Notes/Planning

R esate Question
A nswer Question
C ite Quotes
E xplain Quote

Thesis: Of all the well-crafted characters in Dickens’ classic, A Christmas Carol, I believe Mrs. Cratchit is most significant because she symbolizes the poor who struggle, shows the joy found in family, and helps to define Scrooge’s character.

Reason #1: Symbolizes the poor who struggle

Reason #2: Shows joy found in family

Reason #3: Helps define Scrooge’s character

Quotes:

“He wears a threadbare and fringeless comforter hanging down in front of him. Tiny Tim carries small crutches and his small legs are bound in an iron frame brace.”

“They are not handsome. They are not brilliant. They are not well-dressed or tasteful to the times. Their shoes are not even waterproofed…yet they are happy, grateful, pleased with one another, contented with the time an how it passes.”

“It should be Christmas Day, I am sure, on which one drinks to the health of such an odious, stingy, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge…”
It’s holy Christmas day, yet she spits fiery rage at the dinner table. It’s a day of forgiveness, yet an eternal grudge burns in her soul. It’s a day of rejoicing, yet her jaws are clenched when her husband raises his glass in a celebration toast. Although Dickens created many characters with hopeful hearts and optimistic spirits such as Nephew Fred and Fezziwig, it is actually a feisty, hot-tempered character that is most indispensable to this holiday story. Of all the well-crafted characters in Dickens’ classic, A Christmas Carol, Mrs. Cratchit is the most significant because she represents the struggle of the poor, highlights the joy found in family, and helps characterize Scrooge.

Mrs. Cratchit is a strong representation of the poor. She desperately desires health and happiness for her family, yet her cramped four-roomed house, threadbare clothing, sick child, and simple dinner are evidence of her family’s struggles. Most heart-wrenching, is the fact that she is powerless to provide a healthy childhood for her sickly son, Tim. An illustration of this is when Dickens describes Bob Cratchit and son writing, “He wears a threadbare and fringeless comforter hanging down in front of him. Tiny Tim carries small crutches and his small legs are bound in an iron frame brace,” (666). The worn out scarf and the makeshift crutches illustrate the Cratchit family’s intense needs. When readers analyze Mrs. Cratchit, they see a devoted mother whose ability to care for her family is unfortunately limited by poverty. Her handcrafted quilt and celebrated plum pudding are Mrs. Cratchit’s motherly efforts to provide what comfort she can for her family, yet they are ineffective in solving their larger problems of poverty and sickness.

Additionally, Mrs. Cratchit is a respectable character highlighting the joy found in family. Despite their meager income, this mother and wife seeks to give her family joy through simple gifts such as baking plum pudding to share, sewing blankets, and joining
them in song. The Ghost of Christmas Present explains, “They are not handsome. They are not brilliant. They are not well-dressed or tasteful to the times. Their shoes are not even waterproofed...yet they are happy, grateful, pleased with one another, contented with the time and how it passes,” (669). This powerful quote illustrates that though the Cratchits cannot afford fashionable clothing or even warm shoes, they still find great joy in their everyday living. This depth of joy is modeled by the mother of the family, Mrs. Cratchit, as she presents her family with a carefully prepared Christmas goose, sewn quilt, and warm greeting for each family member who crosses her tiny threshold. She gathers them around her table to remember their family blessings.

Lastly, Mrs. Cratchit helps define Scrooge’s character. While Bob graciously offers a toast in Scrooge’s honor, she resentfully cries, “It should be Christmas Day, I am sure on which on drinks to the health of such an odious, stingy, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge…” (667). She is railing against the employer who keeps her family poor while hoarding wealth for himself. Through Mrs. Cratchit, readers realize how Scrooge’s greed affects others. A character readers can relate to, she does not sugar-coat her feelings towards Scrooge, but rather boldly proclaims them, calling him “odious” and “stingy”. Her voice presents Scrooge as he truly is and the evil effect his actions have on others.

A beloved novel A Christmas Carol, became an instant classic as Dickens poured his heart, soul, and life experience into its pages. We see his emotions alive in many well-defined characters, but it is Mrs. Cratchit that readers truly understand the struggle of the poor, the joy found in family, and the ruthlessness of Scrooge. Without her this novel would not have as great of depth or richness.