

**MRS CRATCHIT** Well, it won't be if we don't keep an eye on it.

**MARTHA** *(Coming in.)* I'll lay the table, mother.

**MRS CRATCHIT** Would you dear. Thank you. Oh, but could you get the punch ready as well, Father's sure to want us to have a toast before dinner.

**MARTHA** He's done it himself.

**MRS CRATCHIT** Then let's put it on the fire in here and keep it warm.

**MARTHA** I'll fetch it.

**MRS CRATCHIT** What's Peter doing?

**PETER** *(Coming in.)* I'm doing the potatoes. Look at them, mother. They're the best I've ever done them. And they taste delicious.

**MRS CRATCHIT** Yes, and you taste much more of them and there won't be any left.

**PETER** I only had a little.

**MARTHA** *(Coming back.)* Oooooo. *(She stands still in the middle of the room.)*

**PETER** What's the matter with you?

**BELINDA** Just smell that goose. There never was such a goose.

**MRS CRATCHIT** Listen! Here's your father back from church with Tiny Tim.

**PETER** Quickly, Martha, hide. Hide.

**BELINDA** Yes, do, do. Quickly.

**MRS CRATCHIT** You better hurry or he'll catch you.

**MARTHA** All look the other way or something.

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*MARTHA hides. EVERYBODY ELSE looks quite innocent, and BOB CRATCHIT arrives with TINY TIM on his shoulder. TINY TIME is carrying his crutch.*

**BOB** Hello, all of you. I hope we're in time.

*He sees the gloomy faces.*

BOB                               Why, what's the matter?   Where's our Martha?

**MRS CRATCHIT**                She's not coming.

BOB                               Not coming!

**MRS CRATCHIT**                No, they've kept her at work.

BOB                               Kept her at work!   Not coming on Christmas Day!

*But MARTHA can't keep it up any longer and comes from hiding.*

TINY TIM                        There she is!   There she is!

MARTHA                         Oh, father.   I couldn't keep it up.   I simply couldn't.

PETER                         You've spoiled it.

BOB                             You really had me worried.

**MRS CRATCHIT**                It's a shame to tease him on Christmas Day.

Skip

~~BELINDA                        I want to show Tiny Tim the pudding.~~

~~TINY TIM                        Please, please.~~

~~PETER                         And the goose.~~

~~TINY TIM                        Everything.   I want to see all of it.~~

~~PETER                         Come on then.~~

~~*And he and BELINDA help the excited TINY TIM out to the kitchen.*~~

~~MARTHA                        I'll see they don't eat it all.~~

~~*And she follows them.*~~

Restart

BOB                             My, it smells good.

**MRS CRATCHIT**                I hope it is Robert.   And I hope there's enough.

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BOB                             Of course there'll be enough.   You always worry about that.

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**MRS CRATCHIT**                I'm sorry.   I didn't mean...

BOB                             No, I know you didn't.   I never cease to marvel how you make a few shillings go so far.

**MRS CRATCHIT**                How did little Tim behave at church?   Was he good?