

The Ghost of Christmas Present snaps his fingers, leaving Scrooge suddenly sober

The set changes to reveal the kitchen parlour of the Cratchits' house

Scrooge What am I doing in the middle of the street in me nightclothes?

Christmas Present Never mind about your nightclothes. Come. I want you to see the world as it really is.

Scrooge Who lives in this miserable hovel?

Christmas Present Behold the lavish abode of Robert Cratchit, Esquire.

Scrooge (*lamely*) Looks quite nice, really... for a wages clerk... Can I look through the window?

Christmas Present It will cost you nothing, which I'm sure will be good news for you.

Scrooge Will they be able to see me?

Christmas Present No, which I'm sure will be good news for them!

Scrooge I could do with another one of them drinks.

Christmas Present Later. For the time being it's better that you see things as they really are. Touch my robe.

Scrooge does so. There is a blinding flash of light, and Scrooge and Christmas Present are inside the Cratchit family's kitchen-parlour, unseen by them

SCENE 2

The Cratchits' house

Mrs Cratchit, Bob's pretty wife, lifts the lid of the copper and fishes out a rather undernourished muslin-wrapped plum pudding with her copper-stick, sniffs it approvingly and lowers it with loving care back into the bubbling cauldron. Bob Cratchit is carefully assembling and mixing the ingredients for his home-made punch. Three more of the Cratchit children, two boys and a girl, chase one another noisily around the kitchen. Bob finally holds up his hands to silence them

Bob Cratchit (*gently*) Now listen, my dears. Your mother and I want you all to have a good time, but you don't have to wreck the house and kill each other to do it, all right?

The children calm down and nod