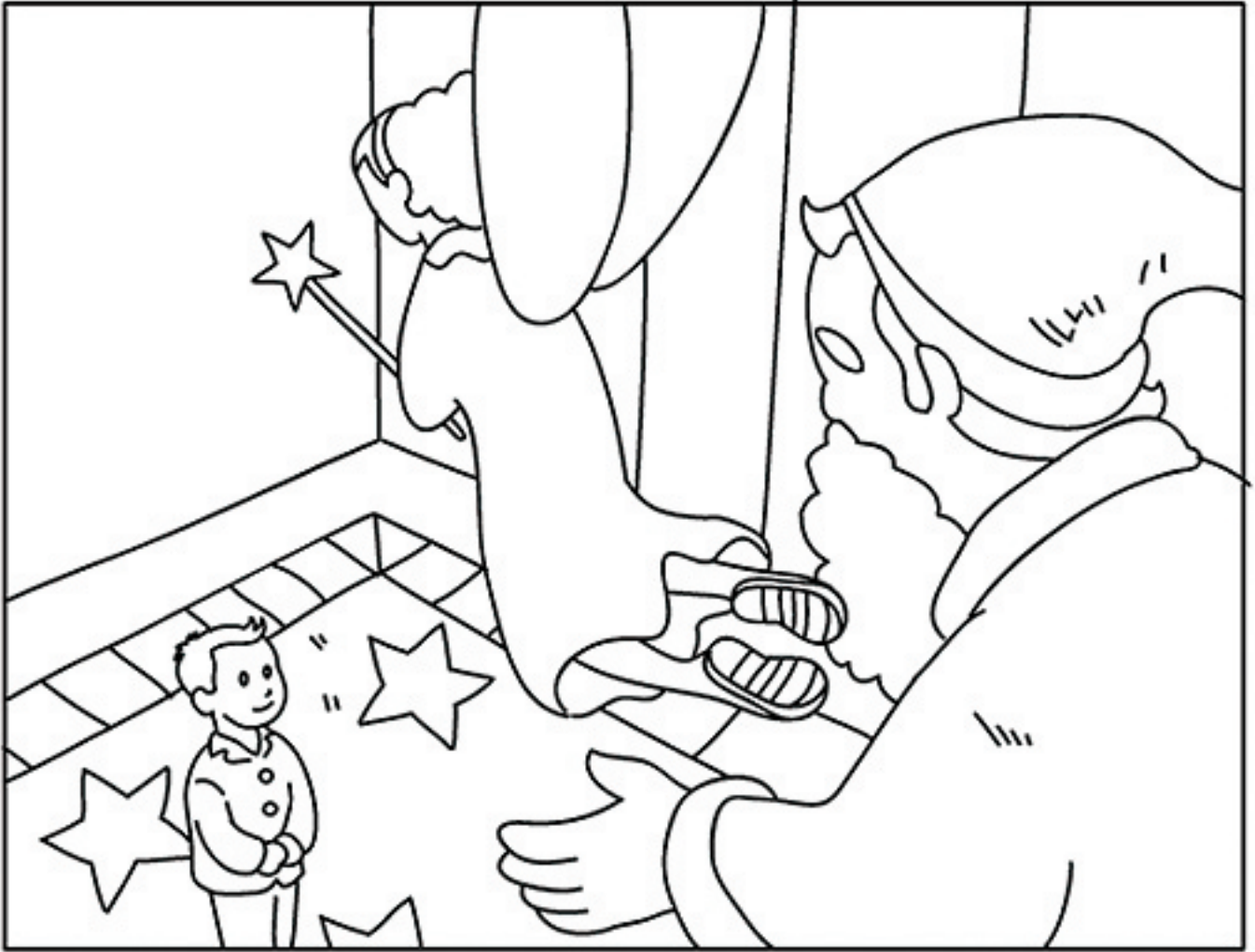
“Alfred, I’ll need a chair and a sink,” said the Tooth Fairy. Alfred led them into the kitchen. The Tooth Fairy sat down beside Santa at the table. Alfred sat across from them. The Tooth Fairy washed her hands, then folded her wings around Santa. Alfred heard an ouch. “There,” she said, holding up Santa’s very old tooth. “Now smile for me, Mr. Claus.” Santa tried to smile. “Oh, that’s quite the gap,” she giggled. “You’ll have to replace it.” “You can have my tooth if you like,” Alfred said. “Alfred,” said the Tooth Fairy, “if it’s not under your pillow, I can’t leave you a coin.” Alfred had always loved finding that coin under his pillow. But this was more important. He gave Santa his tooth. Santa’s eyes twinkled. He handed it to the Tooth Fairy. “Plenty of childhood in it,” she said. “I think it will grow just fine.” She closed her wings around Santa. “Right in...here!” she said, then opened her wings.

The Christmas Tooth



”Ho ho ho!” laughed Santa, jumping up. “That’s wonderful!”
He smiled at Alfred and hugged him, saying, “Thank you, thank you!” over and over.
Alfred’s tooth was inside Santa’s happy smile.
“Alfred,” said the Tooth Fairy. “That was very generous.”
Alfred smiled, then yawned in spite of himself.
“It is late,” said Santa. “I really should be going. But I’ll cherish my tooth always, Alfred Peter Wannamaker.”
They led him upstairs and tucked him in.

The Christmas Tooth



Chapter Four

“Good night, Alfred,” said the Tooth Fairy.

“Merry Christmas, Alfred,” chuckled Santa.

Alfred gazed up at them. “Will I remember this?” he asked, yawning again.

The Tooth Fairy and Santa looked at each other.

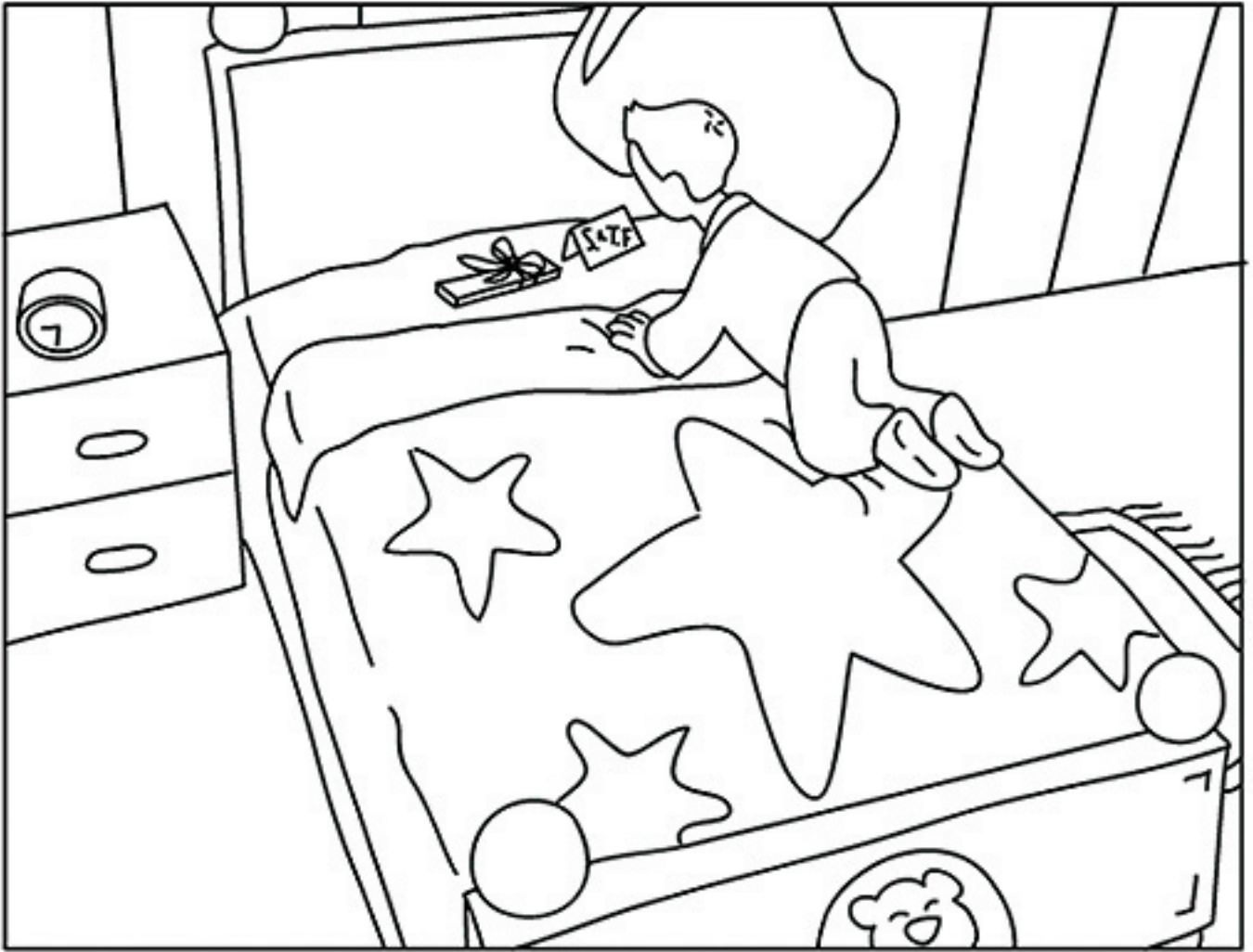
Only the nicest children in the world remember the magical things, they knew.

“Do you want to?” asked Santa. Alfred nodded yes.

“Then you shall,” answered the Tooth Fairy.

The last thing Alfred saw that night was her hand moving past his face.

The Christmas Tooth



On Christmas morning, Alfred tumbled out of bed and ran downstairs. There were wonderful gifts. It wasn't until later that he remembered his pillow. Beneath it was a long thin box tied with a red ribbon. The note read "From S. and T.F. -- For The Rest of Them, Just In Case." He opened it. It was a toothbrush made of reindeer antler. Then Alfred remembered.

-- The End --