

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT

BOB CRATCHIT. Whose presence, darling?

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. I don't even know. Never mind. Let's stop standing in this tableau and move around normally, all right? *(They break the tableau, and move normally.)*

BOB CRATCHIT. Children, your mother is hearing voices. We must be very kind.

LITTLE NELL. I hear voices too. I heard the woman's voice say that Tiny Tim and I are going to die.

TINY TIM. Oh dear. And it's true I don't feel very well. I have a feeling I may die.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Nonsense. What would you die of?

TINY TIM. Of being a cripple.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. That doesn't make sense. That's like saying you're going to die because you have brown hair.

TINY TIM. Nonetheless I feel it. Unless Mr. Scrooge reforms his personality and learns to value Christmas, I can tell I'm going to die.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. What does Mr. Scrooge have to do with it?

BOB CRATCHIT. Oh, Tiny Tim. *(Weeps.)*

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. He's not dying. He probably feels ill from the Happy Meal, all that fat and grease. Children, if you need to throw up, use one of the white bags the food came in. That's why they put the food in those white bags, it's for vomiting in later on.

TINY TIM. No, it's more serious than throwing up, Mummy.

LITTLE NELL. I feel my mortality too. I have this little bag of nettles still. What if later tonight, I get hungry again and I choke on one of them?

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Well you mustn't eat the nettles then.

LITTLE NELL. But if I'm hungry ...

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Here, give those to me. *(Snatches the little cloth bag full of nettles that Little Nell has carried from before.)* No choking on nettles for you, Young Lady. I've had enough sickness and pathos, and this stupid family where everything is about suffering.

TINY TIM. I think I feel consumption coming on. That's when your little lungs fill up with something and you cough and die, right? *(Coughs poignantly.)*

BOB CRATCHIT. Oh poor Tiny Tim. Other two children, let us pray he doesn't die.

OTHER CHILDREN. Don't die, Tiny Tim, don't die!

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. *(To Bob.)* Oh why do you encourage him?

LITTLE NELL. He's not the only one dying. The spirit said I was

going to die. Oh, I think I'm starting to choke on an imaginary nettle. *(Little Nell starts to choke. Tiny Tim keeps coughing softly and poignantly. They both continue to cough and choke during the following.)*

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Well, if it's imaginary, how can you choke on it? I've had enough. Wallowing in consumption, poverty, no food, no money, this isn't what I signed up for! It seems like I've walked out on you several times already, but one of these times it's gotta work! So long, everybody — I'm going to the pub and then I'm jumping off the bridge. And don't anyone try to stop me. It's a horrible life.

BOB CRATCHIT. It's a wonderful life.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. It isn't! *(Music. The set changes to a pub again. The Cratchit family and set somehow disappear.)*

Scene 11

The Pub. A bartender. Mrs. Bob Cratchit comes storming in.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Give me a Tequila Surprise, and then point me to the river!

BARTENDER. Okay, coming right up. *(Mrs. Bob Cratchit chugs her drink down.)*

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Mmmm, delicious! Gimme another! *(Bartender makes her another. Sound of wind begins. Mrs. Bob is pushed about by the wind.)* Oh, it's getting windy! *(More wind sound, music. Enter the Ghost, dressed in black robes, like the figure of Death. She carries a scythe.)*

BARTENDER. Oh my God, it's Death.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Finally! Over here, I'm over here! *(Ebenezer Scrooge follows the Ghost in, momentarily seeming scared.)*

GHOST. Ebenezer Scrooge, behold your gravestone! *(The Ghost points to the ground. Scrooge looks at the floor, sees nothing.)*

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Where?

GHOST. *(Takes off the black hood part of her costume.)* Oh for God's sake. We're not in the cemetery???? Where are we? *(Enter George Bailey, all happy and hyper. Dressed in a 1940s suit.)*

GEORGE BAILEY. My mouth's bleeding, Bert! My mouth ...