

CHILD 442

Scene 5

Bob Cratchit's house. A wooden table, missing a leg but standing nonetheless; it seats perhaps six. A chair or two. Mrs. Bob Cratchit is there, doing needlepoint. A couple of children lie on the floor (a girl and boy). Scrooge and the Ghost stand in the set, staring at them.

CHILD 1. (Girl) I'm hungry.

CHILD 2. (Boy) Me too.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. So we're all hungry. What do you want me to do about it?

CHILD 1. Give us some food.

EBENEZER SCROOGE. This isn't the Fezziwigs.

GHOST. You're right, it's not. I seem to have brought us to the wrong place.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Excuse me, who are you?

GHOST. Uh... no one. I'm a ghost. You can't see me.

EBENEZER SCROOGE. And I'm just some old man. (*Whispers to Ghost.*) Why can she see us?

GHOST. I don't know, something's wrong. (*To Mrs. Bob Cratchit.*) We were looking for the Fezziwigs.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Oh? And who might they be?

GHOST. They were employers of Mr. Scroo... of this old gentleman long ago. Tell me, is this the present or the past?

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Every day of my life seems the same to me, I haven't a clue if it's the present or the past. Children, are we in the present or the past?

CHILD 1. I'm hungry.

CHILD 2. Feed us!

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. All children want to do is eat, it's disgusting. (*Screams at them.*) When your father finally makes some money, then you'll eat! And not a minute before!

GHOST. Oh right, this is Bob Cratchit's house, isn't it?

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. What?

GHOST. We're supposed to be here much later. Something's gone awry.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. I'm sorry, who are you and why are you here?

GHOST. (*To Scrooge.*) Touch my cloak and I'll try to get us back in time to the Fezziwigs.

EBENEZER SCROOGE. What cloak?
GHOST. My arm then, don't be so fussy. Touch my arm. (*Scrooge touches the Ghost's arm and there's a large POP sound. Brief flash of light too. But Scrooge and the Ghost are still there.*)

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Oh! Where did those two go? The black delivery woman and the old doddering man. Children, did you see them leave?

CHILD 1. I'm hungry.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Shut up. That's strange, I didn't see them leave.

GHOST. Well at least we're invisible now. That part is working again. Touch my arm again, and I'll try to get us to the Fezziwigs. (*Scrooge touches her arm. Nothing.*) Damn it, I don't know what's the matter.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Children, don't swear.

GHOST. We're here at the Cratchit house way too early.

CHILD 2. Father and Tiny Tim are home, I think.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. I wonder what good news your father will have for Christmas Eve. Maybe Scrooge will have died and named us in his will, ha ha ha.

EBENEZER SCROOGE. That's rather rude.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. (*To the children.*) Did you say something?

CHILD 1. No. We didn't say anything.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. I thought I heard a voice. Oh Lord, I'm hearing things now.

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Can they hear us?

GHOST. They're not supposed to. (*Enter Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim. Bob has a long, long scarf around his neck that falls to the ground. Tiny Tim is small, carries a little crutch, and limps a lot.*)

BOB CRATCHIT. Gladys, darling, we're home. And Tiny Tim so enjoyed looking in the store windows at all the Christmas treats he can't have.

TINY TIM. And I only fell on the ground twenty-four times today.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Why won't you use your crutch, you stupid child?

TINY TIM. I don't want to people to notice I'm crippled.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. And if you fall down twenty-four times,