

SCENE NINE

SCROOGE

Let me see some tenderness connected with a death or that dark chamber will be forever present to me.

(The Cratchit home is revealed. Mrs. Cratchit, Martha, and Belinda are sewing a burial shroud. Peter reads from the Bible.)

PETER

And he called a little child, and sat him in the midst of them and said, verily I say unto you, except ye become as little children or ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. What's wrong mother?

MRS. CRATCHIT

The color hurts my eyes. They're better now. The candlelight makes them weak and I wouldn't show weak eyes to your father when he comes home for the world. It must be near his time.

PETER

Past it rather. But I think he has walked a little slower than he used to these last few evenings, mother.

MRS. CRATCHIT

I have know him to walk with—I have know him to walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed.

MARTHA

As so have I, often.

BELINDA

And so have I.

PETER

And I.

MRS. CRATCHIT

But he was very light to carry and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble, no trouble. And there is your father at the door!

MARTHA

Hello father, we've have your tea ready for you.

BELINDA

Please father, don't be grieved.

BOB CRATCHIT

I'm alright, my dears. Look how hard you've been working and so fast. You will be done long before Sunday.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Yes, Sunday. You went today, then, Robert?

BOB CRATCHIT

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'll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday. (crying) My little child! My little child!

BOB CRATCHIT

I met on the street today Mr. Scrooge's nephew. He was extraordinarily kind and seeing that I looked just a little down asked what distressed me. I told him about Tiny Tim. It really seemed as if he knew our Tiny Tim and felt with us.

MRS. CRATCHIT

I'm sure he's a good soul.

BOB CRATCHIT

He said, "I am heartily sorry for it, Mr. Cratchit and heartily sorry for your good wife. By the bye, how he ever knew that, I don't know.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Knew what, my dear.

BOB CRATCHIT

Why that you were a good wife.

PETER

Everybody knows that.

BOB CRATCHIT

Very well observed, my boy. I hope they do. Mr. Fred then said, "If I can be of any service to you in any way, here is my card." I shouldn't be at all surprised if he got Peter a better situation.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Only hear that Peter!

MARTHA

And then, Peter will be keeping company with someone, and setting up house for himself.

PETER

Get along with you!

BOB CRATCHIT

It's just as likely as not, one of these days; though there's plenty of time for that, my dear. But however and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim—shall we—or this first parting that there was among us?

BELINDA

Never, father!

BOB CRATCHIT

And I know that when we recollect how patient and mild he was, although he was a little, little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it.

PETER

No, never, father!

BOB CRATCHIT

I am very happy. I am very happy!