

The Last Noel – Sensory Synopsis

Spoiler Alert!

This pamphlet describes the entire plot of The Last Noel.

Please do not read this pamphlet if you do not want the show to be spoiled!

This resource is written for audience members with disabilities, who want to avoid surprises for whatever reason.

The sensory synopsis describes what happens in every scene, and describes the sensory elements to expect, like music, and lighting, as well as the moments of high emotion in the story.

If you don't mind surprises, that's great! You do not need to read the sensory synopsis.

Enjoy the show.

The Last Noel – Sensory Synopsis

Section	Story	Sensory	Emotional
1 Preset	<p>When you arrive in the theatre space, at 7:15pm, the actors will start coming out from backstage, and talking to the audience, in character.</p> <p>The actors play Alice, Mike and Tess, and they will talk to you, and the other audience members, as though they have invited you to their house to spend Christmas with them. You are welcome to talk back, and sing along with the piano.</p> <p>The actors might ask you to help make paper chains, or decorate the tree, but you don't have to talk or interact if you don't want to. You can just sit quietly and wait for the show to start.</p> <p>At 7:30, Mike starts to get the other characters in position, but just as they are about to start the first song, the stage manager interrupts him to give the theatre's safety announcement. She does this for every performance, and this is just so that everyone knows how to stay safe at the theatre.</p> <p>When she is finished, Sam will start playing music, and the first song of the show begins.</p>	<p>In the stairwell, there is a Christmas smell of nutmeg, sage, rosemary and marjoram. When you arrive in the playing space, you can collect a free cup of mulled wine (alcoholic) and spiced apple juice (non-alcoholic).</p> <p>One of the actors who plays the character 'Alice' will ask Sam, the pianist, to start playing music. He is very friendly, and a very good musician, and if you ask him for your favourite Christmas carol, he might know it, and be able to play it for you.</p> <p>You will hear Sam playing piano throughout the production, sometimes even during scenes where the characters aren't singing.</p>	

2 Song: It's Christmas	<p>In this song, Mike, Alice and Tess share what they each think Christmas ‘isn’t’ about. They all talk about things that happen at Christmas every year which are a bit annoying, but that feel really familiar and comforting.</p>	<p>Sam plays piano and the actors sing.</p>	
3 Opening Scene	<p>Alice, Mike and Tess explain to the audience that ‘today’ is their family’s Christmas Day. They usually can’t have it on 25th December because Tess’s mum is a doctor, and doctors can’t always get off work on Christmas Day, like other people.</p> <p>Tess’s mum is called Gail, and the family explain that they aren’t allowed to have too much fun before she arrives. Alice also explains that none of them are supposed to eat anything (Mike and Tess don’t agree with this rule!)</p> <p>So, every year, when the family are waiting for Gail to arrive, they tell stories to pass the time, including Gail’s favourite Christmas story. But Alice, Mike and Tess don’t agree with each other about what Gail’s favourite story is. Alice insists she is correct, and starts telling the story of ‘The Lighthouse Keeper’.</p>		<p>The characters argue a little bit.</p>

4 The Lighthouse Keeper, Part 1	<p>In Alice's story, the main character is a Lighthouse Keeper. The Lighthouse Keeper is waiting for her husband to return from a voyage at sea. The lighthouse is cosy and warm, and the Lighthouse Keeper makes sure that she keeps her lantern burning, as she waits, as that is all she can do.</p> <p>Alice suddenly stops telling the story of the Lighthouse Keeper, and she seems distracted. Mike and Tess ask if she is alright, and Alice leaves to make some tea.</p>	Some piano plays while Alice talks.	
5 Three Best Men, Part 1 Song: Twelve Hours of Stag Do	<p>Mike sees an opportunity, and decides to start telling his story, (which he thinks is Gail's favourite).</p> <p>Mike's story is called 'The Three Best Men'. It's about how his sister Gail, and her husband, decided to organise their stag do and hen do between Christmas and New Year. Mike was dragged onto the stag do, with the groom, and two other 'best men'. The four of them go on a wild trip to all the pubs, clubs, and bars in town, and do lots of drinking. The groom and the best men plan to meet up with the bride and her friends, but they discover that the hen party has gone missing. Mike leaves the story on a dramatic cliffhanger.</p> <p>Tess checks her phone, but still hasn't heard from her Mum and Dad. Mike discovers that Alice has been breaking the rule about not snacking, and has hidden some malt loaf in her pocket.</p>	There is a song in this section, accompanied by piano.	

6 The Night Before Christmas, Part 1	<p>While Mike is distracted by the malt loaf, Tess starts telling her story, The Night Before Christmas, but she can't quite remember all the words, and how it's supposed to rhyme.</p> <p>Eventually she admits that the best thing about the story is how her Mum tells it, and she's sad that she can't tell it in the same way. She also explains that she likes it because it reminds her of how Christmas was when she was a kid. Now that she's older, it feels like everything has changed.</p> <p>Eventually, she starts her story again, but this time, she tells a new tale about the time she went to her favourite pub, before Christmas, after her first year at university. She tells us about meeting a boy she has a crush on, and chatting with him. The boy asks Tess "Are you excited for Christmas?". This is not an easy question for Tess to answer, and she shares her feelings with us through a song.</p>	<p>When Tess starts telling her story about the pub, piano accompanies her.</p>	<p>Tess shares that she is sad about thinks changing as she grows up, and not being able to tell the story the way her Mum does.</p>
7 Song: A Waiting Song	<p>Tess, Mike and Alice sing about Christmas, and about Gail not being with them, and how it makes them feel. It seems like they all have something on their mind, and that they know something that we don't about Gail.</p>	<p>This is a song, accompanied by piano.</p>	

<p>8 The Lighthouse Keeper, Part 2</p>	<p>Alice starts telling her story about the Lighthouse Keeper again. The Lighthouse Keeper is looking out at the night, imagining her husband navigating to her. The fog starts to get thick, the wind blows, and thunder starts to rumble.</p> <p>Tess stops Alice telling the story, and says it is too dark and scary for Christmas. . Tess and Mike take over the story, and skip to their favourite part, where the Lighthouse Keeper rescues a little mouse that she finds in the storm outside. They argue about where the mouse is from, and Alice settles the quarrel by briefly taking over the story again.</p> <p>However, Alice doesn't want to continue, and suggests Mike carry on telling his story.</p>	<p>The piano plays as Alice talks.</p>	<p>This part of Alice's story is a bit creepy. She talks about the dark water, and the rumbling thunder, and feeling worried about not knowing where her husband is.</p> <p>There is some light arguing in this scene, but some of it is silly.</p>
<p>9 Three Best Men Part 2 Song: Five Gold Rings</p>	<p>Mike picks up the story where he left off. He tracks down Gail to a pub called 'The Star'. However, when he gets there, the landlady tells them that Gail and her friends were thrown out for being too noisy. But where are they now?</p> <p>Mike remembers that when Gail was younger, and she was feeling upset or stressed, she used to go to the local farm. He leads the rest of the stag party to the farm, and sure enough, they discover Gail and her friends fast asleep on the hay, among the animals.</p> <p>Mike finishes his story triumphantly, but Alice explains to Tess that Mike is exaggerating some of the details.</p>	<p>Throughout this section, the piano plays, and Mike alternates between speaking the story, and singing the story.</p>	

10 The Night Before Christmas, Part 2

Tess takes over, and picks up her story where she left off. While flirting with the boy at the pub, her friends all suddenly arrive. Everyone has stories to share, and Tess is really excited to see her friends again.

Then, in the story, Tess gets a text from her Mum. Her Mum says she will be home from work early, and is curious to see if Tess is around to see her. Tess explains to her Mum that she is out with her friends, and can't come home right now, but that they will see each other tomorrow.

Tell stops telling her story and checks her phone, and seems distracted, and a little worried. Mike and Tess encourage Alice to tell her story again, but Alice declines.

Alice, Mike and Tess all seem a little upset, although none of them explain exactly why. Gail has still not arrived, but they agree to not eat anything else until they hear from her.

Tess continues telling her story. She describes how her friends leave, and the only people left in the pub are her, and the boy she fancies, who works on the bar. She tells the boy how, next year, she plans to apply to an exchange scheme, and study overseas.

The characters all seem upset about something but don't explain to the audience what is going on. They nearly argue, but manage to calm down.

11 Song: The Other Side Of The World	<p>Tess sings a song that shares her feelings about discovering a university exchange scheme, which, if she got a place, would mean she would spend the next year studying in Australia. She shares what she imagines Australia is like, what Christmas is like there, and what her family would say, if she went there.</p> <p>Eventually she reveals that she can't go to Australia. There is an important responsibility, something to do with her family, which is keeping her from going on this amazing adventure. She doesn't explain exactly what it is.</p> <p>When the song ends, Mike is shocked that Tess never told him that this happened. But, he comforts Tess and shows her that he is there to support her.</p>	<p>Tess sings, and piano accompanies her.</p>	<p>Tess shares how sad she is through the song.</p> <p>The song is about giving up an exiting opportunity to do something that is less exciting, but which you feel is more important.</p>
12 The Lighthouse Keeper, Part 3 Song: I Will Wait For You	<p>Alice picks up her story from where she left off. She tells how the Lighthouse Keeper is still waiting, but suddenly, there is a lightning strike, which doesn't hurt her, but the lighthouse lantern goes out.</p> <p>Outside the story, Tess suddenly turns off the light for dramatic effect (don't worry, the room won't actually go dark, it will just go a little dimmer.) Alice is little distracted but continues.</p> <p>In the story, the Lighthouse Keeper knows she must turn on the lighthouse lantern, because otherwise, her husband's ship will not be able to navigate the sea in the dark and stormy night.</p> <p>(continues on next page)</p>	<p>After Alice says 'The lantern goes out', Tess suddenly dims the lights (but the room won't actually go dark, just a little bit dimmer).</p> <p>Throughout this section, the piano plays, and Alice alternates between singing and speaking her story. Near the end of the scene, Mike and Tess join in the singing.</p>	<p>This part of the story is a bit scary, and dramatic, but it turns out ok in the end.</p> <p>The Lighthouse Keeper is scared that her husband will smash his ship on the rocks, and die.</p> <p>The Lighthouse Keeper risks her life by climbing onto the roof of the Lighthouse in the storm.</p>

	<p>The Lighthouse Keeper climbs onto the roof, with a replacement lantern, but in the terrible weather, she drops it, and it smashes on the rocks below.</p> <p>But against the odds, the Lighthouse Keeper turns in the direction of her beloved husband's ship is coming, and starts to sing. As she sings, a bright light pours out of her, and lights up the darkness. Her husband sees it, and he manages to safely moor his ship.</p> <p>Outside of the story, Tess finally gets a text from her Mum and Dad. It turns out that they have just got in the car, and are on their way home.</p>		<p>(continues on next page)</p> <p>Then, she drops the lantern, it smashes and she feels despair and hopelessness.</p> <p>Then she creates the light for the lighthouse, by singing her love for her husband, and helps him get to safety.</p>
13 Closing Scene	<p>Alice, Mike and Tess start preparing for Gail to arrive. Tess says that they should tell the audience what's really going on, and Mike and Alice agree.</p> <p>The family explain that Gail is a doctor, and they have always had to work around her schedule, but recently, things have changed. Gail has become ill, and has been spending a lot of time in hospital.</p> <p>This evening, it wasn't certain if Gail was able to come home for Christmas, and the family were waiting for a text, to confirm it. This is why Alice, Mike and Tess have seemed distracted throughout the show.</p> <p>However, they now know that Gail is on her way, and that things aren't perfect, but for now, they're going to be alright. And when Gail arrives, they will tell her all the stories, all over again.</p>		

14 Song: The Last Time	In this song, Alice, Mike and Tess share how they feel about the fact that Christmas changes every year. They express that it's sad when things change. They share how they will spend Christmas loving Gail, for however long they still have with her.		This is a bit of a sad song, but it's also about appreciating the people we love while we have the chance.
15 Bows	<p>After the song finishes, the actors will bow to the audience, then, Sam, the pianist bows. Everyone on stage indicates the technicians, who also help to put the show on, and gives them a clap. The actors and Sam bow one last time, and then they go backstage for a rest.</p> <p>That is the end of the show. You don't have to leave the theatre straight away, feel free to take your time, have another drink, and leave whenever you like.</p>	<p>Bows can be noisy, as different people show their appreciation in different ways.</p> <p>People in the audience might cheer and clap, to show the actors and the backstage team that they enjoyed the show.</p> <p>But you don't have to make noise if you don't want to.</p>	