

A Christmas Carol

The Cratchit family was overjoyed by their Christmas goose, which they all agreed was the best they had ever tasted. Bob Cratchit proudly declared it to be incredibly soft and flavorful, and everyone discussed its size and cheapness. Despite its apparent quantity, the family realized a lot of the fullness came from the accompanying apple sauce and mashed potatoes. Regardless, there was enough food for everyone, with even a tiny bit left over, making Mrs. Cratchit cheerfully announce that they simply couldn't eat it all. The youngest Cratchits were especially stuffed.

Once the plates were cleared, Mrs. Cratchit, terribly nervous, left the room alone to retrieve the plum pudding. She worried about every possible disaster: that it wasn't cooked, that it would break apart, or even that someone had snuck into the garden to steal it—a fear that particularly terrified the two youngest children.

However, all fears vanished when a wonderful aroma filled the house. The smell of the pudding was a mix of laundry day (from the cloth it was steamed in) and a restaurant and cake shop side-by-side. Moments later, Mrs. Cratchit reappeared, slightly flushed but beaming with pride. She carried the pudding, which was almost the size of a football, hard, round, and burning brightly with ignited brandy, topped with a piece of Christmas holly.

Bob Cratchit hailed the pudding as the greatest success of their marriage. Mrs. Cratchit, now more relaxed, confessed she had doubts about the amount of flour she used, but everyone praised it. No one dared to suggest it was too small for their large family—that would have been a terrible thing to say in the Cratchit household.

Finally, the dinner concluded. The tablecloth was cleared, the fireplace was swept, and a new fire was lit. Apples, oranges, and chestnuts were brought to the table. The family gathered around the fireplace in a “circle” (as Bob called it, though it was only half a one). Bob poured the hot liquid from a jug into the family's best glassware—two old glasses and a cup—which held the drink as perfectly as real gold cups would have.

As the chestnuts popped and sputtered on the fire, Bob Cratchit raised his glass and announced: “A merry Christmas to us all, my dear family. God bless us!”

The entire family echoed the sentiment, and Tiny Tim, the last of all, added, “God bless us every one!”