



MelodyMice

Meet the Cast

STANDARD EDITION

Spark & Anvil

Copyright & License

© 2026 Spark & Anvil (501(c)(3) public charity). Chapter text and illustrations licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. App software © Spark & Anvil — all rights reserved. Distribute, adapt, and remix freely for educational use with attribution.

This book collects 3 chapter books from the MelodyMice cast — each character embodies a different curricular primitive; together they teach the full subject.

Methodology: distributed-narrative learning per Bruner narrative-cognition + Habgood intrinsic-integration + SAMHSA TIP 57 trauma-informed register.

Spark & Anvil is a 501(c)(3) public charity. All apps free forever; no ads; no tracking; no in-app purchases.

spark-and-anvil.com

For everyone who learns by hearing a story first.

Contents

[Copyright & License](#)

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

Tap-Tap

Sing-Back

Shaky

[About Spark & Anvil](#)

[More chapter books from Spark & Anvil](#)

[Methodology](#)

[License](#)

Introduction

The MelodyMice cast was authored to embody the curriculum, not decorate around it. Each of the 3 characters you'll meet in this book teaches a specific primitive — a particular tactic, a particular technique, a particular way of seeing. Together they form an ensemble: the cast IS the curriculum.

Read in any order. Each chapter stands alone.

Each character also appears in the matching Spark & Anvil app (free, forever) where you can practice what they teach.

— *The editors at Spark & Anvil*

Tap-Tap

*STEADY BEAT — *steady beat. keep going.**



Tap-Tap is a soft cream-and-grey field-mouse-kid in striped overalls and chunky boots, with a tiny tambourine clipped to her belt. She taps her foot as she walks — *tap. tap. tap. tap.* — keeping a steady beat, and little glowing sound-dots float up from her boot with every tap.

Tap-Tap's special skill is keeping the beat *steady* — not fast, not slow, just steady, the same friendly pace, over and over. When music plays, her foot matches it. When there's no music, her foot keeps its own beat going all by itself. She taps her boot a few times, the dots glowing, and says her gentle words: "Steady beat. Keep going."



Tap-Tap found her steady beat in the quietest, coziest place of all.

When she was a tiny mouse, she couldn't sleep one night — everything felt jumbly and fast inside her. So she curled up close and listened, and she heard something slow and even and sure: *thump-thump... thump-thump...* — a heartbeat. Steady. Never rushing, never dragging. Just... keeping on.

"It made me feel so *safe*," Tap-Tap says. "That steady thump, going and going, the same every time." From then on she started tapping that steady, heartbeat pace with her own little foot — and it made the jumbly feelings settle right down. "A steady beat is like a heart," she likes to say. "It just keeps going, calm and cozy." She's tapped it ever since.



Today, Squeak brings the kid to the rhythm-corner to visit Tap-Tap. Squeak is right there — the band-leader — and a grown-up too.

"Watch Tap-Tap's foot," Squeak says. "Then YOU tap. Steady beat, keep going. Use your foot, your hand, your knee, your tambourine — any tapping is tap-tapping. Match Tap-Tap's beat."



Tap-Tap taps a steady, cozy pace, and the kid taps along — and a grown-up can tap too; the whole family can tap together, because tapping is fun *together*. And here's the most important part: Tap-Tap *never* says "you tapped too fast" or "you missed the beat." Tapping *at all* is tap-tapping success — every single time. If the kid's beat is faster or slower than hers, that's still tapping, still wonderful; Tap-Tap just keeps her own beat going steady, and the kid taps along however feels good. She'll never grade a beat. If the kid wants the tambourine, she unclips it and hands it right over — shake it, bang it, tap it, *any* tambourine-noise is good tambourine-noise. The point is *moving and feeling the beat*, never matching it perfectly.



"Steady beat. Keep going." That's Tap-Tap.

And when you tap along — foot or hand or tambourine, steady and cozy — a calm, warm, happy feeling settles right through your body, snug as a heartbeat, glad as a favorite song. That steady, safe, cozy feeling — *tap, tap, tap, keep going* — with a friend beside you and a grown-up too, is the very best part of the music.

Sing-Back

*CALL-AND-RESPONSE — *I sing. You sing.**



Sing-Back is a warm-russet dormouse-kid in a soft acorn-cap and a tiny bowtie. Musical-note sparkles float from her mouth when she sings, and her hand cups behind her ear while she waits to hear back. She lives in Squeak's call-and-response corner — a little singing-circle on soft grass.

Sing-Back's special skill is *call-and-response* singing. She sings a short little phrase — just a few notes — and then *waits*. The kid sings it back, or hums it, or taps it, or answers however they like. Then Sing-Back sings a *new* little phrase, and the kid answers again. Back and forth, back and forth. She sings a tiny three-note phrase, the sparkles float, she cups her hand behind her ear, and says her gentle words: "I sing. You sing."



Sing-Back learned to love singing-back from her grandmother, on cozy evenings by the acorn-fire.

Her grandmother would sing a little phrase, soft and warm, and wait — hand cupped behind her ear — for tiny Sing-Back to answer. And little Sing-Back's answer was *never* quite the same notes; her small voice wobbled and squeaked. But her grandmother's face would light up *every* time, as if the wobbly answer were the most beautiful sound in the world.

"She never once said I was off-key," Sing-Back remembers. "She just looked so *glad* that I sang back at all." And that gladness made Sing-Back feel warm and brave and loved — never ashamed of her little voice. "That's the whole gift of singing-back," she says. "It's not about the *right* notes. It's about the *together*." She's passed that warm, no-wrong-notes gladness along ever since.



Today, Squeak brings the kid to the singing-circle to visit Sing-Back. Squeak is right there — the band-leader — and a grown-up too.

"Watch Sing-Back call," Squeak says. "Then YOU respond. I sing, you sing. Sing it back, hum it, tap it, use any sound. Any response is a good response."



Sing-Back sings her little call and cups her ear, and the kid answers — however they like. A grown-up can sing back too; their voices can be different and both wonderful. And here's what matters most: Sing-Back *never* says "that was off-key" or "try to match my pitch." *Whatever* the kid sings back is exactly the right response — the kid's own voice, the kid's own pitch, the kid's own timing, all of it welcome. (Little kids are still growing their pitch-matching, and Sing-Back would never, ever teach a child to feel shy about their voice. Singing *at all* is success.) And if the kid wants to make up their *own* little phrase instead? That's wonderful too — now the kid is the caller, and Sing-Back cups her ear and sings *their* phrase back. They can switch, back and forth, as long as they like.



"I sing. You sing." That's Sing-Back.

And when your song comes back to you — warm and friendly, from a friend who's so glad you sang at all — you feel it right in your tummy: happy, safe, and cozy, glad all the way through that someone is singing *with* you. That warm, sung-together, no-wrong-notes feeling is the very best part of the music.

Shaky

*INSTRUMENT EXPLORATION — *new sound. try it.**



Shaky is a soft warm-amber harvest-mouse-kid in pocketed overalls *stuffed* with mini-instruments — a different one poking out of every pocket: a tiny shaker, a small bell, a wooden block, a mini-drum, a finger-cymbal, a little egg-shaker. Wherever she goes, she pulls out a *different* instrument and plays it, and shake/ring/boom sparkles match whichever one she's holding. She lives in Squeak's instrument-corner, a little wooden bench covered in small instruments.

Shaky's special skill is *trying new sounds*. Every instrument makes its own sound — its *timbre*. A bell *rings*. A drum *booms*. A shaker *swishes*. A wooden block *clacks*. A finger-cymbal *chimes*. Shaky helps the kid *hear* each different sound and *try* each instrument. She pulls a shaker from a pocket, gives it a shake — *sw-sw-sw-swish* — and says her gentle words: "New sound. Try it."



Shaky became the Instrument-Tryer because of one boring, silent afternoon that turned magic.

When she was very little, she thought she wasn't "musical" — she couldn't play anything *properly*, so she figured music wasn't for her. Then she found an old bell in a dusty pocket and, just curious, gave it a *ring*. The sound sparkled out — bright and silvery — and something happy fizzed up inside her. She rang it again. Then she found a wooden block and made it *clack*. Then a shaker: *swish!*

"Nobody told me the *right* way," Shaky says, eyes bright. "I just *tried* — and every new sound was a little surprise, a little gift. That's when I stopped worrying about being 'musical' and just started *exploring*." She's been trying new sounds, and loving every one, ever since.



Today, Squeak brings the kid to the instrument-corner to visit Shaky. Squeak is right there — the band-leader — and a grown-up too.

"Watch Shaky shake," Squeak says. "Then YOU try. New sound, try it. Pick an instrument, make a sound. Try a different one, make a different sound."



Shaky lets the kid try them all — bell, block, drum, shaker, cymbal — one at a time, so they can hear each one's own personality: some loud, some gentle, some quick, some long. A grown-up can try too; different instruments and different people together make *band practice*! And Shaky *never* says "that's not how you play it" or "you're doing it wrong." *Any* way of playing is good playing — banging gently? Yes. Shaking softly? Yes. Tapping with one finger? Yes. Any noise the instrument makes is welcome noise, because *experimenting with sound* is the whole goal; there's no wrong-way-to-play here. And if the kid wants to play *two* at once — a shaker in one paw, a bell in the other — Shaky *loves* that: lots of sounds at once! Best of all, sometimes she reaches into a deep pocket and pulls out a brand-*new* instrument the kid has never seen. "New sound. Try it!" — and the kid gets to discover, all on their own, what it sounds like.



"New sound. Try it." That's Shaky.

And when you try a new sound — a ring, a boom, a swish that *you* made happen — something happy fizzes up inside you, warm and bright and proud: that glad, surprised, *I-made-that!* feeling. That fizzy, joyful, look-what-I-can-do feeling, with a friend beside you and a grown-up too, is the very best part of all.

About Spark & Anvil

Spark & Anvil is a 501(c)(3) public charity. We make educational apps for ages 9-14 — all free, forever; no ads; no tracking; no in-app purchases. MelodyMice is one of 140+ apps in the portfolio.

More chapter books from Spark & Anvil

Each app in the Spark & Anvil portfolio publishes its own illustrated chapter book + audio drama, available free from **spark-and-anvil.com/books**. Highlights include:

- **GambitTales** — chess tactics through Sir Pinwell, Lady Skewer, Queen Vesper, and the Twin Knights of Fork Hill
- **ProofQuest** — formal proof techniques through Direct-Proof Dora and the Lemma Library
- **CuriosityQuest** — Texas geography exploration through Linger, Notice, and the Lantern in the Dark
- **QuillSpell** — spelling craft through the Word Wizard cast
- **SynaForge** — sensory-affirming creative tools through Lull, Soften, and the Quiet that is Also Creating

Methodology

Distributed-narrative pedagogy per Jerome Bruner (narrative-cognition) + Sebastian Habgood (intrinsic-integration in educational games) + SAMHSA TIP 57 (trauma-informed register).

Trauma-informed-design framework per Eggleston et al. (2025) and Stoltenburg et al. (2024).

License

© 2026 Spark & Anvil (501(c)(3) public charity). Chapter text and illustrations licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. App software © Spark & Anvil — all rights reserved. Distribute, adapt, and remix freely for educational use with attribution.

Cover art, chapter illustrations, and chapter text are reviewed for age-appropriate, trauma-aware content before publication. Audio drama transcripts available at spark-and-anvil.com/cast.