

CRATCHIT

Thank you, sir. God bless you, and Merry Christmas!

FRED continues down the street and out of sight. CRATCHIT looks over and sees TIM still looking wistfully at the other children. He is moved, but puts on a brave front as he walks over to his son, who is gazing at the sky.

Son, what has you looking so thoughtful?

TINY TIM

(dreamily)

I was just praying that Martha can come home for dinner tomorrow. We can't have Christmas unless we're all together!

Music Cue #5: NEXT CHRISTMAS

CRATCHIT

Now, Tim, you know that the Cratchit family will always celebrate Christmas, even after all the children--even you--have grown up and moved away.

TINY TIM

Oh, I'm never going to leave you father! I'll be home this Christmas and the next, and the next...

CRATCHIT

God bless you, son.

~~(singing; a thought occurs to him)~~

~~NEXT CHRISTMAS MAY SEEM
OFF IN THE DISTANCE
I'LL LEAD YOU THERE
WITH NO HINT OF RESISTANCE
THOUGH THE ROAD MAY TWIST
I'LL MAKE NEXT CHRISTMAS
MORE MERRY THAN THIS~~

NEXT CHRISTMAS MAY BRING
 NEW FRIENDS AND FACES
 AS WE MAY FIND NEW LIVES IN NEW PLACES
 NO MATTER WHAT WE MISS
 WE'LL MAKE NEXT CHRISTMAS
 MORE MERRY THAN THIS

BY THE TIME NEXT CHRISTMAS COMES AROUND
 YOU'LL BE PLAYING ON THE GROUND
 RUNNING WITH YOUR BROTHERS IN THE SNOW
 BY THE TIME YOU'RE FILLED WITH CHRISTMAS
 TREATS
 YOU'LL SCAMPER THROUGH THE CITY STREETS
 LEAP ABOUT WITHOUT ME IN TOW

*CRATCHIT picks TIM up and puts him on his
 shoulders.*

TIM

Don't carry me anymore, father. I want to walk.

CRATCHIT

But, we have such a long way to go and these streets are very crowded.

TIM

Even better! I want all these people to see how well I'm doing. Come on, father. Set me down!

*CRATCHIT puts TIM down gently. TIM hobbles
 along the way a bit, slowly but excitedly.
 CRATCHIT watches him sadly, and his thoughts
 turn inward.*

CRATCHIT

NEXT CHRISTMAS MAY NOT
 BE ALL I ENVISION
 IT'S ONLY OUR GOOD LORD'S DECISION
 (He looks up at the night sky)

~~SO GRANT ME ONE WISH
PLEASE MAKE NEXT CHRISTMAS
MORE MERRY THAN THIS~~

A small bit of Tim's song "A Child Alone" from later in the show is heard, and CRATCHIT catches sight of TIM'S angelic, beaming face waiting for him on the street corner.

~~MORE MERRY THAN THIS~~

TIM admonishes him from his place on the corner

TIM

You're falling behind, father!

CRATCHIT

I'm right behind you, son.

TIM

You'll have to catch me!

CRATCHIT

Here I come, then.

(Cratchit runs up behind Tim, lifts him up playfully and runs out of sight.)