

DOROTHY. "Well now I'll tell ya. She's not coming, Bobby."

PHIL. "Not coming on Christmas?"

MARTHA. (*Coming out from behind couch.*) "Oh, I can't bear it. I can't bear to tease Father."

DOROTHY. "Let's sit down by the fire, then, Bob."

(*THEY all sit on couch. LUTHER sits on M.J.'s lap.*)

DOROTHY. "How was church, then?"

PHIL. "Tiny was good as gold. He's growing stronger every day. Doesn't he seem bigger, Martha, since you saw him last?"

M.J. "Yes, I truly think he'll grow up hearty and strong."

PHIL. "I'm a rich man."

DOROTHY. "No you're not."

PHIL. (*Referring to his script now.*) I am.

DOROTHY. (*Referring to her script.*) "No you're not. You're poor. You're poor and you're a coward with two retarded children and a third who's eating you out of house and home." That seems a terribly cruel thing to say, doesn't it? Just a thought. "And a third who's eating you out of house and home."

LUTHER. "God bless us everyone."

(*The CRATCHIT FAMILY freezes in a tableaux.*)

LARRY. "Spirit, tell me ... that boy there—the one with the crutch ... will he live?"

WALTER. (*Reading from his script.*) "He looks pretty indestructible to me. He won't die now. It's too late. But something could have been done earlier."

LARRY. "How do you mean?"

WALTER. "Could Mrs. Cratchit possibly have wanted this child? Did she want to add to the surplus population? Bring another hungry mouth into a family already suffering from malnutrition? I think not. But where could she go for help when no governmental agency will give her advice?" This ... this ...

WAYNE. (*Rushing to front of stage.*) Yes?

WALTER. This ... seems a little preachy. Kind of stiff. You know?

WAYNE. You could do it sitting down.

WALTER. I don't think that would help. This stuff is very hard to say.

LARRY. What would make it easier?

WALTER. Could I do it without the beard?

WAYNE. (*Looking first to Larry.*) Sure.

WALTER. And the wig?

WAYNE. Sure.

WALTER. Great. (*WALTER takes off both.*)

(*ZORAH enters.*)

LUTHER. Here she is.

(*SHE has come from the hair dressers. SHE is transformed from her former work-a-day self into something much more glamorous. Beneath her coat SHE wears a sensual and revealing dress.*)