



Chapter Seven

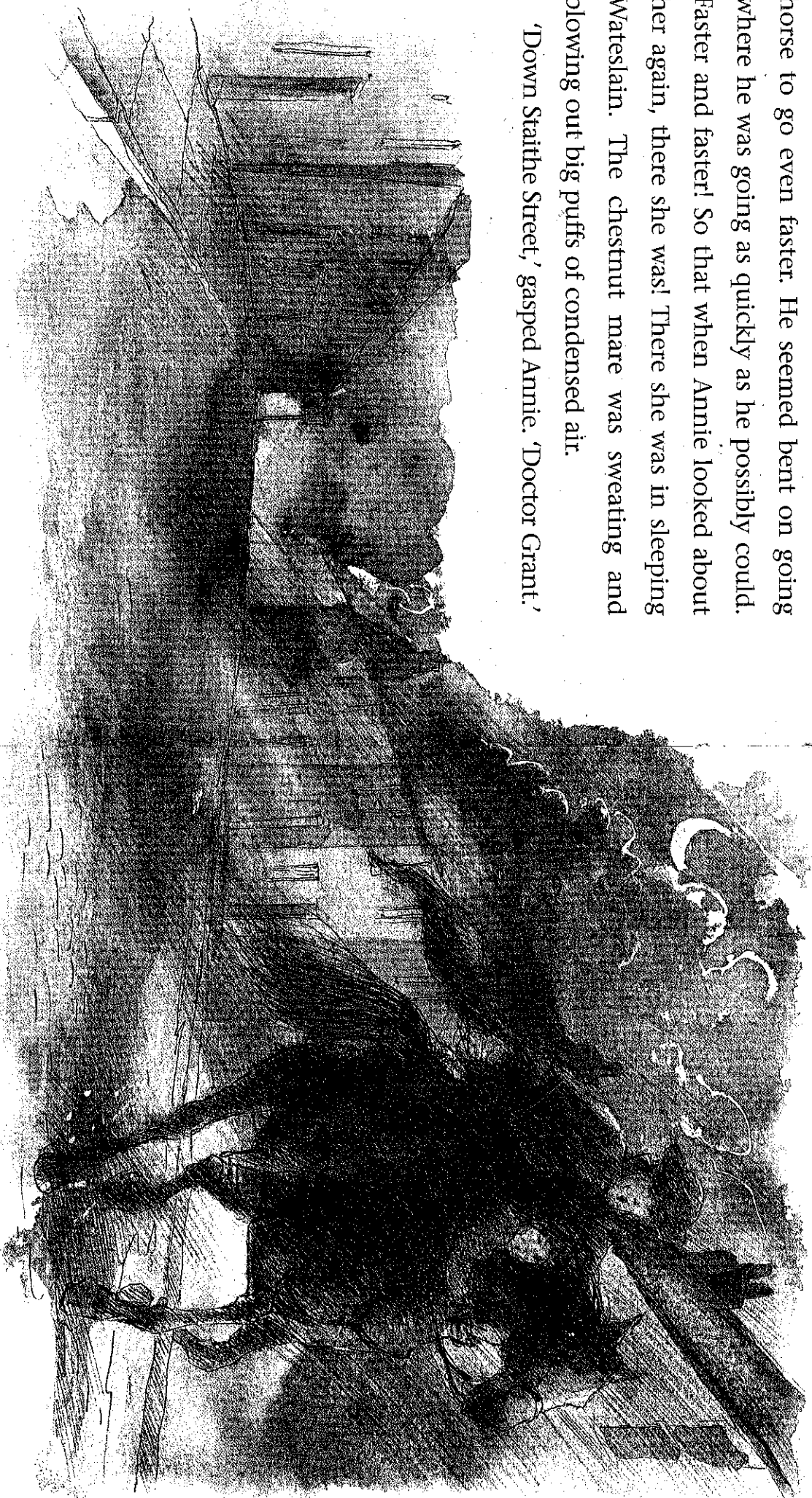
WHAT A NIGHT it was! The salty wind was going round and round in circles, first whipping them forward, then holding them up, then barging them towards the hedge on one side of the lane or the deep ditch on the other. The horseman kept one arm round Annie and Annie held on to the horse. The rain flew straight at them, spiteful drops sharp as pins and needles.

Then Annie began to sway in the saddle. She thought she could bear it no longer – the furious gallop, the gallop of the storm, the storm of her own fears. What can I do? What if I never get to Doctor Grant?



But the horseman only shouted and spurred his horse to go even faster. He seemed bent on going where he was going as quickly as he possibly could. Faster and faster! So that when Annie looked about her again, there she was! There she was in sleeping Wateslain. The chestnut mare was sweating and blowing out big puffs of condensed air.

'Down Staithe Street,' gasped Annie. 'Doctor Grant.'



The horseman galloped straight up the middle of the village street. The horse's hooves clattered on the tarmac and Annie saw that several times they struck sparks from pieces of chert and flint. Then they turned into Staithe Street and 'Whoa!' shouted the horseman in his dark voice.

'Whoa!' And his mare at last slowed down to a trot. 'There!' said Annie, pointing to a gateway flanked by laurel bushes. 'We're there!'





Chapter Eight

DOCTOR GRANT'S LIGHTS were still on.

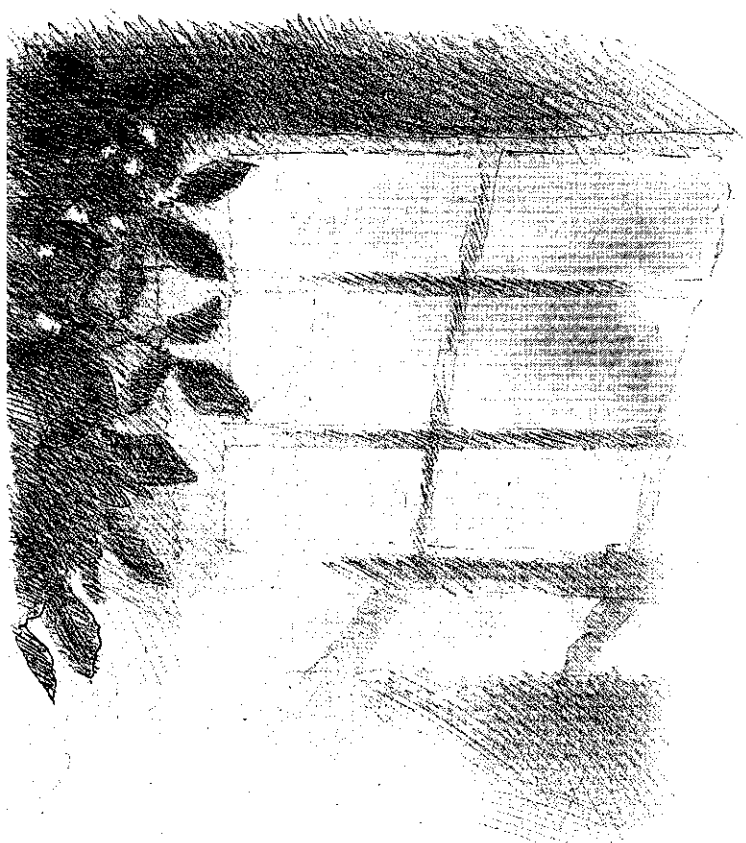
His curtains were the colour of ripe peaches. And a lantern, swaying in his porch, threw a pool of soft shifting light over the flagstones and gravel outside the front door.

Annie stared and stared as if she had never seen bright light before. In the gloom nothing had looked quite definitely so. It looked frightening: the reaching arms of the fallen body of the milk churn, the dark water. There was danger, too, in the chancy things that only come out of the dark o'-the-wykes and bogles and boggles. But now, in the clear light, there was nothing for anything uncertain or ghostly.

Annie relaxed her grip on the horse and took a deep breath. And when she slowly let her breath out again, she felt as if she had been holding it in ever since she left home.

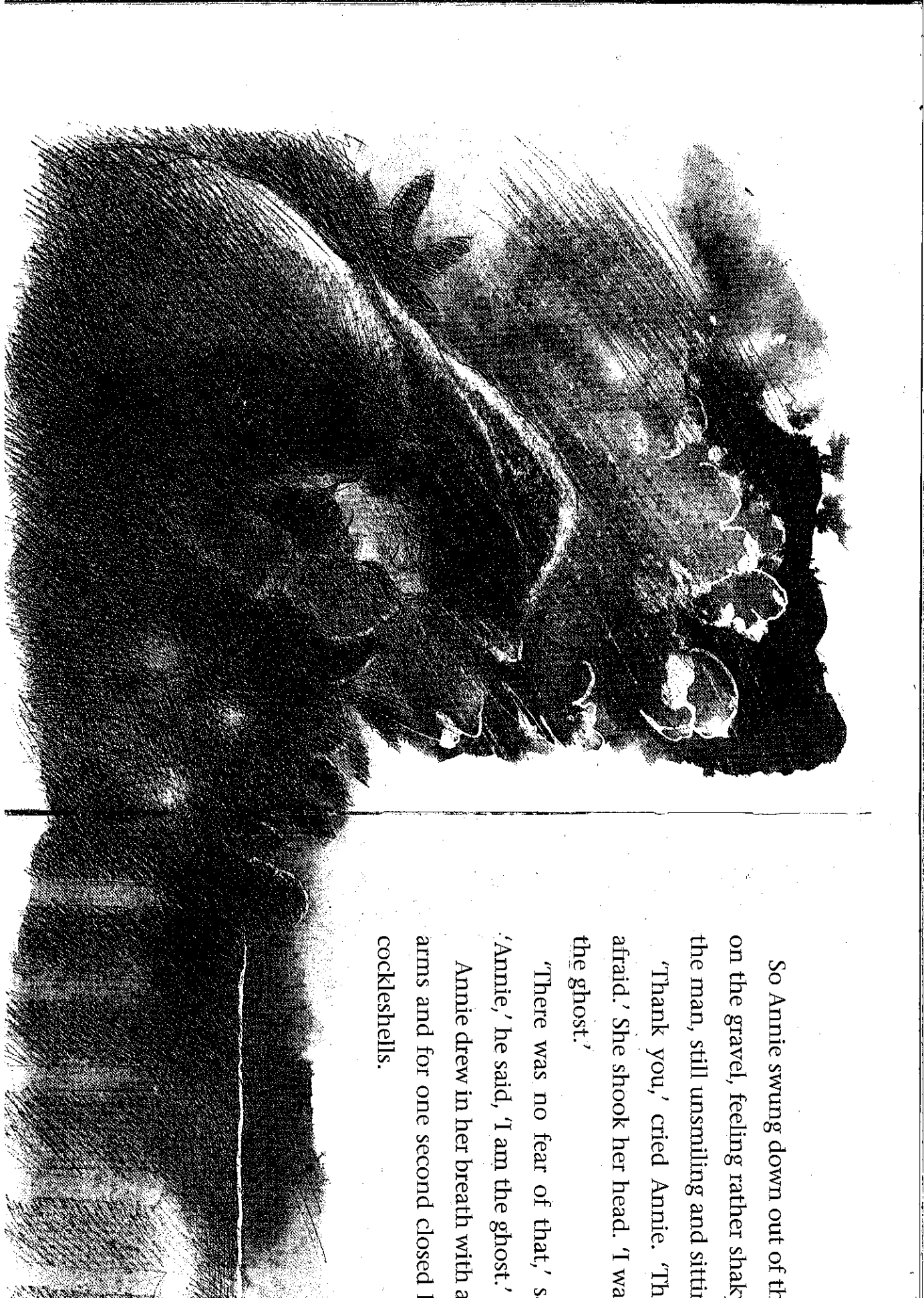
'So, Annie,' said the horseman, 'this is where I must leave you.'

'Come in!' cried Annie. 'I'm sure you can come in.'



'You must go your way and I mine, shaking his head and taking great care from putting so much as a hoof in. Your sister and her baby will be all





So Annie swung down out of the air, landing on the gravel, feeling rather shaky. She looked at the man, still unsmiling and sitting on the ground. 'Thank you,' cried Annie. 'Thank you, I was afraid.' She shook her head. 'I was not afraid of the ghost.'

'There was no fear of that,' said the man. 'Annie,' he said, 'I am the ghost.'

Annie drew in her breath with a gasp. Her arms and for one second closed I cockleshells.

When she opened them again there was nobody there, no horseman and no horse. Dr Grant's lantern still creaked and swayed in the porch, and its light shone over the flagstones and gravel, but Storm and his chestnut mare, they had both completely vanished.



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