MRS. CRATCHIT

(cheerfully, kissing her on the cheek.)
Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are! Come in from the cold!

MARTHA

We had a great deal of work to finish up last night, and had to clear away this morning, mother!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Well! Never mind so long as you here!

PETER

(looking out the door, or window)
I see Father . . . and Tiny Tim. Martha, hide, and we will surprise them!

MARTHA finds a space to hide, perhaps behind the door as BOB and TINY TIM enter.

BELINDA

Father, you are home! Merry Christmas!

The children run to BOB and TINY TIM, along with MRS. CRATCHIT. All share a warm embrace and greetings of “Merry Christmas!” After a moment, BOB looks around and says:

BOB

Why, where’s our Martha?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Not coming.

BOB

Not coming! Not coming upon Christmas Day!

MARTHA comes out from hiding.

MARTHA

Here I am, Father. Merry Christmas!

They embrace.
BOB
Oh, a merry Christmas to you, daughter! It would not be Christmas Day if my Martha were not here!

MATTHEW
It was Peter’s idea to surprise you, Father. Did it work?

BOB
It was brilliant! I was very surprised, and very happy to see that we are all here!

MRS. CRATCHIT
And how did our Tiny Tim behave in church? Good as gold, I suppose?

BOB
As good as gold and even better! He is so thoughtful, and he listened so carefully to the Christmas story. Tim, tell everyone what you told me on the way home – about the church service.

Music begins. The family gathers around BOB and TIM to listen.

#16 As We Remember (BOB, PETER, MRS. CRATCHIT, CRATCHIT FAMILY)

TINY TIM
I said that I hoped the people saw me in the church, because I am a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see.

BOB
AS WE REMEMBER CHRISTMAS DAY, 
EV’RY DECEMBER LET US PRAY 
AND LOOK TO THE SAVIOR BORN TODAY 
IN BETHLEHEM.

PETER
HE TOUCHED THE BLIND AND MADE THEM SEE;

TINY TIM
HE TOUCHED THE LAME, WHO WALK LIKE ME.

MRS. CRATCHIT
AND HE SETS THE POOR AND CAPTIVE FREE 
BY LOVING THEM.
CRATCHIT FAMILY

ON CHRISTMAS DAY, REMEMBER
THAT THIS IS A TIME FOR LOVE.
THIS IS A TIME TO OPEN YOUR HEART
AND LOOK ABOVE.
LOOK UNTO GENTLE JESUS,
WHO CAME TO US MEEK AND MILD
ON CHRISTMAS DAY, REMEMBER
THE GIFT OF THE HOLY CHILD.

BOB

(almost overcome with emotion)
Oh, my precious Tiny Tim! I do believe that God is granting you more strength every day!

MRS. CRATCHIT

(quietly)
I pray so, Bob.

(to MARTHA)
Martha, I believe the goose should be done! Go and bring it. Belinda, you may go help her – it may take two to bring such a bird! Peter, you and Matthew may bring the pudding – but be careful, it is piping hot! Elizabeth, help me finish the table. Father, you and Tim find your seats. I know you must be tired after the long walk home from church.

The children exit offstage to kitchen.

BOB

I say, that goose smells absolutely scrumptious! I can almost taste it!

MRS. CRATCHIT

It has been cooking all day, along with the pudding. I say, the whole house smells like Christmas, as it should.

BOB

Indeed. I know it will be a wonderful meal, dear.

The children return, and all make their way to their seats.

MARTHA

What a glorious goose!
BOB
I have never seen such a goose! I daresay, Mrs. Cratchit, that this meal looks to be your greatest success of our entire marriage!

MRS. CRATCHIT
Careful, now, Bob Cratchit . . . flattery is a sin!

BOB
Not when it is sincere! Let us give thanks to the Lord for His gracious provision. A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!

The family echoes “God Bless Us” . . ., then TIM speaks-

TINY TIM
God bless us everyone!

The family kneels their heads in prayer, as the lights dim on the Cratchit’s, and up again on SCROOGE and PRESENT.

SCROOGE
Spirit . . . tell me if Tiny Tim will live.

PRESENT
I see a vacant seat in the corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die.

SCROOGE
No, no! Oh, no, kind Spirit! Say he will be spared!

PRESENT
Why? If he is likely to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.

SCROOGE
(head bowed in shame)
Oh, Spirit . . . you condemn me with my own words! I grieve at the sound of them!

PRESENT
Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man’s child!
SCROOGE, in recognition of the truth of what he has heard, falls to his knees before PRESENT, weeping.

After a moment, the Cratchit area brightens again, and SCROOGE rises at the sound of his own name.

BOB

(lifting his glass, or goblet)
Mr. Scrooge! I’ll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!

MRS. CRATCHIT

(suddenly angry)
The Founder of the Feast indeed! I wish I had him here. I’d give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he’d have a good appetite for it.

BOB

My dear . . . the children! Christmas Day . . .

MRS. CRATCHIT

It should be Christmas Day, I am sure on which one drinks to the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert! Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow!

BOB

(mildly)
My dear . . . Christmas Day.

MRS. CRATCHIT

I’ll drink to his health for your sake and the Day’s . . . not for his. Long life to him! A merry Christmas and a happy new year! He’ll be very merry and very happy, counting his money, I have no doubt!

TINY TIM

(lifting his glass, or goblet)
Merry Christmas, Mr. Scrooge!

This causes all the family to laugh and breaks the tension. Soon, their laughter is broken by Fred’s singing from another part of the stage. The lights fade out on the Cratchit’s and up on the parlor of Fred’s home – much more beautifully appointed than the Cratchit’s. Gathered there, are FRED, his wife VIRGINIA, TOPPER, Fred’s good friend, and other young couples and guests. They are singing and having a grand time. An SATB “double quartet,” which includes FRED, VIRGINIA, and TOPPER is recommended – four couples in all, with additional musicians as needed.
CAROLINE
To whom will our debt be transferred?

THOMAS
I don’t know. But before that time we shall be ready with the money; and even though we were not, it surely won’t be anyone as merciless a creditor as he was. We may sleep tonight with light hearts, Caroline!

THEY embrace, joyfully.

CAROLINE
Oh, Thomas! Heaven forgive me, but . . . it seems like a miracle!

The lights fade out quickly on them and they exit. SCROOGE wearily looks to FUTURE.

SCROOGE
Let me see some tenderness connected with a death, or these dark shadows, Spirit, which I have seen just now, will be forever present to me.

FUTURE turns and points his arm toward the Cratchit home.

#21 Cratchit – Underscore 2 (ORCHESTRA)

MRS. CRATCHIT, and all the Cratchit children, except TINY TIM, are gathered around the table, listening to PETER, who is reading from the Bible. We see Tiny Tim’s crutch, carefully stored, in the corner, or hung on the wall.

PETER
And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms . . .

PETER, thinking of Tiny Tim, cannot go on. He weeps softly and stops reading.

Music fades out.

MRS. CRATCHIT
That is enough for tonight, Peter. You better rest your eyes, dear. Your father will be home soon. It seems time for him to be here.
MARTHA
Yes – or past it, Mother. But I think he has walked a little slower than he used to, these few last evenings, mother.

MRS. CRATCHIT
I have known him walk with--
(composing herself)
I have known him walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed.

BELINDA
So have I, so many times, mother.

MRS. CRATCHIT
But he was very light to carry, . . . and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble: no trouble.

BOB enters at the door.

ELIZABETH
Father!

MRS. CRATCHIT
Oh, there he is! Come, and sit, darling. Here – I have your tea ready.

The children go to BOB and embrace him. HE embraces them all fully, kissing them on the cheek, obviously moved.

PETER
(trying to be brave)
Oh, Father . . . don’t mind it . . . Don’t be grieved! Tim is in heaven – walking and running!

MRS. CRATCHIT
You went today, then, Robert?

BOB
Yes, my dear. I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you’lI see it often. I promised him that we would walk there on a Sunday.
(weeping)
My little, little child! My little child!
The family gathers in close to BOB, until he has recovered and continues.

BOB
I must tell you who I saw today . . . Mr. Scrooge’s nephew, Fred. I met him on the street and he said that I looked – um – just a little down you know, and when I told him about Tim – why – he is the most pleasantly-spoken gentleman, he said that he was heartily sorry for me – and heartily sorry for my good wife, Mrs. Cratchit. How he knew that, I will never know.

MRS. CRATCHIT
Knew what, my dear?

BOB
That you were a good wife, of course!

MATTHEW
Everybody knows that!

BOB
Very well observed, my boy! I hope they do. “Heartily sorry,” he said, “for your good wife. If I can be of service to you in any way,” he said, giving me his card, “that's where I live. Pray come to me.” Now, it wasn’t for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that this was quite delightful. It really seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim, and felt with us.

MRS. CRATCHIT
I’m sure he’s a good soul!

BOB
Oh, he is! If you could see him and speak to him, as I did, you would be sure of it. I shouldn’t be at all surprised . . . if he got Peter a better situation.

MARTHA
And then, Peter will be keeping company with someone, and setting up for himself!

PETER
Get along with you!

BOB
It’s just as likely as not, one of these days; though there’s plenty of time for that, my dear.

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