

CLARENCE

(Reaches in his pocket.) Zuzus petals! Zuzus petals! (He's in ecstasy finding the flower petals.) I do exist! Thank you, Clarence. Good old Bedford Falls! It didn't become Pottersville! I've got to go find Mary. Mary, Mary! (He runs off.)

EBENEZER SCROOGE. What was that all about?

GHOST. I'm not quite sure. (The sound of a tinkly bell ringing. Enter a Child.)

A CHILD. (In a very sweet, sweet voice.) Teacher says whenever a bell rings, it's an angel getting its wings. (George Bailey comes back for a minute.)

GEORGE BAILEY. That's right, that's right. (George Bailey and the Child exit.)

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. I've never heard that.

GHOST. Me neither. Of course, I'm a Ghost and not an angel. (Enter Clarence, a sweet, doddering old man of an angel. He has a very large set of wings on his back that make it hard for him to balance.)

CLARENCE. Well it's true. The bell that just rang was for me — I just got my first pair of wings. Saved that man from killing himself. George Bailey of Bailey Savings and Loan. And now I've got these great big things on me. Ooooh, they make me feel a little unsteady. (To the Ghost.) Hello. I'm Clarence. What's your name?

GHOST. My name is Trophemia.

CLARENCE. Trophemia. What a lovely name. I'm an angel, what about you?

GHOST. I'm a ghost.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. I hate all this stuff about ghosts and angels. I don't believe it.

CLARENCE. You don't believe your eyes?

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. I think you're all a piece of undigested mutton. Or a glob of still-fermenting Rice-A-Roni.

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Oh, that's what I said too.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Hello, there. I'm Mrs. Bob Cratchit. Are you Mr. Scrooge?

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Yes. I've enjoyed watching you.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. (Excited.) Ooooo, watching me do what?

GHOST. (Notices the flirtation, but focuses back on Clarence.) Clarence, I wonder if maybe you've been sent to help me. I've tried and tried to make Mr. Scrooge reform himself, but this lady, Mrs. Bob Cratchit, keeps getting in the way with all her negativity. And I try to show him his gravestone, and we end up in a pub. MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Well I'd prefer a pub any day.

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Me too. (They smile at each other.)

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Brilliant minds think alike.

CLARENCE. Well I love to help people, I'm a very good person.

Ummm ... let me see. (To Mrs. Bob Cratchit and Scrooge.) Which of you two is Mrs. Bob Cratchit?

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. (With a look that he's dense.) Well ... I am.

CLARENCE. I understand you have a bad attitude.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. I have a realistic attitude. I'm living in

1840s London, there's no plumbing, everybody smells all the time,

I have twenty children — no, twenty-one — or forty-seven, I don't

know! — there's never enough food, my husband earns no money

cause this man won't pay him anything ...

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Oh, you want me to give him a raise?

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. (To Scrooge, flirtatious again.) No, you're

right, he's not worth a raise. You pay him as little as you want. (Smiles;

then back to Clarence.) It's nonsup pathos in my house. The crippled

little boy with innocent little eyes. The big galumphing Little Nell,

who eats nettles, whatever they are. (Waves the bag of nettles in his face.)

And I feel so lonely, and hopeless, and the people around me are icky

and goody-goody and pitiful, and I wish I had never been born! (A

little ding noise. Clarence looks focused.)

CLARENCE. Say that again.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. I wish I had never been born! (The little

ding noise again.)

CLARENCE. Your wish is granted.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. What?

CLARENCE. You got it. You've never been born.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT. Well, nonsense. I'm still here. I'm still

holding Little Nell's nettles. (Reaches for the bag; it's gone.) Wait.

The bag of nettles, where are they?

CLARENCE. You've never been born, so there is no Little Nell.

And there's no bag of nettles either. And there is also no Tiny Tim.

GHOST. Excuse me. I don't see how this is going to help.

Threatening Scrooge with the death of Tiny Tim is a big part of my

strategy.

CLARENCE. Step at a time. This worked with George Bailey, I

think it'll work here too. Mrs. Cratchit, or Person X, since you don't

exist, you've been granted a great gift. To see what life would've been

like if you hadn't been born. Come let's look and see how your hus-

band Bob would be. (Starts to exit with Mrs. Bob; to Ghost.) We'll be

back in a minute and I bet

she'll be a changed woman!