

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.

Start

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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.

Skip

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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.*

Restart 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.  
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.

Stop

*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.*  
BOB My, it smells good.  
MRS CRATCHIT I hope it is Robert. And I hope there's enough.  
BOB Of course there'll be enough. You always worry about that.  
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?