

# The Box of Delights



**WILTON'S**

MUSIC HALL

**hero**  
productions

**AN EDUCATION PACK**  
**The Box of Delights by Piers  
Torday based on the novel by John  
Masefield**

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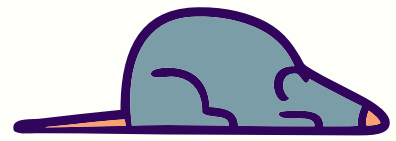
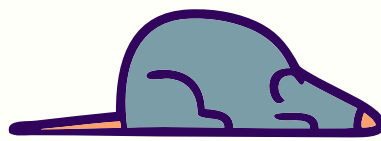
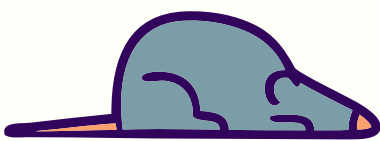
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## PLOT INTRODUCTION (NO SPOILERS)

***The Box of Delights*** by Piers Torday based on the novel by John Masefield returns to Wilton's this Christmas after a sell-out success last year.

Once upon a time, there were two great sorcerers, Ramon Lulli and Arnold of Todi. To decide who was the most powerful, they made a wager. Who could invent the most incredible magical power, never seen before?

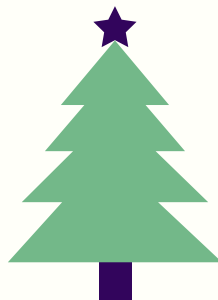
After a year, Ramon returned with an elixir, which would grant the drinker eternal life. But then Arnold revealed his invention.

A box of his own invention. A mysterious and wondrous Box of Delights, with dark powers. Before Ramon could respond, Arnold disappeared, taking his Box with him.

Now centuries later, a boy on a train travelling home for the holidays, is about to be drawn into an ancient magical struggle, that will see him fighting not just for his life, but to save Christmas itself.

Watch out, Kay Harker, for the wolves are running...

Will Kay save Christmas? You will have to watch the play to find out the answer.



## THE MAIN CHARACTERS FACT FILE

### KAY HARKER



**Hobbies:** Magic and saving Christmas

**About:** Kay is an orphan so he is looked after by his guardian, Caroline Louisa, during the Christmas holidays. Kay has a real sense for when something isn't quite right and a taste for adventure.

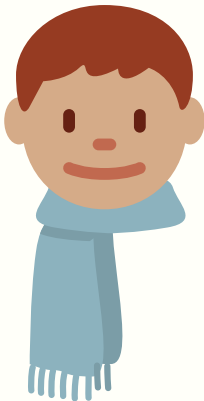
### MARIA JONES

**Hobbies:** Stained glass, guns and robber teas

**About:** Maria is one of the two Jones children who are staying with Caroline Louisa. Maria is highly courageous, utterly fearless and knows how to wear a fake beard and throw a knife.



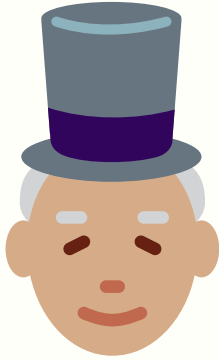
### PETER JONES



**Hobbies:** Chocolate Creams and keeping to the rules

**About:** Peter, the younger of the Jones children, is a reluctant adventurer. His ideal Christmas would include a plumb pudding and a posset before bed.

## THE MAIN CHARACTERS FACT FILE



### COLE HAWLINGS

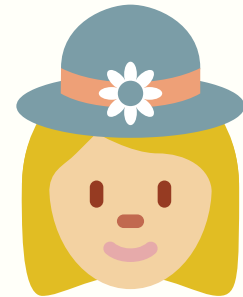
**Hobbies:** Punch and Judy

**About:** Cole is a curious person who travels the country with Toby, his dog, and the Box of Delights.

### CAROLINE LOUISA

**Hobbies:** Carol singing

**About:** Caroline Louisa is a witty and upright person. She enjoys being Kay's guardian.



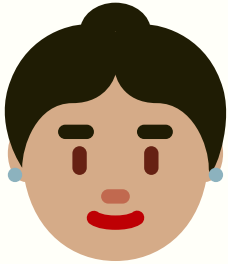
### HERNE THE HUNTER

**Hobbies:** The wild woods

**About:** Herne the Hunter was first written about by the playwright, William Shakespeare in 1597. Part human, part deer, Herne is a ghost who has haunted British folklore for centuries.

## THE MAIN CHARACTERS FACT FILE

### SYLVIA DAISY PONCER



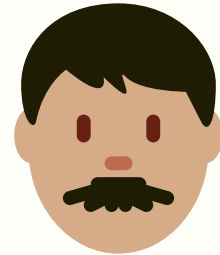
**Hobbies:** Pistols and fur hats

**About:** Pouncer dresses like a duchess and talks like a governess, but can she be trusted?

### CHARLES

**Hobbies:** Impersonating clergymen

**About:** Charles is a jewel thief, who feels a bit out of his depth scrobbing children and priests.



### ABNER BROWN



**Hobbies:** Wearing silk dressing gowns

**About:** Abner, who is married to Pouncer, is a magician who is set on reclaiming his Box of Delights. He is not worried about who he injures in the process.

## THE MAIN CHARACTERS FACT FILE



### THE BISHOP OF TATCHESTER

**Hobbies:** Drinking cocoa

**About:** The Bishop is a very forgiving man who enjoys throwing Christmas parties.

### POLICE OFFICER

**Hobbies:** Keeping pet rabbits

**About:** The Police Officer has the best of intentions but he can often be distracted.



### TOBY DOG

**Hobbies:** Locating lost train tickets

**About:** Toby is Cole Hawling's companion.



(Photo by James Betts)

## AN INTERVIEW WITH PIERS TORDAY

Piers Torday is the author of *The Lost Magician* and *The Last Wild Trilogy*.

Here Piers answers some of our questions.

### **Why did you choose John Masefield's *The Box of Delights*?**

Holly Kendrick (Executive Director, Wilton's), Simon Wheeler (co-producer, Hero Productions) and I had been trying to get the rights to this magical story since we met as friends at university in the nineties.

We had all been mesmerised by the BBC series as children, which was as terrifying as it was magical and ground-breaking. I also loved the original book, which has so much more in it than we have been able to fit into 2 hours on stage, and is well worth a read.

But the rights were not available, as a movie producer had snapped them up. The anticipated film never emerged, however, and finally last year – after twenty plus years of waiting, the rights became free and we were finally able to bring our long-held dream project to life.



### **Who is your favourite character and why?**

My favourite character has to be Maria. She is quite unlike lots of girls in similar adventure stories of the period – she is fearless, unbelievably rude to adults and children alike, and knows how to use both a revolver and a knife. She absolutely refuses to miss out on any aspect of life that boys can enjoy, and in fact, is often better at most things than Kay and Peter, even if her impetuosity can get them all into trouble on occasion! But she really is a hero.

### **Kay Harker has to save Christmas. What is your advice for anyone else who has to save Christmas?**

Follow Kay's lead – work with friends, don't try and do it all by yourself. You will need a little bit of magic, but in the absence of a Box of Delights, try curling up with an amazing book and see where that takes you. And don't forget the food – Christmas is the one time of year you are allowed to feast on whatever you want. A good supply of muffins, mince pies and chocolate creams should see anyone through a Christmas crisis.

### **In the play, when Kay, Peter and Maria go into the Box of Delights, they are turned into different creatures. If you could change into any animal what would it be and what would you do as that animal?**

I would, of course, change into a wolf so I could escape the other wolves, by running for miles through the snow, and howling a warning to any brave children fighting evil nearby...



**The Box has three magical properties. Which of the three would you like to use the most and what would you do with that power?**

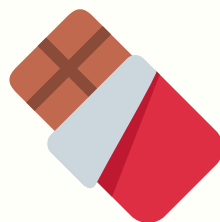
The Box has three powers – it can make you go as small as a mouse, as swift as a falcon, or transport you through time and space. I would go as small as mouse and sneak into Fortnum and Mason, which is the largest sweetshop in London, after everyone had gone home, and eat all the Christmas chocolates.

**You have written a number of books for children. What advice would you give to anyone who wants to be a writer?**

Read as many different kind of books as you can to learn how other people write books, learn new words and get inspired. Write as often as you can to practice things like storytelling, dialogue and description. Keep all your ideas in a big notebook marked Top Secret, and when you need a new idea, try staring out of the window till one arrives. And never, ever, give up!

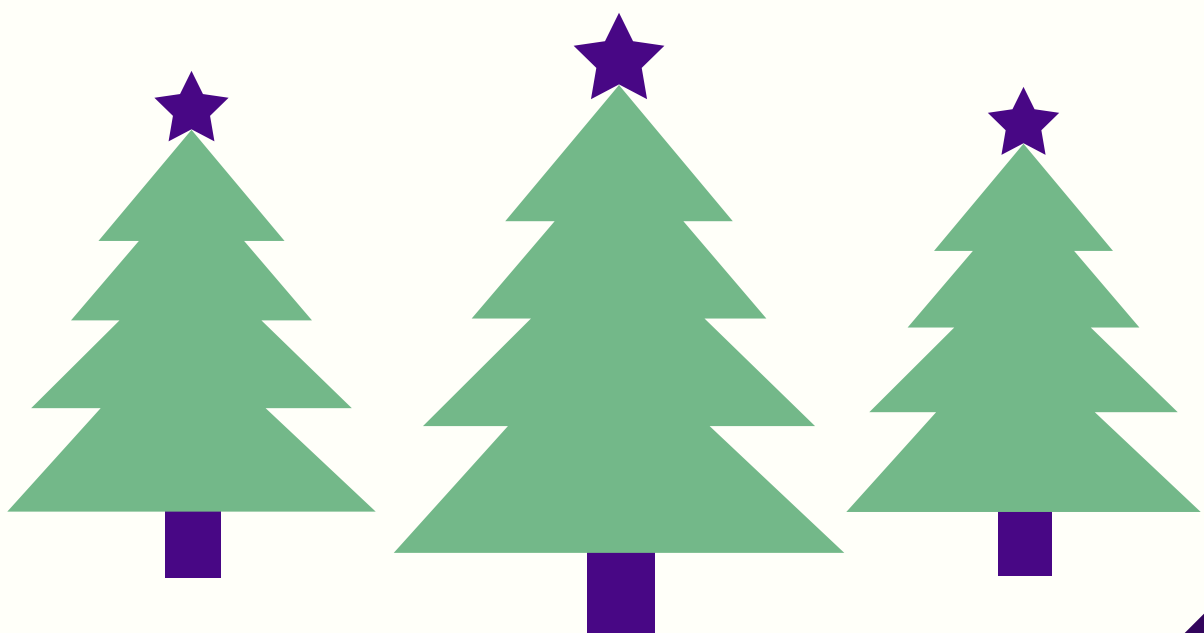
**What are you top three favourite books from your childhood?**

1. *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis
2. *The Hobbit* by J R R Tolkien
3. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl



## **What are the challenges of writing a play that includes a lot of magic?**

For this show, we had to set a phoenix on fire, make a car fly across the stage, and send someone through a painting, not to mention bringing to life a talking rat, demon head and several wolves. And all of that in the oldest grand music hall in Britain – a beautiful historic space with very little in the way of modern stage technology. To find out how we overcame those challenges, you have to see the show. But the trick was believing in the magic of theatre – if you tell an audience something is happening with the right conviction, they tend to believe you!



**"THIS BOX IS FULL OF OLD MAGIC, MASTER HARKER. IT CARRIES THE WEIGHT OF AGES PAST, AND BURNS WITH THE DESIRE OF THOSE WHO WOULD SEEK TO POSSESS ITS DELIGHTS. YOU MUST HANDLE IT WITH GREAT CARE."**

The Box of Delights in the play is a magical box, which Cole Hawlings entrusts to Kay Harker to aid him in his quest to save Christmas. The Box is able to do three things which are very important in the story.

1. The Box can move you through time
2. The Box can make you really small
3. The Box can make you go really fast



**TASK:**

Imagine what you would do if you were given a magical box? Write and draw a picture to illustrate the adventure you would have.

**BONUS:**

If you are feeling like an extra challenge, make up three of your own things that the box could do. For example, your box could allow you to travel to the moon.

## **TASK:**

Kay Harker needs your help! The Box of Delights has been stolen! The last time Kay saw the Box it was in his coat pocket at Seekings but now it has vanished. Help Kay by writing a description of the Box of Delights. Make sure you include a reward for the person who finds it!

# **MISSING!**

## THE BOX OF DELIGHTS WORD SEARCH

H	F	A	Y	U	B	A	M	U	N	T	J	F	M	L
S	E	V	L	O	W	Q	J	H	E	B	N	R	Z	F
C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	Q	R	M	B	E	N
X	P	U	N	C	H	A	N	D	J	U	D	Y	F	R
J	S	B	W	E	O	Z	M	J	O	B	R	Z	C	J
X	R	X	O	S	T	N	J	A	S	T	T	W	S	P
Z	B	U	U	N	L	H	D	Y	G	O	Q	S	Y	B
R	R	E	N	B	A	F	E	I	W	I	T	G	M	E
D	S	J	J	I	K	A	K	H	C	U	C	N	L	W
F	O	R	R	P	B	Z	X	X	U	O	J	I	W	G
D	E	A	Z	F	F	G	H	Y	I	N	T	K	A	Y
B	M	K	I	M	F	N	N	O	P	E	T	E	R	N
D	M	V	J	W	C	P	I	J	T	O	W	E	R	E
H	U	V	P	B	X	L	X	S	E	D	N	S	R	B

### WORDS TO SEARCH

ABNER  
CHRISTMAS  
CONDICOTE  
HERNE THE HUNTER  
KAY  
MAGICIAN  
MARIA  
PETER  
PUNCH AND JUDY  
SEEKINGS  
WOLVES

