

# *Ebenezer's* **CHRISTMAS CAROL**

**By Tracy Krauss**

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# EBENEZER'S CHRISTMAS CAROL

By TRACY KRAUSS

## CAST OF CHARACTERS\*

(In order of appearance)

	<i># of lines</i>
JACOB MARLEY .....	18
Ebenezer's former assistant; now a ghostly narrator	
EBENEZER SCROOGE .....	103
cranky miser	
BOB CRATCHIT .....	25
Ebenezer's mild-mannered and loyal employee	
WOMAN ONE.....	5
collects donations for the poor	
WOMAN TWO .....	7
another	
FREDDIE.....	6
Ebenezer's nephew	
SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS	
PAST .....	27
mischievous spirit	
YOUNG BOY EBENEZER.....	3
Ebenezer as a young boy	
SCHOOLMASTER.....	1
headmaster of Ebenezer's former school	
FANNY .....	3
Ebenezer's sister	
YOUNG MAN EBENEZER.....	5
Ebenezer as a young man	
BELLE .....	5
Ebenezer's former girlfriend	
SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS	
PRESENT .....	17
boisterous spirit	
TINY TIM.....	10
Cratchit's son; needs a crutch to walk	
CRATCHIT CHILDREN (3 or 4) .....	11
Bob Cratchit's children	
MRS. CRATCHIT .....	4
Bob Cratchit's wife	
SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS	
YET TO COME .....	17
ghostly and menacing	
HOUSEKEEPER .....	8
Ebenezer's housekeeper	
PEDDLER.....	7
purchases items from Ebenezer's housekeeper	
EXTRAS .....	
CAROLERS, PARTYGOERS, MR. and MRS. FEZZIWIG, SPRITES, SHOPPERS	

\*Significant doubling possible. Please see PRODUCTION NOTES on page 17 and 18 for suggestions.

## SETTING

The set can be simply accomplished by using a few moveable furnishings and area staging. In the original production, a large desk remained STAGE RIGHT for Ebenezer's office and doubled as a table for the scenes taking place at the Fezziwigs and the Cratchits. Another small desk and stool were also in the office. The stool was moved DOWN CENTER for the schoolroom scene. STAGE LEFT remained set as Ebenezer's bedroom, including a bed, a chair and a dressing screen. The street scenes and the cemetery scene took place on a bare area of stage DOWN CENTER. They could also be played in front of the curtain.

The addition of a raised platform or two-tiered stage is a great asset for all the scenes where EBENEZER and the SPIRIT are watching events take place. If this is not feasible, EBENEZER and the SPIRITS can hover to the RIGHT or LEFT of the main action.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene breaks indicate a change of location only. Action should flow continuously with only brief blackouts or a shift in lighting to indicate the change of location.

Scene One: A street. Played on a bare area of the stage or in front of the curtain.

Scene Two: Ebenezer's office.

Scene Three: Ebenezer's bedroom.

Scene Four: A schoolroom when Ebenezer was a young boy.

Scene Five: The Fezziwig house when Ebenezer was a young man.

Scene Six: Ebenezer's bedroom.

Scene Seven: The Cratchit home presently.

Scene Eight: Ebenezer's bedroom.

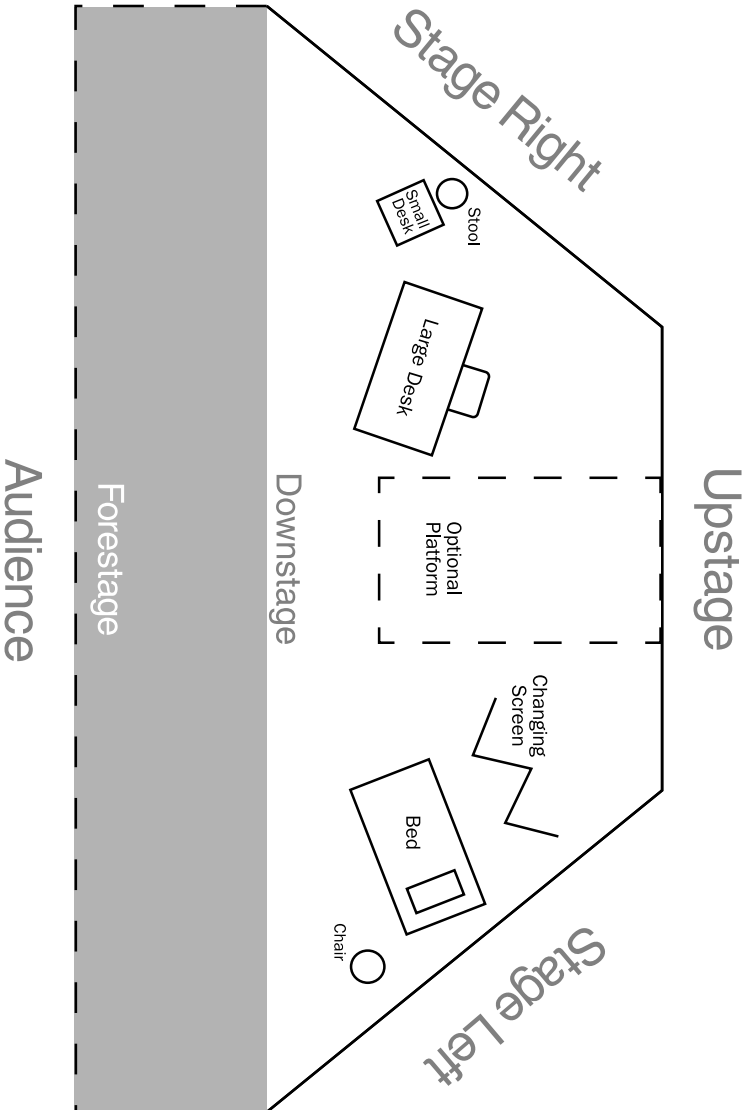
Scene Nine: A street. Played on a bare area of the stage.

Scene Ten: A cemetery in the future.

Scene Eleven: Ebenezer's bedroom.

Scene Twelve: A street. Played on a bare area of stage.

# Ebenezer's Christmas Carol - Set Design



## EBENEZER'S CHRISTMAS CAROL

### Scene One

1 LIGHTS UP on a street, played on a bare area of the stage or in front of the curtain. A group of CAROLERS ENTER singing any familiar Christmas carol. MARLEY ENTERS OPPOSITE as the CAROLERS EXIT.

**MARLEY:** (*To AUDIENCE.*) Hmm... very nice. I always did like Christmas  
5 carols. Not that I would have admitted it, mind you. Allow me to introduce myself. (*Bows.*) Marley's the name. Jacob Marley. But I don't suppose you've heard of me, since I've been dead now for quite some time. That's right... I said dead. But don't worry. We spirits don't really enjoy haunting people. It's part of the job. What  
10 we're supposed to do. And usually it is for your own good. Usually. (*Grins slyly.*) Which brings me to my point. I'm here to tell you a story. A Christmas story, actually, about a particular man named Ebenezer Scrooge. He was my partner—when I was alive, that is. And a stingier, more hard-hearted man never did live. Well...  
15 except, perhaps, for yours truly... but I'm dead now, as I already told you. In any case, Old Ebenezer was the stingiest creature I've yet to meet. Until, that is, one Christmas Eve... (*LIGHTS FADE as MARLEY backs OUT.*)

### End of Scene One

### Scene Two

LIGHTS UP FULL on Ebenezer's office. EBENEZER sits at a large desk  
20 working. BOB CRATCHIT sits on a stool at another desk, writing, frequently blowing on his hands and rubbing them together. He finally approaches EBENEZER'S desk and clears his throat.

**CRATCHIT:** Excuse me, sir.

**EBENEZER:** (*Gruffly, not looking up.*) What is it, Cratchit?

25 **CRATCHIT:** I was wondering, sir—that is, if it's all right with you, sir, if I could put another lump of coal on the fire, sir?

**EBENEZER:** (*Looks up.*) What?! Do you know how much money an  
extra lump of coal costs? Next thing you'll be asking for two lumps  
and then three! Where will it end, Cratchit? Where will it end?! As  
30 it is, I'm going to have to deduct all this time you're wasting from your next paycheck. Now get back to work! (*Goes back to work.*  
*SOUND EFFECT: KNOCKING. CRATCHIT hurries to answer the door.*  
*TWO WOMEN ENTER carrying donation baskets.*)

**WOMAN ONE:** Good day to you, good sir!

35 **WOMAN TWO:** And a Merry Christmas!

**CRATCHIT:** Good day, ladies. And a Merry Christmas to you, too!

1 **EBENEZER:** *(To himself.)* Bah, humbug!

**WOMAN ONE:** We're collecting donations for the poor. Perhaps Mr. Scrooge would care to make a donation?

**CRATCHIT:** Well... I'm not sure if...

5 **WOMAN TWO:** The accounting firm of Fezziwig and Sons has been most generous.

**EBENEZER:** *(Stands. Angry.)* What? How dare you mention the name of the competition on my premises!

**WOMAN TWO:** Oh! So sorry, Mr. Scrooge. I only thought—

10 **EBENEZER:** You only thought! That, madam, is highly unlikely!

**WOMAN TWO:** *(Insulted.)* Well!

**EBENEZER:** I will not give one penny to those who don't earn it.

**WOMAN ONE:** But, Mr. Scrooge, all money collected goes directly to the needy. To homeless orphans and widows.

15 **WOMAN TWO:** That's right.

**EBENEZER:** A worthless bunch—the whole lot of them!

**CRATCHIT:** *(Timid.)* But, Mr. Scrooge, if I may say—

**EBENEZER:** Nobody asked you, Cratchit! Now get back to work!  
*(CRATCHIT bows and scurries back to his desk.)* It's so hard to find

20 good help these days.

**WOMAN ONE:** I would think an upstanding businessman like yourself could find it in his heart to give a little something. After all, it is Christmas.

**WOMAN TWO:** Yes, Christmas.

25 **EBENEZER:** Christmas? Humbug on Christmas! A waste of a perfectly good working day. I'm amazed you ladies have the nerve to go begging money from honest people like myself.

**WOMAN ONE/WOMAN TWO:** Well!

**EBENEZER:** Now please leave these premises—before I throw you

30 out! *(WOMEN EXIT haughtily as FREDDIE ENTERS.)*

**FREDDIE:** My, those two seem in an awfully big hurry.

**EBENEZER:** Not fast enough for my liking.

**FREDDIE:** Uncle! Don't tell me you were rude to those two women?

**EBENEZER:** Nothing they didn't deserve.

35 **FREDDIE:** Really, Uncle. You could have a little compassion. After all, it is Christmas.

**EBENEZER:** Humbug on Christmas! I despise all the pretense. *(Mocking.)* "Merry Christmas!" "Happy holidays!" Makes me sick, I tell you!

**FREDDIE:** I'm sorry to hear it, Uncle. I was hoping you would join Anna and me for Christmas dinner.

- 1 **EBENEZER:** Join you for Christmas dinner? Hah! I would sooner starve! Join you for Christmas dinner, indeed. Ridiculous.
- FREDDIE:** What's so ridiculous about it? You are family, after all. And that's what Christmas is about—family.
- 5 **EBENEZER:** You may be my sister's only son, but you can take your leave along with those two ladies, before I throw you out.
- FREDDIE:** (*Good-naturedly.*) Good thing I'm not afraid of you, Uncle. The offer still stands if you change your mind. (*Tips his hat to CRATCHIT as he leaves.*) And a Merry Christmas to you, Mr. Cratchit! (*EXITS.*)
- 10 **CRATCHIT:** (*Calls after him.*) Merry Christmas, sir!
- EBENEZER:** Cratchit!
- CRATCHIT:** Sorry, sir.
- EBENEZER:** (*Grumbles to himself.*) Christmas... humbug on Christmas. And look at the time. Closing time already. With all
- 15 these interruptions the entire day has been wasted. (*To CRATCHIT.*) I suppose you'll insist on going home?
- CRATCHIT:** Yes, sir. I mean, the family is waiting... (*Puts on his scarf and hat.*) Um, excuse me, sir.
- EBENEZER:** What is it now, Cratchit?
- 20 **CRATCHIT:** Well, sir. Seeing as tomorrow is Christmas, sir, I was wondering...
- EBENEZER:** (*Sigh.*) You expect the day off, do you?
- CRATCHIT:** Well, sir, if it's not too inconvenient...
- EBENEZER:** The entire day?
- 25 **CRATCHIT:** If possible, sir.
- EBENEZER:** See what I mean? Christmas! What a waste! (*Pauses while he drums his fingers on the desk.*) Well... all right. You can have the entire day off. But without pay, mind you. I will not pay a
- 30 man if he's not here to work. And come in early the next day. You'll have lots of work to catch up on!
- CRATCHIT:** Thank you, sir. And... uh... Merry Christmas, sir! (*EXITS quickly.*)
- EBENEZER:** Bah! (*BLACKOUT.*)

End of Scene Two

### Scene Three

LIGHTS UP on Ebenezer's bedroom. EBENEZER ENTERS, still wearing

35 his office clothes.

**EBENEZER:** What a day! (*Removes his jacket and tie.*) All this Christmas nonsense is making me sick. (*Sits down and takes off his shoes.*)

**MARLEY'S VOICE:** (*From OFFSTAGE, ghostly voice.*) Scrooge...

- 1 **EBENEZER:** What's that? I thought I heard something...
- MARLEY'S VOICE:** Scrooge...
- EBENEZER:** There it is again! Must be indigestion.
- MARLEY'S VOICE:** Ebenezer Scrooge.
- 5 **EBENEZER:** (*Jumps up from chair, looks around in fear.*) Who's there?  
Who is calling me?
- MARLEY:** (*ENTERS, dragging a heavy chain with money boxes attached.*)  
Ebenezer Scrooge. It is I, your old partner, Jacob Marley.
- EBENEZER:** What? Who—who are you?
- 10 **MARLEY:** (*Drops the ghostly voice.*) You hard of hearing or what? It's  
me! Marley!
- SCROOGE:** Marley?
- MARLEY:** In the flesh! Well, maybe not exactly in the flesh... I mean,  
a few years in the grave doesn't exactly do much for a guy's
- 15 complexion. But, like I was saying—
- EBENEZER:** But... but... you're dead!
- MARLEY:** (*To AUDIENCE.*) Wow! This guy's really on the ball! (*To  
EBENEZER.*) Of course I'm dead! What do you think I've been trying  
to tell you!
- 20 **EBENEZER:** But how can it be?
- MARLEY:** Well, you see, it was like this. I was eating this tuna fish  
sandwich one day when a bite of the sandwich went down the  
wrong way—
- EBENEZER:** No! I mean, if you're dead, then how can you be here?
- 25 How is it that I can see you? (*Turns away.*) Wait a minute! I'm  
talking to a dead guy! I must be dreaming or something. Maybe it  
was something I ate...
- MARLEY:** Scrooge! I'm here to warn you!
- EBENEZER:** Warn me? About what?
- 30 **MARLEY:** Don't make the same mistakes I made. There's more to life  
than money.
- EBENEZER:** Ha! Like what?
- MARLEY:** Like family... friends... helping others.
- EBENEZER:** Humbug! You sound like that sappy nephew of mine. Or
- 35 that lazy employee, Cratchit.
- MARLEY:** My fate is sealed. I'm destined to carry these weights with  
me for all eternity. But it's not too late for you. You can change!
- EBENEZER:** Change? Why would I? I like things just as they are.
- MARLEY:** Tonight you will be visited by three spirits. Listen closely to  
the lessons they come to teach you.





1 **EBENEZER:** Three spirits? Ridiculous! (*Steps behind dressing screen and quickly changes into nightclothes.*) It must be that bowl of leftover gruel talking! All I need is a good night's sleep. (*Gets into bed.*)

5 **MARLEY:** (*Backs OUT.*) Scrooge! Heed the lessons of the spirits!  
**EBENEZER:** (*Mutters to himself.*) Imagine! Jacob Marley! I wonder what made me think of him. I used to catch him humming Christmas carols at this time of year. Humbug! (*As he drifts off to sleep.*) Yep, a good night's sleep, that's all I need... (*SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PAST ENTERS, skips to EBENEZER'S bed mischievously and shakes him.*)

10 **EBENEZER:** (*Wakes with a start.*) Wha—what? Where am I? Who are you?!

**CHRISTMAS PAST:** I'm the Spirit of Christmas Past.

15 **EBENEZER:** (*Rubs his eyes.*) The Spirit of Christmas Past? (*Mocking.*) Oh, right, like Marley said.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:** That's right.

**EBENEZER:** (*Sarcastic.*) Yeah. Actually, you're just some bad porridge that I ate before bed, so if you don't mind, I'm just going to go

20 back to sleep.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:** (*Offended.*) You doubt my existence?

**EBENEZER:** Well, really. You don't expect me to believe that you're actually some paranormal sent here to teach me a lesson?

**CHRISTMAS PAST:** (*To self.*) Marley warned me he was a tough

25 customer.

**EBENEZER:** Marley? Him again?

**CHRISTMAS PAST:** Listen. I have a job to do, and I'm not leaving until I do it.

**EBENEZER:** And then will you leave me alone to get some sleep?

30 **CHRISTMAS PAST:** Promise.

**EBENEZER:** I can't believe I'm negotiating with a figment of my imagination. All right, then. Do whatever it is you came to do.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:** I'm supposed to take you on a journey.

**EBENEZER:** A journey? To where?

35 **CHRISTMAS PAST:** I'm the Spirit of Christmas Past, remember? We're going back in time.

**EBENEZER:** Whatever you say. This is all a dream anyway.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:** Okay—hang on! (*Takes EBENEZER by the hand and leads him OFFSTAGE as LIGHTS BLACKOUT.*)

End of Scene Three

## PRODUCTION NOTES

### PROPERTIES

#### ONSTAGE:

Ebenezer's office and other locations: Large desk or table, chair, stool, small desk.

Ebenezer's bedroom: Bed, chair, dressing screen.

#### BROUGHT ON, Scene Two:

Quill pens, notebooks (EBENEZER, CRATCHIT)

Hat, scarf (CRATCHIT)

Donation baskets (TWO WOMEN)

#### ONSTAGE, Scene Five: Serving trays of food on table.

#### BROUGHT ON, Scene Six:

Basket of food, including a turkey drumstick (SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT)

#### ONSTAGE, Scene Seven: Additional chairs around the table.

#### BROUGHT ON, Scene Seven:

Checkerboard, toys, books (CRATCHIT CHILDREN)

Crutch (TINY TIM)

Table settings (CRATCHIT CHILDREN)

Very small roasted turkey on covered platter (MRS. CRATCHIT)

Small serving bowls (CRATCHIT CHILD)

#### BROUGHT ON, Scene Nine:

Sack of goods (HOUSEKEEPER)

Small coin bag (PEDDLER)

#### ONSTAGE, Scene Ten: Tombstones.

#### BROUGHT ON, Scene Twelve:

Party hats, noisemakers (SPIRITS)

### SOUND EFFECTS

Knocking, old-time dance music.

### COSTUMES

The SPIRITS can wear plain white gowns with embellishments that differentiate each part. In the original production, one cast member played all three spirits. The actor wore a plain white gown and changed embellishments to show which spirit he/she was playing at that moment.

MARLEY should wear old-fashioned business attire. Add a heavy chain with money boxes attached for Scene Three.

EBENEZER wears nightclothes and slippers except in Scene Two, the very beginning of Scene Three and Scene Twelve. In these two scenes he wears a suit or other business attire. Because fast costume changes are required between his business attire and his nightclothes (and then back again), simplicity is a must.

SPRITES wear ragged clothing and masks.

ALL OTHERS should wear clothes appropriate to their characters and to the period in which the play is being staged.

#### SMALLER CAST POSSIBLE

In the original production, the three spirits were played by the same person. FREDDIE and YOUNG MAN EBENEZER were played by the same cast member, as were YOUNG BOY EBENEZER and TINY TIM. JACOB MARLEY, SCHOOLMASTER, MR. FEZZIWIG and PEDDLER can all be played by one actor as well.

Likewise, many female roles can be doubled. WOMAN ONE, FANNY and MRS. CRATCHIT can be played by one person, as can WOMAN TWO, BELLE and HOUSEKEEPER. MRS. FEZZIWIG can be played by an EXTRA.

All the characters can be doubled except for EBENEZER and CRATCHIT. With the addition of three Cratchit children and two additional extras as carolers/partygoers/sprites/shoppers, the original production consisted of 13 cast members.

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