

A Christmas Tail

STORY SYNOPSIS

It is Christmas Eve. Mr and Mrs Page, the bookshop owners, are very, very busy wrapping presents for their customers **(Song: We're very, very busy!)**.

Minty Mouse and his family live in the bookshop. Minty is called Minty because he loves mints! **(Song/dance: Minty Mouse)**.

Also in the bookshop live a family of spiders **(Song/dance: Fee Diddle Dee - The Spiders' Spinning Song)**, some wiggly bookworms **(Song/dance: Oochy Coochy Cool - The Bookworms' Dance)** and three naughty cats.

Minty overhears Mr and Mrs Page talking to a customer about a 'Christmas tail' (really meaning the Christmas nativity story) and decides that his own tail is not good enough. He therefore sets about finding a Christmas tail. However, the only ones who seem to want to help are the three naughty cats! **(Song/dance: Naughty Cats!)** They lure poor Minty to a Christmas night meeting where he grabs hold of one of the cats' tails, mistaking it for a Christmas tail! Just in time, the spiders come to his rescue and spin a web around the cats so that they can do Minty no harm! **(Dance/movement: Catch-the-Cats Music)**

The bookworms explain to Minty that the Christmas 'tail' he heard about was really the Christmas 'tale', the story of when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. They tell Minty the whole story, about Mary and Joseph, the bright star shining over the stable, and the shepherds, kings and angels who came to see the baby. **(Song/nativity tableau scene: On that special night)**.

When Minty has learnt all about the real Christmas tale, the spiders give Minty a special surprise and decorate his tail for Christmas! Minty is so pleased he throws a 'Christmas tail' party! **(Song: Minty's got his Christmas tail!)**

CHARACTERS & COSTUMES

Minty Mouse: main character, simple speaking part - more lines and acting than others however, so should be a confident child

Mr and Mrs Mouse & triplet mice, Monica, Max and Mabel: very simple speaking parts

Chorus mice: any number, sing/dance only

Minty Mouse can be a modern mouse, with trainers, baseball cap, or whatever else is trendy at the time! – or he might be an old-fashioned mouse! He must have a detachable long, pink 'ordinary' tail, as well as a festively decorated 'Christmas tail'! (decorated with tinsel, coloured bows, out-sized 'sweets' and 'mints' (eg. stripy black and white humbugs!) What would your children choose to put on a Christmas tail?

The baby mice might wear nappies or other baby-style clothes! Mr & Mrs Mouse can wear coloured shirts, trousers, skirt, dress etc. Chorus mice can be in varied costumes eg. grandpa mouse, sporty mouse.

Three naughty cats – Growler, Scrabble and Fleabag: simple 'character' speaking parts

Chorus cats: any number, sing/dance only

Cats can be different colours and have different coloured collars! (Leotards/T-shirts and tights with creative face paints work well.) Fleabag *must* have a **very long** fluffy tail - Minty mistakes it for his 'Christmas tail'!

Mr and Mrs Page, the bookshop owners: simple speaking parts

Customers (3, or 6 in pairs): simple speaking parts

Mr and Mrs Page and the customers can be either modern or old-fashioned people – ask the children what they think they would look like or wear!

Spiders 1-4: speaking parts, Spiders 1 and 2 have more acting to do

Chorus spiders: sing/dance only

Spiders can wear black or brown leotards or T-shirts and tights, with stripes if you wish. Spiders will need 4 fake legs attached to their sides (tights stuffed with newspaper work quite well!). Doodlebug headbands (decorated with tinsel or similar) look funny.

Bookworms 1-6: simple speaking parts, Bookworm 3 has more acting to do

Chorus bookworms: sing/dance only

Bookworms can have tube-like costumes in coloured material, possibly padded, with armholes, and finishing at knee length so that they can dance. Again, face paints and doodlebug headbands (decorated differently from spiders) look funny.

Narrator: an adult or an older child (good reader)

May dress smartly in shirt and bowtie, or in character as a spider or mouse, for example.

Nativity characters: non-speaking parts only

Mary and Joseph

Donkey (plus **other animals**, if required)

Stars (with more prominent '**big**' star): any number, dance/movement only

Shepherds: any number, dance/movement only

Three Kings (plus **camels and pages**, if required): walk-on parts only

Angels: any number, dance/movement only

A Christmas Tail

Script sample

SCENERY – The Book Shop

...Minty creeps to the side of stage (LT) as Mr and Mrs Page and customer 2 come on stage RT and stand together centre stage. Mrs Page holds a large book, and stands between the other two. All three look at the book.

Narrator: Late on Christmas Eve, Minty was creeping about in the shop, looking for a mint that someone may have dropped, when he overheard Mr and Mrs Page talking to a customer.

Customer 2: What a lovely tale!

Mrs Page: This tale is very special.

Mr Page: There's no tale like the Christmas tale!

Customer 2: I'll take it! Thank you!

Mr and Mrs Page hand the book to Customer 2 and all three walk off together, stage RT. Minty comes to centre stage. He looks at his own tail.

Narrator: Minty looked at his own pink tail.

Minty: *(picking up his tail)* My tail's boring! *(stamps his foot, crossly)* I want a Christmas tail!

Mr and Mrs Mouse come on stage LT.

Minty: *(waving his tail)* Mum! Dad! I want a Christmas tail!

Mr and Mrs Mouse: *(together)* What's a Christmas tail?

Narrator: Minty was very disappointed that his mum and dad had never heard of a Christmas tail.

Mrs Mouse: Sorry, Minty! I've got your presents already!

Mr and Mrs Mouse go off stage LT.

Narrator: But Minty was sure that someone would know about a Christmas tail.
He went to ask his friends, the spiders.

The spiders come on from stage RT. They form a semi circle, so that the audience can see Minty. Minty comes forward and stands in the middle.

Minty: Hello, spiders!

Spiders: *(together)* Hello, Minty Mouse!

Minty: I want a Christmas tail!

Spiders: *(together)* What's a Christmas tail?

Narrator: Minty was very disappointed that the spiders had never heard of a Christmas tail.

Spider 1: Spiders don't have tails.

Spider 2: But we can spin webs!

The spiders hold hands and join up the circle for their dance and song. Minty watches them from the side.

Song/dance: Fee Diddle Dee (The Spiders' Spinning Song)

(Chorus) **Fee diddle dee, fee diddle dee,
Very hard working little spiders are we,
Fee diddle doo, fee diddle doo,
We'll keep on spinning if it's all the same to you!**

(Verse 1) **We go in, we go out,
Spinning all the straight lines out.
We go in, we go out,
Then we turn ourselves about!**

(Chorus) **Fee diddle dee, fee diddle dee,
Very hard working little spiders are we,
Fee diddle doo, fee diddle doo,
We'll keep on spinning if it's all the same to you!**

(Verse 2) **We go round, round and about,
Start in the middle, moving out,
We go round, round and about,
Then we turn ourselves about!**

(Chorus) **Fee diddle dee, fee diddle dee,
Very hard working little spiders are we,
Fee diddle doo, fee diddle doo,
We'll keep on spinning if it's all the same to you!**

Narrator: Minty thought the spiders were very clever, spinning their web, but he still wished he could find a special Christmas tail, just like the one that Mr and Mrs Page had spoken about.

Minty picks up his tail and looks sad.

Minty: I wish I could have a Christmas tail.

Spider 3: Go and ask the bookworms. They're very clever.

Spider 4: They'll know all about Christmas tails.

Minty: *(happier)* Thank you! I will!

Spiders: Bye bye!

Minty waves goodbye to the spiders. They go off stage RT.

Narrator: Minty thought it was a very good idea to ask the bookworms. They knew lots of things because they read a lot of books!

Minty walks to a bookshelf, stage LT.

Minty: Bookworms! Are you there?!... Bookworms!

The bookworms wiggle on from stage LT, in a long wiggly line (or two lines, depending on the number of bookworms). Minty stands at one end of the line.

Minty: Hello, bookworms!

Bookworms: *(together)* Hello, Minty Mouse!

Minty: I want a Christmas tail.

Bookworms: *(together)* What's a Christmas tail?

Narrator: Minty was very disappointed that the bookworms had never heard of a Christmas tail...