

# HOW TO MAKE A MRS MANCINI OR FAIRY DANCERS BOOK BAG



## HOW TO MAKE A CUSTOM BOOK BAG



When I give away copies of my books as presents, I love to make a special bag to fit it perfectly. People seem to love the bags almost as much as the books, and they are unbelievably simple to sew. Here are some basic instructions on how to make the bags, you too, can customise your gifts. The fabric bags are much nicer and more useful than paper wrapping or gift bags, and would be an excellent first machine sewing project for a child learning to sew.

The instructions are in two sizes: one for **The Tales of Mrs Mancini** and one for **The Fairy Dancers**, and of course, you can easily adapt them to suit whatever book you are giving away as a present.

### YOU WILL NEED

40cm **Mrs Mancini** or **Fairy Dancer** fabric cotton fabric (makes 2 bags)

The **Mrs Mancini** and **Fairy Dancer** fabric is available for purchase from [Spoonflower](#). A yard (as a US based company, Spoonflower sell in yards, not metres) will make six bags in the larger size if you cut carefully. Alternatively, purchase or select something from your stash that will tone in with the cover of the book.

60cm header tape or ribbon

Header tape is an inexpensive, woven tape used in curtain making. It's readily available from most draperies, is sturdy and comes in different colours. I use the cream and dusty pink ones from Spotlight.

A basic sewing machine

An overlocker makes the job twice as fast if you have one.

Matching thread, fabric scissors, a tape measure, erasable fabric pencil or chalk, a point turner or chopstick, FrayStopper (optional).

### STEP 1: CUTTING

Cut two rectangles from your fabric, each 23cm wide by 32cm tall (**The Tales of Mrs Mancini**) or 22cm wide by 27cm high (**The Fairy Dancers**). MOST OF THE MRS MANCINI AND FAIRY DANCER FABRICS HAVE DIRECTIONAL PATTERNS. CHECK THE FABRIC ORIENTATION BEFORE CUTTING.

If you are making the bag for a different book, run your tape measure all the way around it. Add 6cm to this measurement and divide it into two. This will be the width



of your bag. Measure the book from the top of its front cover to the bottom, under the bottom of the book, and up the back cover of the book to the top. Add 6cm to this measurement and divide it into two. This will be the height of your bag. Cut two rectangular pieces as above.

Cut your length of header tape or ribbon in half and trim the ends to give you two pieces of tape, each about 29cm long. If you're using Fray Stopper, run a line along the cut edge of the tape to seal it and allow it to dry while you are doing the sewing.

## STEP 2: SEWING THE BAG BODY

Pin the bag pieces right sides together. Using a quarter inch seam allowance, sew down one long side, across the short side (the bag bottom) and up the other long side, securing the start and finish of your work with a few back stitches.

If you used a sewing machine, switch over to zig-zag stitch and finish the raw edges of all the seams, as well as the raw edge of the bag opening.

If you are using an overlocker, seam down each side and secure any loose ends by tying them off. Overlock around the top of the bag opening.



Clip the bottom corners of the bag and turn it right side out. Use a chopstick or point turner to poke the corners into a nice shape and press the bag, paying particular attention to the seams.

## STEP 3: ADDING THE HANDLES

While your iron is nice and hot, turn over 2.5cm at the top of the bag to make a hem and press into position. (You can pin it in place if you like, but I find it isn't really necessary if you press it well.)



Take your dressmaker's tape and measure in two inches from the each of the outside seams. Mark this position with your chalk or fabric pencil, turn the bag over, and do the same on the other side. These marks show the position of your bag handles.



Pin the ends of the handles to the INSIDE of the bag, lining them up so that the left edge of the header tape is against the left hand mark and the right edge is against the right hand mark. Make sure that the end of the tape reaches right down to the zig-zagged/overlocked edge. Check that the handles are nice and even, and make sure there are no twists in the tape.

If your machine is still on zig-zag, turn it back to straight stitch.



Starting at the side seam, sew around the top of the bag 1.5cm from the folded edge to secure the hem and sew the bag handles in place. If you like, you can sew a second line of stitching 2cm from the folded edge for extra strength.

Rub out the marks and press the bag again. Pop a book inside, and you're finished!

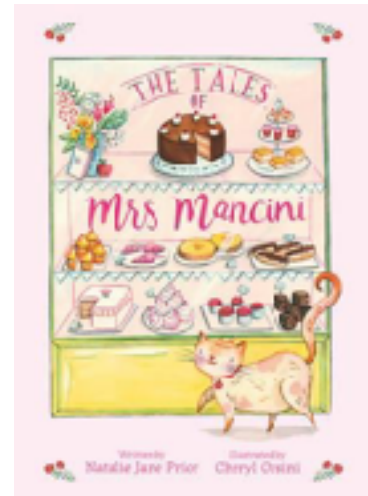


**The Tales of Mrs Mancini** by Natalie Jane Prior and Cheryl Orsini, ABC Books, 2016

*The Tales Of Mrs Mancini* tells the story of a cat who, together with her human friend, Filippina, runs a cake shop full of delectable treats. Alongside her flair for flan, Mrs Mancini also has a special ability to bring lonely children together.

A collection of three fully illustrated short stories celebrating friends and friendship!

Buy [The Tales of Mrs Mancini](#)



**The Fairy Dancers** by Natalie Jane Prior and Cheryl Orsini, ABC Books, 2015

Every Saturday, with a hop, a skip and a magical twirl, Mia, Emma and Grace turn into ... fairy dancers! Enter their enchanted world of fun, friendship, fairy wings and dancing.

Buy [The Fairy Dancers](#)



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