

Ensemble Member #5 reads Mrs. Cratchit & Old Rich Woman

MRS. CRATCHIT. Mrs. Bob Cratchit, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons! Belinda!

(BELINDA enters with plates and utensils.)

BELINDA. Belinda Cratchit, also brave in ribbons. It's a wonderful pudding, mother!

MRS. CRATCHIT. But suppose it should not be done in time! Suppose it should break in turning out!

BELINDA. Peter!

(PETER enters with a bowl.)

PETER. Peter Cratchit, in father's shirt, no ribbons.

(PETER and BELINDA set the table.)

MRS. CRATCHIT. Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the backyard and stolen it, while I was making merry with the goose?

(CHILD #2/MARTHA enters.)

BELINDA. There's such a goose! Martha!

MARTHA. Martha Cratchit.

(MARTHA curtsies to the audience.)

MRS. CRATCHIT. *(To MARTHA:)* Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!

MARTHA. We'd a deal of work to finish up and clear away this morning, mother.

MRS. CRATCHIT. Sit down before the fire, and have a warm.

BELINDA. Father's coming!

(BOB CRATCHIT enters with TINY TIM on his crutches. TINY TIM looks small and sick. Everyone embraces.)

(The CHILDREN rush to the table.)

MRS. CRATCHIT. And how did little Tiny Tim behave?

BOB CRATCHIT. As good as gold and better. He told me, coming home, that he hoped people saw him in church, because he is a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember, upon Christmas Day, who made the lame beggars walk and the blind men see.

(They sing "Good King Wenceslas.")

(The Goose disappears from the table.)

BELINDA. The pudding!

MARTHA & TINY TIM. Pudding!

MRS. CRATCHIT. *(As she exits:)* I doubt the quantity of the flour.

(MRS. CRATCHIT exits.)

BOB CRATCHIT. *(To BELINDA:)* There never was such a goose!

PETER. Such tenderness and flavor.

BELINDA. *(Nodding to PETER:)* The applesauce and mashed potatoes were delightful.

(MRS. CRATCHIT re-enters with a bowl.)

MRS. CRATCHIT. It's a small pudding for such a large family but

blazing with brandy!

(The family claps with excitement.)

BOB CRATCHIT. I regard it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since our marriage. A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!

(The family echoes, "God bless us!" and they sing "O Holy Night.")

(BOB CRATCHIT grabs TINY TIM's hand, embraces TINY TIM. TINY TIM coughs, and coughs, and coughs as his father tries to comfort him and the family looks on in fear.)

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

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. I see a vacant seat. If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, the child will die.

(A beat.)

What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.

BOB CRATCHIT. And God bless Mr. Scrooge, the founder of the feast!

MRS. CRATCHIT. The founder of the feast, indeed! I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon!

BOB CRATCHIT. My dear, the children, Christmas Day.

MRS. CRATCHIT. It should be Christmas Day only, I am sure, on which one drinks to the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge.

(To BOB CRATCHIT:)

I'll drink to his health for your sake, and the Day's, but not for his!

(She drinks, and everyone follows.)

(They clear the table.)

BOB CRATCHIT. And Peter, I have a situation in my eye for you which will bring in, if obtained, a full five and sixpence weekly.

MRS. CRATCHIT. My Peter, a man of business!

Scene #2

OLD RICH WOMAN. When did he die?

OLD RICH MAN. Last night, I believe.

OLD RICH WOMAN. Why, what was the matter with him? I thought he'd never die.

OLD RICH MAN. God knows.

OLD RICH WOMAN. What has he done with his money?

OLD RICH MAN. I haven't heard. Left it to his company, perhaps? He hasn't left it to me. That's all I know.

(The OLD RICH WOMAN laughs.)

OLD RICH WOMAN. It's likely to be a very cheap funeral for, upon my life, I don't know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party, and volunteer?

OLD RICH MAN. I don't mind going, if lunch is provided.

(The OLD RICH WOMAN laughs.)