

The Music Notes of Music Land

In

The Search for Silent Island

*In a place that's not so far
From me or you,
Or the twinkling stars,
The music notes all live and play
Sweet melodies throughout the day;
In harmony they play and sing:
There's never discord, noise or din.
So come and join the merry band,
The Music Notes of Music Land!*

It was Montie Minim's birthday, and all the music notes had come to the grand birthday feast in Concord Castle. Montie Minim, a beautiful white mouse with a tall black tail, sat at the top of the feast table in the great hall surrounded by her four very best friends, Chris the Crotchet Creature, Sloth the Semibreve Snail, and Braver and Waver the Pair of Quavers. They sang to Montie Minim in their very best voices:

(Sing 'Happy Birthday')

After the Music Notes had tucked into huge pieces of the delicious cake, Braver banged his sword and shield together and a hush fell over the great hall.

'Time for the Birthday Note's Story!' Braver announced. It was the custom in Music Land for the music note whose birthday it was to sing a special song for the others, a song that told a story. Montie Minim smiled and began to sing.

*There is an island far away,
So tells the ancient story,
Where dragons guard in fierce array,
And every sound must go away,
For this is Silent Island, Silent Island, Silent Island...*

'Huh!' grunted Chris the Crotchet Creature. 'She sings the same one every year. What a lot of nonsense- Silent Island indeed.'

'Crotchet – by – name – and – crotchety – by – nature', remarked Sloth the Semibreve Snail.

'Well I think it's true,' declared Montie Minim. Braver did, too. 'Adventure!' exclaimed Braver. 'Daring, and peril! I say we search out this island and discover just how silent it really is! What do you say, Waver?'

‘Er, no...’ began Waver, his legs trembling with fright. ‘Dragons really aren’t my thing...’

But no one listened to Waver. They would embark on their adventure to find Silent Island the very next day.

As the sun rose over Music Land, the Music Notes started on their way. Sometimes, they found themselves on a treble clef path, which took them over high, rolling hilltops, and made their voices sound high to match. At other times, they had to take bass clef paths that led them through muddy bogs and slimy swamps, and turned their voices deep and growly.

Suddenly, there was a loud shriek and Braver and Waver toppled to the ground. As Montie, Sloth and Chris hurried to help their friends, they saw that there was someone else rising from the crumpled heap on the grass. It was a small, black, funny-shaped creature.

‘You tripped us up,’ Braver accused the creature.

‘I was *trying* to sleep,’ she retorted, looking cross.

‘You probably needed waking up anyway,’ said Chris. ‘You are only allowed to rest for one beat you know. Friends, meet Christine Crotchet Rest.’

‘Pleased to meet you, I think,’ Christine yawned, stretching out her arms.

*I’m Christine Crotchet Rest
And I love to sleep,
But don’t forget to wake me
After just one beat!*

The Music Notes said goodbye to Christine Crotchet Rest and continued on their way. It wasn’t long before the path suddenly stopped and they found themselves face to face with the highest mountain they had ever seen. Either side of the mountain were but huge, jagged rocks.

‘A sign, a sign!’ Braver exclaimed. ‘Stand back, I’ll read it.’

Crescendo Mountain

WARNING: Any music note climbing this mountain will find themselves getting louder and louder and louder until they are very loud indeed. Signed, *Crescendo Cat, 21A Crescendo Mountain.*

P.S If you want to get quieter again you’ll have to see Diminuendo Dog about that. You’ll find him on the other side of the mountain.

‘It looks like we have no choice,’ said Braver. ‘Up the mountain, everyone!’

*Up the mountain,
Up the mountain,
Climbing higher,
Getting louder!
Louder and louder
As we go,
Forte, forte,
Fortissimo!*

'What now?' shouted Chris the Crotchet Creature loudly when they reached the top.

'It was on the sign-we've got to find Diminuendo Dog,' Montie Minim replied in an equally booming voice. 'Come on, down here.'

Diminuendo Dog, a friendly-looking Dalmation chewing a soft, fluffy slipper, soon quelled their fears. 'Just climb down my side of the mountain into Diminuendo Dell,' he told them. 'Very pretty it is-lots of flowers. Oh, and it's very quiet.'

'Down the mountain, everyone,' said Sloth.

*Down the mountain,
Down the mountain,
Getting quieter,
Climbing down.
Softer and softer
As we go,
Piano, piano,
Pianissimo.*

Diminuendo Dell was just as pretty as Diminuendo Dog had described. Shaded by leafy trees and carpeted with moss as soft as velvet, it was the perfect place for a rest.

As Sloth rested, something funny happened to his slime. Instead of semibreves for his trail, he had little rectangles of slime, and they were hanging on the line!

*Slime, hanging on the line,
Means rest for four!
(One-two-three-four)
Slime, hanging on the line,
Means rest for four!
(One-two-three-four)
If you see that slime,
Hanging on the line,
You know it's really time
To rest for four,*

*(One-two -three-four)
Rest for four,
(One-two-three-four)
Rest for four!
(One-two-three-four)*

After a lovely rest, the music notes got up. All, that is, apart from one. Chris the Crotchet Creature stayed exactly where he was, a very grumpy frown on his face.

*The journey's long, the path is rough,
I think that I have had enough:
That's it- I'm off for home,
Not Silent Island.*

With a kind look, Montie Minim pulled Chris gently to his feet, patted him on the back and began to sing, the other music notes soon joining in:

*Music notes must stick together,
What is one without the other?
Only in our family
Can we make tuneful melody.
Music notes must stick together,
What is one without the other?
Only in our family
Can we make tuneful melody.*

'All right, all right,' said Chris as they set off once more. As he looked around at his four best friends and realised how true their words were, the grumpy frown soon vanished from his face. Soon, they had come out of the woodland into the bright sunlight. Before their eyes was the sea, and a bridge going to an island. But at the end of the bridge were four: DRAGONS!

Waver was terrified and tried to run away, but, of course, he couldn't go far. Step by step, they crossed the bridge, and when they were nearly across the dragons opened their mouths.

*Roar, roar, roar!
Dragons one, two, three and four!
Roar, roar, roar!
You're not coming through this door!
Everything inside our land is silent,
So your noisy band
Is banned!*

Braver was about to draw his sword in battle, when Waver whispered something into his ear. Slowly, very slowly, the notes began to play the most beautiful music that you can imagine.

As the music died away, so did the dragons' fire, quenched by the tears that were rolling down their faces.

'Music! We'd forgotten about music!'

The dragon told them that when someone blew a horn in the King of Silent Island's ear fifty years ago he banished all sound from the island. But he, he too, had forgotten about music! You had better meet him. Come, through the gate.'

* * * * *

'Off with their heads!' whispered the King fiercely, as the music notes stood before his throne. 'What? What was that? *Music*? Did you say *music*?' A glimmer of recognition flickered across the king's face. 'I think I might have met your kind before, a long time ago... Tell me who you are, and what you do.'

'We, sir,' declared Braver, his own voice wobbling for once, 'are Braver and Waver, the Pair of Quavers.'

*Braver and Waver
The pair of Quavers,
Best of friends, you'll find they often
Stick together:
Braver first, he's oh-so bold,
Says 'Waver, here's my hand to hold',
So when you're playing music
It is sometimes quite a feat
To fit those two into a single,
Yes, a single beat!
Ta-te, ta-te, ta-te, ta-te,
Ta-te, ta-te, Ta-te!*

The king looked in wonder at his foot, which had been tapping in time with the music. 'Go on, go on,' he said slowly, his voice a little louder now.

'Introducing,' said Braver, 'Chris the Crotchet Creature!'

*Chris the Crotchet Creature
Is a very clever teacher;
With lots of legs and lots of feet,
He says 'hold me for just one beat':
Ta, ta, ta, ta,
Ta, ta, ta, ta,
Ta, ta, ta, ta,*

Ta!

‘And presenting to you,’ Braver proclaimed with a flourish, ‘Minty Monim!...No, er, Montie Minim!’

*Montie Minim,
White mouse, tail out,
Says to you
‘Hold me for two’:
Ta-a, ta-a,
Ta-a, ta-a,
Ta-a, ta-a,
Ta-a, ta-a.*

‘I’ll take over, Braver.’

Everyone looked in amazement at Waver as he stepped forward. It had been Waver’s wise thinking that had got them past the dragons, they all realised, and they suddenly knew why he had become a knight.

‘This,’ Waver announced quietly, ‘is our slow but steady friend, Sloth the Semibreve Snail.’

*Snails are slow,
But they adore
That semibreves
Are held for four:
Ta-a-a-a,
Ta-a-a-a,
Ta-a-a-a,
Ta-a-a-a,
Ta-a-a-a,
Ta-a-a-a,
Ta-a-a-a,
Ta-a-a-a.*

The king clapped his hands and jumped to his feet. ‘Silent Island,’ he announced, ‘I declare you to have a new name- Music Island! Let there be music, yes, singing and playing!’

The people and music notes cheered, and the music that would never again leave the island began to play.

