



# Tizzy the Spider's Cathedral Adventure



Hello, some of you may remember me from one of our Family Fun Days at Norwich Cathedral. I am Tizzy the spider. I live in the Cathedral. I feel sad sometimes when people run away from me. Some even scream when they see me because they are afraid of me! How silly. Just because I have eight wiggly legs that move around quite fast, does not mean that I will hurt you. We spiders are very friendly.

Living in a Cathedral is exciting. It is such a big place so I never get bored of being there. I can make my home in all sorts of secret places. There are plenty of places to burrow away when it is cold in there during the Winter. My favourite place to build my web and nest is the Treasury. This is a room high up in the Cathedral. You have to climb a winding, stone staircase to get up there. I love to spin a long thread down the stairs and zip wire down them.

In the Treasury there are lots of precious, old cups called Chalice and plates called Patens. These were used centuries ago by the Christians who came to the Cathedral to remember Jesus with bread and wine in that special service called Holy Communion. The Cathedral still uses newer chalices and patens now for this service. It happens every day here.

I love the ceiling in the Treasury because it has the remains of some very old paintings on it. Hundreds of years ago people painted pictures of Jesus, Mary, Saints and angels. There were paintings all over the Cathedral 900 years ago, some of them showed stories from the Bible.

I have a favourite 'nook' a little bit of the ceiling that joins the wall and a pillar. It is a perfect, warm space to spin a comfy web to sleep in.

I often have adventures in the Cathedral. Most days I have to watch out for the cleaners early in the morning. If they see my webs they sweep them away with their cobweb brushes. They say that I make the place look messy and dirty. Have you ever seen a spider's web early in the morning? When the sun light shines through it, it glistens and shimmers. If it is in a garden and the early morning dew has settled on it, it twinkles like diamonds. So why do they want to sweep them away?

I also watch out for the famous, Cathedral cat, Budge. You might have met him too? I *never* spin my webs in the Choir, near the seats he likes to sleep on, even if they do have interesting wooden carvings that are easy to weave a web around. He tends to stretch and move around a lot and I do not want to have my web swept away by his paws and tail or worse still, if he sees me, he likes to play with me. He pats me and spins me round on the seat with his paws. This makes me a very dizzy Tizzy.

One day I had a real adventure, in fact it is a day I will never forget. Many people tell me I was just dreaming and that it did not really happen, well, I will leave you to make your own mind up about that.

It started when I was spinning a new web in a side chapel called St Luke's. I like it in there. There is a very old font in there, you know, the big shaped object that holds water for baptising people. I crept behind it and found a little hole where the old crumbling stonework was sticking out. I was doing quite well when I heard footsteps. It was a verger. The vergers work in the Cathedral. They keep it clean and tidy. They get everything ready for services and they help the priests during services. It was Bob. He was whistling happily and came towards the font. I could see that in one hand he had a feather duster and some cleaning bottles in a basket. In the other hand he was holding a small step ladder.

'Dancing Queen, young and sweet, only seventeen, he sang, then he whistled the rest. He was a great Abba fan! He placed the basket on the floor and opened up the step ladder, then he climbed up to where the Chrismatory, a set of glass jars hang that are full of holy oil. He had a cloth and some spray in his hand and began to clean and polish the jars and brass around them.

I heard a squeaking noise and suddenly saw a little mouse creep out from the altar at the opposite side of the chapel. It ran fast towards the basket and climbed inside. I decided I ought to warn this silly, little thing that this was *not* a good place to nestle in as he would end up stuck in the cleaning cupboard. I crawled out and ran to the basket too. I climbed up the side. There he was, making a nest out of some paper tissue roll and a duster. I leaned over into the basket.

'Hey,' I shouted, 'Mousey, get out of here quickly. You'll end up stuck'. He looked up at me, twitched a whisker and pulled a rude face at me. 'I mean it' I added, 'get out of there now or you'll end up locked away!'

All of a sudden, there was a jolt and I lost my balance and fell into the basket. The basket began to shake and rise upwards as Bob picked it up and stuck it under one arm. I hung onto a small brush. The mouse was still nesting busily. Bob began to whistle again and walked quickly out of the chapel, round the back of the Cathedral and down the aisle towards the verger's storeroom. He opened the door and placed the basket down on the floor by the sink. He then went off to get an altar ready for the lunch time service of Holy Communion.

I was tired and the rocking of the basket on our way there meant that I felt very sleepy. I yawned and stretched. Mousey was already asleep. I spun a few threads from the brush to the woven basket wall, curled up and closed my eyes. 'It won't matter', I thought to myself. 'I'll take a nap here until he comes back to get the basket. I can easily escape before he puts it in the cupboard. It was warm and snug in there and I soon fell fast asleep.



Loud voices woke me up. It was still light. 'I'm hungry' I thought. Suddenly there was the sound of a huge, metal lock opening with a key. A huge, heavy, wooden door swung open suddenly. 'That is strange,' I thought, 'there is a new door on this room with a quiet, push button lock'. I crept out from my web and climbed up the side of the basket.

There, above me was a man. He was covered in white dust and had a small linen hat on his head. His face was dirty and wrinkled. He did not smell too fresh either.

'Rufus, come on' shouted a voice from outside. 'We need to get that pillar finished. Bring the basket now'. It said. The man then grabbed the basket and I fell back inside. It was then that I noticed my mousey friend had gone. He must have climbed out when I was asleep.

Rufus carried the basket into the Cathedral, but as I looked up it was *so* different. Down the aisle he walked. As I looked up, I could see that the ceiling was unfinished. There were pieces of wood sticking out. The air was full of dust. I could hear the sound of hammers banging and saws grating. Then I saw a large hole.

'We must get this roof on before Winter comes' said a cross sounding man. 'Those stone masons are so slow, they need to get the walls finished so that the carpenters can do their work!' He sounded very annoyed. Just then another man shouted to him crossly.

'It is only 1136 sir' he said. 'Do you not think we stone masons have done well to get this far in fifty years of building? We are just about finished.'

With that, Rufus turned round and I could see much more of the nave ceiling with beautiful wooden beams and the tops of the arches and pillars were painted with the most amazing patterns and colours. I felt confused.

I had not noticed that the basket now seemed to be full of tools, small spikey saws and shaped metal pieces for carving stone. 'Have you brought the finer tools?' asked the stone mason.

'Yes' answered Rufus. He sounded tired. 'I need a sleep sirs' he added. 'I have been working since 4.00 this morning'. They all ignored him and told him to get up the ladder that was leaning against a pillar nearby.

I decided it would be best to stay put. The basket was going up higher and higher as he balanced it under one arm. Soon we were way up near the ceiling and all around us was rickety, wooden scaffolding. There were many boys and men up there, sawing, and chipping at stone.

'One day you will feel so proud my boy' said an older looking man to a boy. 'You will know that you had a part to play in building this magnificent Cathedral'.

I must have heard that wrong I thought, as the basket was placed on a large plank of wood. 1136? Building the Cathedral? 'What on earth is going on?' I thought. I crept up out of the basket for Rufus was now wiping the top of a pillar with a damp cloth, then he began chipping again. He was carving a pretty pattern there. I walked along the plank and climbed up further onto some stonework.

'Wow' I exclaimed. 'Look at that'. I could see more of the rainbow coloured decoration now. I had heard people talk about how the Cathedral has been so beautifully painted when it was first built. They had obviously had time to finish quite a lot of it and were now on the very last bit.

'This is pretty dangerous work up here' I thought. I turned suddenly as there was a cracking sound. 'Oh no!' I gasped. I could see that the beams holding together the scaffolding were snapping in two. The scaffolding was beginning to fall. Rufus began to fall too. He was crying out with fear as down, down, down he went. I scrambled down the stone work towards the floor. Luckily his fall had been broken by a pile of wood and some large pieces of animal skin that were covering it. Three men ran over to him.

'Wake up, wake up!;' they were yelling into Rufus's ears. He blinked then began to scream with pain. I could see blood coming from the top of one of his legs and from his head.

'We need to get him to the infirmary' said one stone mason. They picked him up, two holding his feet and two supporting his head and shoulders. By now, a man dressed in a long, black robe had appeared.

'Brother Frederick, we need to get this man some help' said one.

'Come with me' said Brother Frederick. They followed him out of a side door, down through the cloisters and out towards the refectory. I ran as fast as I could to keep up with them.

We headed down some draughty corridors to the infirmary. This is an old fashioned word for hospital. Once inside I followed them into a small room, with a wooden bed in it. The mattress was filled with straw and there was a rolled up piece of cloth for a pillow. They placed Rufus on the bed. He was in so much pain.

'Brother Charles will be here soon with medicines and poultices' said Brother Frederick. I remembered now that there used to be monks living here when it was a monastery called a Priory. These men were monks. It was dark in here as the windows were small and there was a candle lit on a table near the bed. It smelled of honey, it was a hand made beeswax candle. The monks made their own candles.

Suddenly in rushed another monk. 'Now move away please' said Brother Charles.' He had a potion mixed up in a jug. 'I have mixed herbs that calm the body and mind' he said and began encouraging Rufus to drink it. 'Come along my friend, this will ease your pain and make you sleepy'. After a few minutes Rufus became quieter, he was indeed falling asleep. Brother Charles then began to bathe his wounds with a mixture of more herbs in a jar. He then took out a jar of mashed up cabbage with other herbal mixtures. He smeared this all over his wounds then wound linen cloth around head, shoulder and legs.

'Thanks be to God Brother that he has no greater injuries' said Brother Charles. 'Many have fallen to their deaths!'. I felt pleased that Rufus was no longer in pain.

'He can stay here for a day or two' said Brother Frederick.

'We must get back to work' said the other men, and with that they left the infirmary.

Just then I heard shouting outside. I crept out of the door and saw another brother monk. A man was with him. 'It is alright Brother Wilfrid' He said to another monk nearby. 'I have all under control'. The man was very scruffy and extremely upset.

'They have taken my wife to the river' he yelled. 'But she is not a bad woman'.

'Please be calm sir' said Brother Felix. 'I will try to help you.'

The man began to breathe more slowly. 'They say she is a witch!' he then said.

'Pray, why would they say such a thing?' asked Brother Felix.

'Well you see, she does good things my wife. She has healing hands, always has had. People come to her you see. When they are worried she calms them with her words. When they have aching bones she makes potions and prays with them. The pain goes away. She even helped a poorly baby and all thought he was dead but he came back alive again. But the law men, they say it is not right Brother, they say she is a witch'.

'I see' said Brother Felix.

'They have taken her down to the river and they will strap her to a ducking stool and put her under the water to test if she is a witch. If she dies in there, that is proof that she is not a witch!' the man was so angry and upset.

I felt very scared for the man and his wife. I had heard of such things happening.

'Brother Wilfrid, come with me please' asked Brother Felix. 'We shall all go down to the river and plead for this poor woman. I have known her since birth and she is no witch!'.

They all began to rush out of the grounds towards Pull's Ferry and the river. I followed in hot pursuit.

'What ever is happening round here today?' I thought, as I ran as fast as my eight legs would carry me.

When we got there a huge crowd had assembled and they were shouting and cheering. Some men had got Matilda, the poor lady strapped on a chair. Her head was covered with a cloth bag. She was crying. Just as they were about to lower the chair into the deep water of the river, Brother Felix yelled out.

'In the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, stop this now!' he shouted, raising his right arm in the air. 'What right have you to do this to her?' he asked. They all froze and stared at him.

'Just because she has some healing gifts, a bit like our Lord Jesus and is able to help people with her kind words and medicines *does not* mean she is a witch. Our Lord was no wizard or magic man, and nor is she. She is just a follower of Our Lord and she shares his love by helping everyone. Now stop!'

The chief man of law from the city stepped forward. 'Can you speak out for this woman sir?' he asked Brother Felix. 'Oh yes. For I have known her since she was baptised in the Cathedral font, and there is no evil in this woman' he declared.

The man bowed to him and then said: 'Release this woman'. The man ran towards his wife and pulled her from the chair. She was crying now with happiness and so was he. The monks led them back to the guest hall at the Priory where they were given bread and broth and a hot drink of herbal tea.

'Thank you kind sirs for saving her' said the man.

'We do what we believe is right sir' said Brother Felix. 'As our founder St Benedict told us to we try to take care of all who come through our doors as if it were Jesus himself' he added. With that the man and his wife left.

I knew I had to somehow get back to my resting place in St Luke's chapel, at least in there I would feel safer. 'If I have to stay back in time' I thought, 'I would rather be in one of my favourite places'.

I scampered back through the Cloisters, all the way to the Prior's door. I noticed that the painting and roof bosses out there were so bright and colourful. Phew, I was so glad to reach the chapel. I could still hear hammering and banging and had no idea what time it was. How lucky people were, I thought, to have the infirmary here where the monks cared for everyone when there were no other doctors or hospitals in Norwich. I crawled behind the altar and fell fast asleep. I did not even have the energy to build a web to rock myself in.

I dreamed about the calming river flowing towards the Cathedral and thought about what it must have been like all those hundreds of years ago when all that stone was brought across the sea from France. Light was suddenly streaming through the beautiful window and I heard Bob's whistling in the background. 'I am back' I thought as I opened my eyes. 'What an adventure!' 'I do love being a Cathedral spider' I said to myself, 'even if it is a bit tricky at times! Time to spin an enormous web now, well away from vergers, cats and cleaners.'



