

A Monster Calls - January 2027

From the novel by Patrick Ness

We will be using the original Old Vic script which was devised for the stage by the company and directed by Sally Cookson.

I'm excited to introduce the beginning of the journey to our 2027 Drum show. Yes, it's tinged with a touch of sadness that due to circumstances beyond our control it was not possible to stage A Christmas Carol. However, A Monster Calls is brilliant and does have many similarities. It has a large cast, so lots of opportunities for people to get involved both on stage and behind the scenes. It tells a strong human story using a similar core style that is central to Xmas Carol of leading the central character Conor through a series of stories to help him understand the situation he finds himself in.

Conor has been having the same dream every night, ever since his mother first fell ill. But tonight is different. Tonight when he wakes there's a monster at his window. It is elemental, a force of nature. It wants to tell Conor three stories, and then wants Conor to tell a fourth himself, and it wants Conor to tell the truth. This is a powerful, moving and imaginative stage version of an acclaimed novel of love, loss and hope.

Getting to know A Monster Calls

I am very much aware that the story may not be known to everyone so I will be holding a reading / workshop on Tuesday 4th August at Manor Gardens. This is your opportunity to read some scenes from the play, and find out a bit more about how I am hoping we can bring this wonderful story to life. The evening will start at 7:30 and as well as reading some parts you will have a chance to find out how we intend to create the fantasy worlds of the Monster's stories and the real worlds which Conor inhabits. I aim to make this a fun and informative evening for anyone who might be considering auditioning. That said, you don't need to attend the reading workshop to audition.

Auditioning

Auditions will take place at Manor Gardens Thursday Aug 6th 7.30 and Monday 10th August. Bearing in mind that we are in holiday season, please do contact me if you are interested in auditioning but on holiday for both those dates and I'll accommodate if I can. You only need to attend one of these.

An important note on casting

At this stage I have deliberately not made any definite decisions on casting. There are roles for a wide range of ages. Also, there is a lot of flexibility in the gender of the characters in the play. If you are uncertain whether there would be a part for you, then please do either come to the workshop or get in touch with me personally and I'll be happy to have a chat about options.

Rehearsals and Performances

We will start rehearsals in mid to late September. The production week is the first week in January 2027 and will be in the Drum from 5th January to 9th January. Clearly this is rather close to Christmas and New Year – but I am intending that we are ready to run the show before Christmas and then only need a brush up on the weekend before we get into the Drum. I will have a more detailed timetable ready for the workshop.

Cast and Staging

I see this as very much an ensemble piece. The cast size is flexible, and can be between 12 and 20. With some larger roles and some smaller roles (all will have dialogue). There will be cast on stage for the majority of the time creating both Conor's world and the worlds of the stories the Monster tells. This does not mean everyone has to be on stage all the time – and some of the smaller roles will not be needed for all rehearsals.

The stage design will enable the cast to flow between school, home, the hospital, the park and of course the garden where Conor meets the Monster, which is in the form of a tree. We will be building a tree for this production!

Behind The Scenes

Also a looking for a DSM who will be working with the Drum techs on sound and lighting. I am also on the lookout for someone who can do effects make-up. Please contact me.

Get in touch.

If you want to come to the reading workshop and/or audition for a part, please email me at svince009@gmail.com or you can send me a personal WhatsApp message if you are part of the Tams group. If you want a phone chat prior to auditioning, then message me first and I'll arrange a good time.

Characters

The following is a list of characters. I have given an indication of the characteristics for some and indications of the flexibility

Conor

Teenage boy at the centre of the story. He is carer for his mother. On stage for the majority of the time. Conor goes through a really emotional journey. This is a role which will present a rewarding challenge in portraying emotional depth. While Conor is a teenage boy, I am open to auditioning anyone who would like to take on the challenge. This role can be played by an adult.

Monster

A strong and somewhat threatening character, but with 'a heart' and who clearly cares about the boy. Whoever takes on this part will need to be comfortable with developing a strong physicality to the character. The monster has a number of significant monologues.

Mum

Mum has late stage cancer, but is dealing with her situation with grace and dignity. She is in the play throughout with declining health.

Grandma

Mum's mum, who is caring but stern and somewhat old-fashioned in her outlook. She is determined to see the best outcome for Conor.

Dad

Conor's Dad is now living in America with a new partner. He comes back to the UK to support Conor and his Mum as best he can.

Harry

The leader of the bullies at Conor's school. As with his mates, he is not nice to Conor but as with all the characters in this piece there is depth to his character.

Sully

Sidekick to Harry and very much has similar attributes. Sully is a female.

Anton

Second sidekick, Not as vocal. The one who follows the crowd. Could be played by male or female.

Lily

Conor's protective female school friend. Lily is feisty and doesn't take Harry and his mates' bullying lightly.

Godfrey

Deputy head teacher. Caring and understanding, but misreads the signs. A good teacher. Male or Female.

Marl

A class teacher, comes across as an older teacher who has seen it all. Male or Female.

King, Prince, Queen, Farmer's Daughter

These all feature in First story.

Apothecary and Parson

Both feature in Second story.

Nurse

Features in final story.