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# **Tovik Tomte and the Trolls**

## **A Swedish Christmas Adventure**

By  
ERIC COBLE

**Dramatic Publishing Company**  
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*Tovik Tomte and the Trolls* was commissioned by Talespinner Children’s Theatre (Alison Garrigan, Artistic Director) and premiered on November 30, 2019, in Cleveland.

CAST:

TARFA..... Carrie Williams  
TOVIK ..... Cecilia Zitarosa  
ADELGUNDA and others..... Asia Sharp-Berry  
JORGEN and others.....Adam Graber  
TOMTES and others .....Sidney Edwards, Shatara Jordan

PRODUCTION:

Director .....Nina Domingue  
Scenic Design..... Carrie Williams  
Lighting Design ..... Josh Heidinger  
Costume Design.....Melanie Bowman  
Puppets and Props .....Alison Garrigan  
Stage Manager .....Charlie Levinson

# **Tovik Tomte and the Trolls**

## **CHARACTERS**

TARFA: A tomte, grandfather, storyteller, birthday boy. 500 years old.

TOVIK: A tomte, grandson, wannabe storyteller, kid. 100 years old.

TOMTES: A group of small, party-loving creatures, at least 3 of them.

ADELGUNDA: A human, farmer's daughter, sweet.

JORGEN: A human, neighbor, also sweet.

SKIMPA: A troll, greedy, hungry, opposite of sweet.

JOMPA: A troll, also greedy, hungry, and opposite of sweet.

PLACE: Various locations near a farm in Sweden.

TIME: Christmas Eve.

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

The play can be performed by 5-9 actors (or more with extras playing a passel of Tomtes and others) of any gender or ethnicity. Go nuts.



## Tovik Tomte and the Trolls

*(The tiny elf home of the TOMTES on a farm in Sweden. It's Christmas Eve, and snow surrounds the set. Perhaps there are extra-large human items used as furniture for the small TOMTES to sit on [e.g., shirt buttons, a thimble, etc.]*

*AT RISE: TARFA, an ancient Tomte, clambers onstage. Like most Tomtes, he wears a striped stocking cap, a beard and perhaps wooden shoes. He is followed by three other TOMTES.)*

TARFA *(turns to audience)*. Hello! Hej, hej, hej! Come in out of the cold, join the rest of the Tomte family! Come, come, come, you can just set my birthday gifts over on the table there—

*(Beat.)*

You did, ah, you did bring gifts, didn't you? Oh no matter, no matter!

*(To the other TOMTES onstage.)* They must be the Tomtes from over beside the lake!

*(To the audience.)* You never bring gifts, but you always bring the most delicious cakes! Just set the cakes over there on the ... no cakes? You didn't bring anything? Ohhhh!

*(To the other TOMTES onstage.)* They're the Tomtes from alongside the river!

*(To the audience.)* You bring the best gifts of all! Stories! You must all have your stories!

TOMTE 1. I have a story!

TOMTE 2. I have a story!

TOMTE 3. I have meningitis!

*(They all look at him.)*

TOMTE 3 *(cont'd)*. I mean, I have a story!

TARFA. Well, I'm going to claim my rite as Birthday Tomte to get to tell the *first* story of the night!

TOMTES. *Skol!*

TARFA. It's not every day I turn 500 years old!

ALL. *Skol!*

TARFA *(to the audience)*. How old are you?

*(He and the TOMTES react in shock to the answers.)*

TOMTE 1. How are you even able to walk at that age?

TOMTE 2. You're too young to even be let out of the house!

TARFA. I've got a grandson, Tovik—he's a youngster like you—well, he's 100 years old, not even old enough to grow a beard! But oh-ho-ho, I can tell you stories about him! In fact, that's what I'll do! Because as much as I love cake and presents—*(Looks around.)* I do hope the other Tomtes bring cake and presents ... but what we love *best*—

TOMTES. Is a good story!

TARFA. And this one is a real *storslagen!*

*(To the audience.)* The first thing you have to know is about farm Tomtes—we're pretty much like all you Tomtes—

TOMTE 1. Tall as a dandelion!

TOMTE 2. Cheerful!

TOMTE 3. Hard working!

TOMTE 2. Like to tell stories—

TOMTE 3. Did we mention that part?

TARFA. But. But! We have a very important job around the farm of the big people. You see, the big people have never seen us, but

they know we're here, and they know they need us! Because even though we're little, we have to protect the whole farm!

TOMTE 2. If a fox comes sneaking around the chicken coop at night—it's *our* job to scare her off!

TOMTE 1. If the sugar beets weren't planted quite deep enough in the field—it's *our* job to push 'em in deeper!

TOMTE 3. If a big person is no good at checkers—it's *our* job to hide all the pieces so *no one* can play!

TARFA. That's not our job.

TOMTE 3. It's not?

TOMTE 2. Are you the one who's been hiding all the checkers and dominoes and dice?

TOMTE 3. Mmmmmmaybe.

TARFA. No, *our* job is to protect the farm! And make sure everything is growing well—

TOMTE 1. And the biggest thing—

TOMTE 2. The biggest thing—

TOMTE 3. Literally the biggest thing—

TARFA. We have to watch out for ... are ...

ALL. The trolls!

TARFA. Just past Hulta Wood here, did you see that big mountain? That's Troll Hill.

*(All TOMTES shudder.)*

TARFA *(cont'd)*. That is where two of the mightiest, meanest, biggest, hungriest trolls in all the world live—Jompa and Skimpa!

TOMTE 2. They've been around even longer than us!

TOMTE 1 *(gestures to TARFA)*. You think *he's* old—he's just a kid compared to Jompa and Skimpa!

TARFA. They're 4,000 years old!

TOMTE 3 (*gestures to an adult in the audience*). That's almost as old as him!

TOMTE 2. He's not 4,000 years old.

TOMTE 3. Then he's led a hard life, I'll tell you that.

TARFA. But these trolls—they're always looking for ways to hurt the farmers!

TOMTE 1. Stealing their goats.

TOMTE 2. Burning their crops.

TOMTE 3. Putting too much salt in their eggnog.

*(Beat.)*

TARFA. They don't do that.

TOMTE 3. Then ... who's been putting salt in my eggnog?

TARFA. But every time the trolls try to do harm—we Tomtes outsmart them.

TOMTE 2. Well, most of the time.

TARFA. That's true. Sometimes we, um, sometimes we lose the battle.

TOMTE 2. If we can have a moment of silence for Torborg Tomte.

*(They take off their hats. Beat.)*

TOMTE 3. I wondered why he wasn't here. *(Pause.)* I thought the house smelled better.

*(TOMTE 1 nudges him.)*

TARFA *(to the audience, putting his cap back on)*. But the big people, the humans, they've never actually *seen* the trolls or us Tomtes, but they still tell stories about us.

TOMTE 1. And leave us gifts!

TOMTE 2. Every Christmas Eve, the big people leave a bowl of rice pudding outside for us Tomtes—to say “thank you!”

TOMTE 3. And “keep up the good work!”

TARFA. But we know the big people exist! And that is what started *this* story—

*(TARFA steps into a special “storytelling light.” Perhaps there is special music as well.)*

TARFA (*cont’d*). The story of my grandson Tovik Tomte!

*(Young TOVIK, in a striped cap but beardless, leaps onstage brashly.)*

TOVIK. Me!

TARFA. Yes, him. Only 100 years old, but already sure he knows everything.

TOVIK (*beaming proudly*). ’Cause I do!

TARFA. We’ll see. One thing he *did* know: He loved a very particular big person.

TOVIK (*swooning*). Adelgunda!

*(ADELGUNDA appears with a basket in her own area, separate from the TOMTES, a young, not-too-bright woman wearing a traditional Swedish dress.)*

TARFA. Adelgunda was the big person daughter of the big person farmer. and she was—

TOVIK. Sweet.

TOMTES. Awww ...

TARFA. Yes, she was sweet, and she was—

TOVIK. Kind.

TOMTES. Awww ...

TARFA. Kind, yes ...

TOVIK. And she could milk a cow like nobody's business!

TOMTES (*truly appreciative*). Ohhhh!

TARFA. But like all other big people, she had no idea little  
Tovik was even around her!

*(ADELGUNDA hums a Swedish tune [perhaps ABBA, or something similar] and walks into the main area sprinkling seeds.*

*TOVIK pulls out an identical 8-inch-tall TOVIK puppet on a stick and proceeds to move the small puppet around human-sized ADELGUNDA, unseen as she works.*

*(Whenever TOVIK interacts with creatures larger than himself, the puppet will be used.)*

TOVIK. Adalgunda! I'll help! You're planting the strawberries too close to the carrots—let's move these seeds over a bit—  
*(Moves seeds as she continues tossing them, then she takes up a watering can.)*

Adalgunda! Over here! The cucumbers need the water!  
Over here, over—

*(She unintentionally pours "water" over him—he chokes and coughs.)*

Not on me! On the cucumbers!

*(She accidentally waters him again.)*

Do I look like a cucumber?

*(She moves on.)*

Oh well. Maybe I needed a bath anyway.

TARFA (*to the audience*). Now the person Adalgunda *did* see ... was another big person. A boy named—

TOVIK (*cheerfully*). Jorgen!

(*JORGEN, a cheerful, not-too-bright lad enters in traditional Swedish wear, stepping over to ADELGUNDA.*)

TOVIK (*cont'd, to the audience*). Jorgen is from the farm next door, and Adelgunda loves him sooo much, and he loves her soooo much, and I love her sooo much that I want her to be happy with him ...

JORGEN. *God morgon, Adelgunda.*

ADELGUNDA. *God morgon, Jorgen.*

(*Pause. They stand there awkwardly, shyly. The little TOVIK puppet dances around them unseen, expectantly.*)

TOVIK. Well? Say something! Say something!

JORGEN (*to ADELGUNDA*). I slipped in some cow poop this morning.

TOVIK. Not that! Don't say that!

ADELGUNDA. Really? (*Pause.*) I can hardly tell.

TOVIK (*hopping around*). Noo! This is awful! Say something romantic!

ADELGUNDA. Our cow—she's got some sort of odd skin disease.

TOVIK. NOOOO!

JORGEN. Really? That must be hard.

ADELGUNDA. It is. And kind of scaly.

TOVIK. Stop stop stop! (*Hops over to a stump or fence post and whistles like a bird.*)

ADELGUNDA. OH! You hear that sedge warbler?

JORGEN. I do! (*Beat.*) The only thing sweeter than the call of a sedge warbler is the sound of your voice.

ADELGUNDA. Really?

TOVIK (*hopping around*). Yes! Yes! Now we're getting somewhere!

JORGEN. Yes, the sound of your voice is so strong it makes my ears bleed.

TOVIK. Okay, stop again, enough—

ADELGUNDA. Our cow with the skin illness, sometimes her ears bleed as well.

*(TOVIK hangs his little puppet head in despair.)*

JORGEN. Maybe I could help.

ADELGUNDA. Would you?

TOVIK. Good good good ...

JORGEN. But first there is something I must tell you ...

TOVIK. Uh oh ...

JORGEN. As you know, I've recently become old enough to marry ...

TOVIK (*agape to JORGEN*). Whaaaaaaa.

ADELGUNDA. As have I.

TOVIK (*agape to ADELGUNDA*). Whaaaaaaa.

JORGEN. And I've been thinking ...

TOVIK (*beside himself with glee*). He's going to ask her to marry him! He's going to ask her to marry him!

JORGEN. As you know I'm not the most ... poetic person.

TOVIK. It's all right, spit it out, spit it out!

ADELGUNDA. Neither am I.

TOVIK. That's fine, you're perfect together, ASK THE QUESTION!

JORGEN. I guess we both can get a little tongue-tied.

TOVIK (*racing around angrily*). AAAAAAAAAAAHH!

ADELGUNDA. I know I can.

TOVIK (*taking little elf breaths*). Breathe ... breathe ...

JORGEN. Which makes this a little hard.

ADELGUNDA. I guess it does.

*(On the ground behind ADELGUNDA, a SNAKE puppet has been inching closer ... TOVIK sees it.)*

TOVIK. AAH! Snake! Adelgunda hates snakes! This will completely ruin the moment! (*Runs to the SNAKE, unseen by the humans.*) Get out! Shoo! Shoo!

*(The SNAKE rises up to attack.)*

SNAKE. SSSSSSS!

*(During the following, the SNAKE puppet attacks the TOVIK puppet in a frantic puppet battle—writhing, riding, bucking through the air—all unnoticed by the lovestruck humans.)*

JORGEN. But I do think since it's such a beautiful day ...

ADELGUNDA. It is that.

JORGEN. The sun shining so brightly ...

ADELGUNDA. The sedge warbler singing ...

JORGEN. Or it was singing.

ADELGUNDA. It was, it appears to have stopped now.

JORGEN. I wonder where it went?

ADELGUNDA. Perhaps home to its spouse and children.

JORGEN. Yes!

ADELGUNDA. Yes.

JORGEN. Which reminds me.

ADELGUNDA. Yes.

JORGEN. My point about being of marriageable age.

ADELGUNDA. Which I am as well.

JORGEN. Yes, I remember that.

ADELGUNDA. Me too.

*(And now from behind JORGEN, a SPIDER puppet starts creeping up, unseen by the humans.)*

TOVIK *(momentarily holding the SNAKE at bay)*. A spider??  
Jorgen hates spiders—if he sees that, he'll run off screaming!

*(TOVIK leaps for the SPIDER and they start writhing, boxing [eight legs!]*—but the snake joins in to oppose TOVIK—it's two against one!**

JORGEN. Isn't it funny how time has passed, and we've gotten so much older?

ADELGUNDA. I remember when we were both just children chasing chickens—

JORGEN. And eating what turned out to be somewhat poisonous plants!

ADELGUNDA. That was one of the longest nights of my life.

JORGEN. Mine as well.

ADELGUNDA. Yes.

JORGEN. And speaking of things feeling like eternity, I have been thinking of who I would like to spend my life with.

ADELGUNDA. I have been thinking about that as well!

JORGEN. Have you?

ADELGUNDA. Yes.

JORGEN. Isn't that funny?

ADELGUNDA. It's very funny, yes!

JORGEN. The humor keeps accumulating!

ADELGUNDA. Like snow before an avalanche!

*(TOVIK holds the SNAKE and SPIDER off while screaming at the humans.)*

TOVIK. ASK HER! ASK HIM! Somebody ask somebody! I can't do this forever!

JORGEN. Well, so I have been thinking—

ADELGUNDA. I as well—

JORGEN & ADELGUNDA. I'd like that person I spend my life with to be you.

Really?

You too?

What are the chances?

Oh wonderful!!

*(TOVIK holds down the SNAKE and SPIDER, panting. Both humans kneel simultaneously.)*

JORGEN & ADELGUNDA (*cont'd*). Will you marry me?

I would love too!

TOVIK. *Skol!*

JORGEN. Now let's go look at your sick cow!

ADELGUNDA. Let's!

*(They charge off as TOVIK releases the SNAKE and SPIDER, who go skittering off. TOVIK does a victorious dance, leaping around.)*

TARFA (*still in the storytelling light*). And that was last spring! The wedding is coming up on the first of the new

year, but before *that* we have Christmas, and before *that* we have my birthday!

*(The storytelling light goes out, and the other actors become TOMTES once again, cheering on TARFA.*

*And TOVIK, without the puppet, approaches.)*

TOVIK. Happy birthday, Grandfather!

TARFA. Tovik! I was just telling the other Tomtes about you!

TOMTE 1. About how you helped Adelgunda become engaged!

TOMTE 2. About the snake and spider!

TOMTE 3. About how you met the big bad wolf on the way to your grandmother's house!

*(They look at TOMTE 3.)*

TOMTE 2. Were you listening to the story *at all*?

TOVIK *(to TARFA)*. You told them about me helping Adelgunda last spring?

TARFA. I did.

TOVIK. But that was *my* story! I was going to tell my story!

TARFA. I was just using it as a warm-up to the great stories to come.

TOMTE 2. I'm sure you have other stories, Tovik.

TOMTE 3. Tell us another story!

TOMTE 1. We're all ears.

TOMTE 3. And beards.

TOVIK. Well ... there was the time ... I ... I ate my own weight in muffins!

*(Pause.)*