

Well, will he?

Christmas Present What does it matter to you, Ebenezer Scrooge? If he is going to die, then he had better do it, and decrease...

Both ... the surplus population!

Scrooge hangs his head to hear his own words quoted. Focus back to the Cratchits for the end of the song

Cratchits Then the beautiful day that I dream about
Would be here and now.

Christmas Present Of course the boy will die! Unless the future changes in an unforeseen fashion. But who are you to decide who is surplus? I suspect there are many of the opinion that it is *you* who are surplus!

Scrooge I should like to go home now.

Christmas Present No. We have one last call to make. Touch my robe.

As the Cratchits end the refrain The Beautiful Day, Scrooge touches Christmas Present's robe. There is a blinding flash of light

I Like Life (No. 16a) starts (underscore)

SCENE 3

Scrooge's Nephew's sitting-room

A warm, cosy Christmas, the room illuminated by firelight and candle-glow

As the Lights cross-fade, there is a contrasting, uplifting swirl of music, and a tumble of rowdy, happy Children in bright party clothes bounce across the stage to the music of I Like Life. They are playing Blind Man's Buff, laughing, giggling and screaming with delight. The Adults follow, among them Scrooge's nephew, Harry, and his pretty wife, Helen (played by the same actress who was Isabel, whom Scrooge never quite sees). Blindfolded is Harry's best friend, Topper. As he gropes and stumbles about, he always seems to seek out the same attractive and buxom lady, named Mary

Helen I think Topper can see through that blindfold! He keeps chasing Mary!

Nephew Well, you can't blame him, can you?

Helen Oh Harry, you're outrageous!

Topper makes a final lunge for Mary and grabs her in an elaborate embrace. Mary whips off his blindfold