



Gather 'Round the Sound

Paulo Coelho , Yvonne Morrison , Charles Dickens

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Audible's 2017 holiday collection includes:

Zip Code 12345

This mini-documentary centers around a peculiar holiday tradition at General Electric's headquarters in Schenectady, NY. For two decades, GE has been receiving thousands of letters from kids - children who think they're reaching Santa Claus. And every year, a handful of GE employees give up their December lunchbreaks to respond to each and every letter.

An Aussie Night Before Christmas, by Yvonne Morrison, performed by Magda Szubanski

This rollicking rewrite of the famous old poem 'Twas The Night Before Christmas gives the original version a hilarious Aussie twist. Magda Szubanski, Australia's most trusted personality, carries this incredibly fun romp. Kangaroos pulling the sleigh, a beer for Santa, and all the over-the-top Australian lingo, it's everything you'd expect.

The Music Coming from the House, by Paulo Coelho, performed by Daniel Frances-Berenson

In this magical story from the author of *The Alchemist* - the master of the modern parable - a disguised king visits a poor village, and what he sees through the window of a house changes his life, and those of the occupants.

The Signal-man, by Charles Dickens, performed by Simon Callow, Dan Starkey, and John Banks

For literature lovers, the holiday season needs a little Dickens. We dug up a story of his that you may not be familiar with, originally published in the Christmas edition of a Victorian short story periodical. Of course, ghosts are involved in this 19th century work told by Simon Callow (*Outlander*) and Dan Starkey (*Dr. Who*).

A Very Improvised Holiday Musical

What would the holidays be without some carols? Vern, a New York City-based improv troupe, performs a few improvised holiday songs.

Gather 'Round the Sound Details

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Author : Paulo Coelho , Yvonne Morrison , Charles Dickens

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From Reader Review Gather 'Round the Sound for online ebook

Melissa says

Meh. This was a free audible book offered during Christmas 2017. For a free book ... well, it lived up to that price at least. It was a little over an hour long. It wasn't much of a Christmasy sort of listen. There were a few interesting bits. There were a few weird bits. There were a few boring bits. I'm sure I will never listen to it again. I'm being pretty generous in giving this one two stars, but it's Christmas, so there.

Elyse says

I only really liked the first story. The rest were just alright. Glad it was short and it was free.

Read for Seasons of Reading's Christmas in July (7/28-7/31).

Kimberly says

I downloaded this freebie from Audible and it was my first Christmas read of the season. It had everything: a little nonfiction, some fiction and some singing! I wasn't sure about the singing and the Dickens story wasn't particularly Christmassy. But all in all, it was entertaining. My favourite part was An Aussie Night Before Christmas. A nice gift from Audible!

Cassandra Page says

This was a free Audible download to celebrate Christmas. It was a bit of a grab bag, with a podcast vibe. I liked all of it but the musical at the end - maybe improv is too chaotic for me?

Jessica says

All my reviews can be found at: <http://jessicasreadingroom.com>

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This review will post on my site on December 12th

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Gather Round the Sound was free on Audible and there was a good reason for that: It really did not need to be made into a compilation of short stories/performances. This one was a big miss for me. The best short was Zip Code 12345: I really enjoyed it and wish it had been expanded. If this had been the whole 'book' that would have been fine with me!

Apparently I am not a Dickens fan as The Signal-man wasn't for me. When it was over I had no idea what had happened. Maybe it was the narrators with their accents that ruined it for me. The 'musical chapters' were also subpar. They were meant to be funny and entertaining, but were far from that.

I cannot recommend this compilation: I say listen to the first chapter: Zip Code 12345 and skip the rest. I hate saying this, but it just did not deliver.

Barbara (The Bibliophage) says

This is holiday-themed, and was a perfect listen while prepping and recovering from a holiday brunch.

Sara (A Gingerly Review) says

If you want a super quick listen, this is it. If you want something with enjoyable content geared towards the holidays, skip this one.

Andrea says

This is a short freebie of Xmas theme randomnalia - a documentary about letters to Santa, the Aussie version of Santa, a Dickens horror story, and some improv carols.

I kinda liked the horror story, but the rest was pretty meh.

Angie Dokos says

This was cute and entertaining. I enjoyed listening to the letters to Santa in 12345.

♥Marie Gentilcore says

This was okay. It features several short Christmas-themed stories including one by Charles Dickens.

Liz Shaw says

The story about the GE workers answering letters to Santa was fascinating. I also enjoyed the Coelho story. The Dickens story didn't seem very related to the holidays to me, but it was a good story.

Jen says

I downloaded this freebie book on December 10, 2017, and I think I listened it on either December 12th or 13th, so I'm going to say I started it very late on the 12th and finished it in the wee hours of the morning on the 13th for recording purposes.

Even though I don't remember exactly when I listened to this book in December 2017, I do remember that I was VERY confused by it. The first story especially . . . It seemed like an ad! I was sooo confused; it didn't come across like a story at all for me (I was listening while playing a game). And sadly, this confusion set me up for failure when I continued past this first story. I didn't take in ANY of the stories. :-(

So, I know I read this, but I couldn't tell you what I read. (It didn't seem very Christmasy or Holiday-ish to me, though. THAT I remember. Though it's probably because of my confusion.) I had intended to try it again in December, but somehow I just never got around to it. I am not going to give this book a star rating until I do get to re-listen to it. Hopefully, I'll understand it better the next time around. :-/

UPDATE: I listened to this book for the second and third times in January 2018, for the #245thon. (Apparently, I didn't record any of my audiobooks as having been read for that 'thon. :-/)
Although I listened to it twice more, I didn't truly understand it any better. Or, at least, now that it's the end of February, I don't remember much about it any longer, so if I did understand it finally, who's to say?
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Colleen Houck says

Cute little audible bonus. I liked the feature on the company at zip code 12345 who help out with Santa's mail.

Janice says

I don't know what I was expecting exactly but this wasn't it. I loved the Dickens reading and Zip Code 12345. The musical at the end was awful. What about beautiful Christmas music? A reading of the Gift of the Magi? This had such potential but really was just "not much." But again, it was free . . .

Anniken Haga says

I've learned to mistrust things that are for free, but Audible usually has some nice christmas gifts. This one may have been the worst of them yet, but it wasn't all bad. I enjoyed "Zipcode 12345", although I wish it was longer and vi could actually get a snippet from the Adoption Box — I think I know what was in them, though.
I also liked the story from Dickens. I haven't read much by him before, but it's always fun to get a sneak peak into the different classic—authors, as I haven't read many of them.
The poem and the songs at the end were just kinda weird, though, and not for me
