

# A Dickens Christmas

## Visual Story

You are going to the theatre to watch A Dickens Christmas!

The show is at the Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham, in the Irving Studio.



When you walk in, you will see the set for the show. It looks like an old dockyard, with wooden decks, blue sails and a sandy coloured floor. There will be three crates in the shape of a coffin with a Christmas wreath on top.



You will see three performers on the stage in the show. Their names are Sian, Georgia and Callum.





Callum plays the part of Man, Sian plays the part of Woman 1 and Georgia plays the part of Woman 2. Over the course of the show all three performers will change their costumes, voices and expressions to become lots of

different characters.

When the lights get darker, it's time to sit down and watch the show.

A bell will ring, and then the actors will enter the space singing 'In the Bleak Midwinter'. They stand on a platform above the crates, and drop confetti snow.





The scene suddenly shifts, the lights get warmer and the actors begin to talk to the audience about Charles Dickens. Another bell rings and the lights get darker.



From one of the crates, a costume is produced. Man puts it on and becomes the character of William, a drunken sea captain.



William arrives home and meets his housekeeper Mrs Tetterby who wears a white apron and cap.



Mrs Tetterby has put up a Christmas tree, which William doesn't like. It makes him sad, and he asks her to take it down. She doesn't understand, and William gets angry, breaking the decorations and



throwing the tree into a bucket.

Mrs Tetterby leaves, and William transports us into his memory, to a dockyard location.

William is loading the Golden Mary, a boat headed for California. Miss Coleshaw enters, and he welcomes her aboard.





Mrs Atherfield enters, also boarding the boat. She is carrying a suitcase awkwardly, it looks like there is something precious inside, but she refuses help from William.



Mr Rarx appears, a ghostly character who speaks in riddles, confusing William.



Once all the characters are aboard, William waves, a bell rings and they head out to sea. The lights dim, and in the Bleak Midwinter plays.



Time has passed, and the actors say '10 Days at Sea'. William and Mrs Atherfield are on deck. A baby cries, which Mrs Atherfield tries to pretend is a seagull. She is hiding a baby in her shawl.



William is frustrated that she has brought the baby aboard without him knowing, saying that bringing a child aboard a ship is a curse.



They decide to keep the child a secret. As William leaves the conversation, he bumps into Mr Rarx.



Rarx is carving a small piece of wood with a knife, and probes William with questions about secrets. William asks Mr Rarx to not tell anyone about the baby.



Time passes again, we hear In The Bleak Midwinter, and the lights rise and fall. The actors say '40 Days at Sea'.

Miss Coleshaw enters, excitedly looking out to sea and spotting lots of ice. Mrs Atherfield and William are with her on deck. Miss Coleshaw climbs the ladder.



William suggests Mrs Atherfield and the baby stay below deck. As Mrs Atherfield sits

down, William joins Miss Coleshaw on the platform.	
Miss Coleshaw and William talk about the ice, and the fact that William is tired. She leaves him on deck alone.	
Mr Rarx reappears warning William of what might be to come.	
Time passes again, we hear In The Bleak Midwinter, and the lights rise and fall. The actors say '50 Days at Sea'.	
Mrs Atherfield is sat	

<p>with baby Lucy below deck. Miss Coleshaw enters, they have been having a party for Christmas eve. William enters, interrupting them. Miss Coleshaw exits, and Mrs Atherfield and William step out on deck.</p>	
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Mrs Atherfield and William talk for a moment about Williams past, before Mrs Atherfield decides to leave him with the baby.



William takes Lucy back inside and puts her to bed. Mr Rarx enters with a present for the child, before riddling about the possibility of morning not coming. He leaves William alone.



William sits with the

baby, Woman 1 and 2  
sing in the Bleak  
Midwinter. William is  
having a nightmare, we  
hear the sound of a  
thudding axe.

There is a loud bang,  
and the creaking of  
wood. A bell rings, the  
actors run around the  
space. The ship has hit  
an iceberg and is  
sinking.





Mrs Atherfield and Miss Coleshaw get into the lifeboat, leaving William on the ship. He fires a red flare into the sky, which lights the stage up red.



William struggles in the water, the lights are blue and he reaches below and above the water, before being pulled into the lifeboat.



The characters in the lifeboat decide that a good way to keep



warm and positive is  
to share a story.

William fires another  
flare into the sky, and  
we begin to move into  
the story.



We meet Gabriel  
Grubb, a grave digger  
who is on his way to  
work. He carries a  
lantern and is grumpy  
to see children excited  
that it is Christmas.



He jumps out and surprises a small child singing a Christmas carol, before beginning to dig a grave.





As he is digging the grave, he is visited by two goblins, who decide to show him some stories.



They tell the tale of a young girl and her family, and of a beautiful landscape with lots of insects. Between the stories, the Goblins hurt Gabriel using their magic.



	
<p>The Goblins leave, and the story concludes, we are transported back to the characters in the lifeboat.</p>	
<p>Time has passed, they have been waiting in the lifeboat for a long time. Together, they choose to share another story. William fires another flare.</p>	

We are introduced to Toby Veck, known as Trotty to his friends.



He reads from a newspaper, and tells us that he thinks all poor people are born bad.

He goes home and meets his daughter Meg, who has brought him something special for dinner. He tries to guess what it is as she won't tell him.



Once he has guessed what's in the basket, Meg reveals she has another surprise. She

is engaged to Richard.	
Trott doesn't like Richard and is worried that Meg will end up unhappy if she marries him. He gets angry and tells her that Richard is a dreamer.	
Suddenly, the Chimes ring out, church bells that call Toby Veck to visit them. The Chimes speak with a loud echoey voice.	
Toby climbs the ladder to meet the bells, who show him many images of what might happen 9 years in the future if he doesn't change his	

mindset.	
He climbs down, determined to change his outlook on life and improve things.	
The story finishes and we end up back in the lifeboat.	
Time has passed again, the lantern won't light, and Baby Lucy is struggling. William is lost in his own world and is neglecting the other characters.	
In the Bleak Midwinter is sang, and William is left alone with his own thoughts. Mr Rarx confronts him and tells	



him he must tell the truth, his story, to save the others in the lifeboat. They confront each other as William would rather die than tell his story.

Eventually William fires a flare, and we are transported into his story.



An earlier version of William, wearing a bowler hat, is looking

for a Christmas tree with his fiance Lettie. Together they spot the perfect tree.	
William begins cutting the tree down as Lettie collects greenery to decorate the house. She sings in the Bleak Midwinter as William chops with the axe.	
Suddenly the tree falls, landing on Lettie.	
We return to Williams living room, where he has been sharing these stories with Mrs Tetterby, explaining why he finds	

Christmas a difficult time of year.

Mrs Tetterby reminds William that a parcel from America had arrived for him. William opens it, inside is a toy boat, sent from Mrs Atherfield and Lucy in America.



William is relieved. Mrs Tetterby exits and William fixes the Christmas tree.



The ensemble reenters and talks to us about Charles

Dickens and the stories he wrote for us.	
The lights fade. The story is finished.	
When the lights come back up, the actors will be onstage to take their bows.	
They will leave the stage and the lights will come up on the seats. You will leave the theatre through the door you came in.	
Thank you for coming!	

