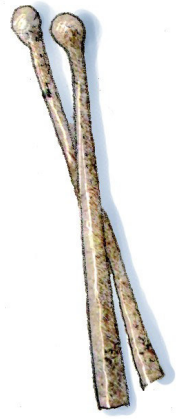


# The Sandman's Band



“I’m a star now!” the Sandman announced, putting two fingers up, V-shaped. “A rock star!”

“Really? How did this happen all of a sudden?” Marilyn asked.

“Oh, you know how it is. Everyone has some kind of a hobby. I was thinking that if I won’t become a famous writer, I might as well become a music star.”

“And what kind of instrument do you play then?” Marilyn asked.

“I play the drums,” the Sandman replied and got a pair of drum sticks from his back pocket. He struck the sticks against the bed, the table, the chair, the pillow, the carpet, and the mattress.

“Hey, you’ve got a pretty decent sound here!”

“What does that mean?” Marilyn asked.

“It means that it sounds really good here. I should bring my band here to rehearse.”

“No way!” Marilyn refused. “I don’t want any bands practicing here. I’ll better come to one of your concerts.”

“We haven’t been invited to play anywhere yet,” the Sandman said. “We only had a gig at a little girl’s place but we got kicked out from there with a broom.”

“How come?” Marilyn asked.

“Her mother said that it was just plain awful.”

“I see,” Marilyn said. “But why was it so awful then?”

“You see, we haven’t had the time yet to learn to play properly. The keyboard player keeps mixing up black and white keys and the guitarist sometimes tries to hold the guitar the other way around. Otherwise it wouldn’t be that bad but the singer can’t really hold a tune.”

“Things seem to be pretty bad then,” Marilyn figured.

“Well, but the contrabass player gets it right. Or at least based on the roaring sounds that he makes, I can’t say that he plays out of tune.”

“You know what, Sandman,” Marilyn said. “Why don’t you invite this band of yours to rehearse here after all. See, my sister Lucy takes piano lessons at the music school and I think that she will be able to help you sound better.”

“Are you being serious?” The Sandman was happy. “You mean right now?”

“Well, yes, because the parents are out late tonight and Lucy is so bored that she’s watching a horror film on TV.”

Sandman jumped onto the desk, picked up the phone and started making calls. In ten minutes, the Sandman and three elves were sitting at Marilyn’s bed, everyone carrying their own instrument. One of the elves was bald for some reason.

Lucy sat at her electronic piano and announced in an important voice:

“Now let’s learn an elf song.” She played the tune and

sang a few lines for them:

*Who lives in the thick woods?*

*Who lives in the thick woods? Who lives in the thick woods?*

*There lives an elf.*

*There lives a small elf, there lives an elf.*

“What a cool song!” the elves said. The bald elf touched his bare head with his hand and added: “And a true story as well.”

In the beginning, they really didn’t sound well together, but after Lucy had shown the right notes to everyone, it started to get better.

Marilyn also sang along and the Sandman was drum-



ming on the pillow. The dust ball Messy came up from the basement and Richie the Rat climbed out from under the closet. Extraterrestrial Truth also appeared from somewhere and soon enough Arnold the Clock Cuckoo also stuck his head out from the clock. Also their baby brother William came from the other room and snuggled under the blanket next to Marilyn. Everyone was singing the elf song. The Sandman felt over the moon.

“You have an extraterrestrial sound here!” Extraterrestrial Truth said and joined the choir:

*He bakes delicious bread, he bakes bread.*

*How much is a loaf of bread?*

*How much is a small loaf of bread, how much is a loaf of bread?*

*You have to strike his head three times,*

*three really long times, three really long times.*

In the end, things got so out of hand that Marilyn was dancing around the room with Richie the Rat, dust ball Messy and the Extraterrestrial Truth, and Arnold the Clock Cuckoo performed a proper solo by falling onto the bed from the clock. William was jumping up and down on the bed like crazy and yelling “Yeah!” while the others were singing.

All this singing and dancing went on until they could hear steps on the staircase and a key turning in the keyhole.

“Mum and Dad!” Marilyn shouted.

Everyone was gone in a moment and when Mum peeked into Marilyn’s room at the door, her daughter seemed to be fast asleep. Mum turned off the lights and everyone climbed out again from somewhere.

“I suppose we ought to finish for tonight,” the Sandman figured.

They said their goodbyes and everyone went in their own direction – Messy and Richie to the basement, Arnold inside the clock, Truth to his own home and elves to their home. The Sandman opened his sand sack and took a tiny bit of sleep sand. He spread the sand in Marilyn, William and Lucy’s eyes and soon enough, all the children were fast asleep.

The Sandman stuck the drum sticks in his pocket and walked away, with a glowing smile on his face.

