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The Last of the Spirits

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Writing a children's book assuming previous knowledge of Dickens's **A Christmas Carol** is a risky business, given that many young readers no longer know anything about those classics that most older people still take for granted. Chris Priestley could claim that this present story still works in its own right, but there remain many puzzling points for those unacquainted with the original. Told from the point of view of two starving street children witnessing some of what happens to Scrooge from outside, various ghosts still come and go but their ubiquity somewhat lessens their shock effect. More puzzlingly, Priestley spends the last few chapters almost out-vying Dickens in sentimentality. 'Hearty chortles' are followed in the next line by an insistence that Scrooge 'chuckled merrily.' Like Priestley's previous [The Dead Men Stood Together](#) [4], a riff on Coleridge's **The Rime of the Ancient Mariner**, good stuff is also to be found here but in an overall enterprise that seems something like a literary diversion for a normally fine writer.

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