

# The Humming Machine

Berlie Doherty

*Random House Children's Publishers UK*

# Contents

Cover

About the Book

Title Page

Dedication

Stop That Noise

The Humming Machine

“Remember the Sapphire Stars?”

Once in a Blue Moon

A Wind of Diamonds

Faery Again

Nightmares

The Forest of Ten Thousand Soldier Trees

The Flame-Reader

The Flame-Reader’s Story

The White Path

The Emerald Bird

The Stinking Fox

The Boy Tobit

“You’re All Mine!”

The Midnight Bear

Fairy Bargains

The King of the Fairies

Oban

The Green Passage

About the Author

Also by Young Corgi

Copyright

# About the Book

When his Great-grandpa gets a wonderful humming machine, it's the start of new adventure for Tam. The King of Faery has seen Great-grandpa and the machine and wants them both, so he magics them off to Faery. Now it's up to Tam, once more, to travel to that magical land and, with the help of his old friends, try to bring Great-grandpa home. A fabulous sequel to *The Starburster* from a Carnegie Medal winning author.

# The Humming Machine

Berlie Doherty  
Illustrated by Lesley Harker

RHCP DIGITAL

*For Tommy*



## Stop That Noise

Tam was dreaming about a wonderful little tube called a starburster. When he looked through it he saw the most gorgeous shapes and colours. He had dreamed the same thing every night since midsummer's day, and he always enjoyed the dream till he got to the last bit, when he had to give the starburster away. But tonight something woke him up before he got to that bit.

Tam sat up in bed with a start. There was a terrible noise coming from somewhere. It sounded like a tin can full of bees, all buzzing at once. Or a motorbike in the bath. Or a piano being dropped downstairs - *buzz thump clang wuzz ding fuzz*.

It was awful, and it was coming from Great-grandpa Toby's room. Tam jumped out of bed and ran to see what was happening. Everyone was awake now. Mum was shouting, Baby Blue was screaming, and Dad was hammering on Great-grandpa Toby's door.



“Stop that noise!” everyone shouted - except for Blue, who stopped screaming, took a deep breath and screamed again, only louder.

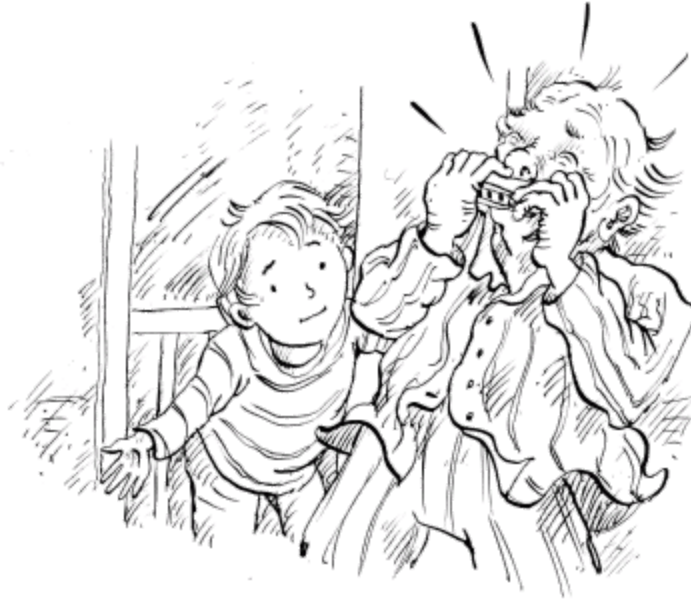
The noise from Great-grandpa’s room grew wilder and buzzier, and much worse. And now there was a kind of thumping sound too. The floor was shaking and creaking.

“You’re a noisy old nuisance!” shouted Dad. “I wish you’d go and live somewhere else.” He stormed off back to bed.

But the buzzing and thudding and creaking didn’t stop.

Tam pushed open the door and peered in.

Great-grandpa Toby was dressed in his red stripy pyjamas. He was bouncing round the room, up and down, one step, two steps, kick, hop, jump. He was holding both his hands up to his mouth as if he was eating a sandwich. And the buzzy tin can motorbike piano noise was coming from him!



“How do you do that?” Tam shouted. And again, “How do you do it?”

But Great-grandpa Toby had his eyes closed and couldn’t see Tam. The noise he was making was so loud that he couldn’t hear him. And he was jumping and kicking and hopping so wildly that it was impossible to get anywhere near. It was a terrible shindig he was making.

At last he stopped. He sank down on the edge of his bed with a sigh like a vacuum cleaner that’s just been switched off. His room was filled with silence. Beautiful, white, cool silence.

But Tam was still shouting, “*How do you do that?*”

He noticed that the noise had stopped.

“Great-grandpa,” he whispered. “Tell me.”

Great-grandpa opened his eyes and beamed at Tam. “My word, that was fun!” he said. “Look, Tam, isn’t it beautiful!” He opened his hands and showed Tam a shiny silver mouth organ. “I bought it today. It’s a humming machine.”





## The Humming Machine

All next day Great-grandpa and Tam took it in turns to play the humming machine. Great-grandpa had to show Tam how to do it.

“Put it against your lips. Now, you suck in to make one sound, and you blow out to make another. And you slide it from side to side to do the do-ray-mi’s. It’s easy. As easy as breathing. As easy as humming a tune.”

It made Tam’s teeth feel tingly and his lips feel rubbery, and it tasted horrible, like the taste you get when you’ve just lost a tooth. But the noise it made inside his head was really exciting.

Dad said he’d had enough of it and was glad he was out at work all day. Mum said it gave her a headache, and she put the radio on really loud to drown out the noise. Baby Blue hated the sound at first, but she got used to it and started to gurgle and giggle whenever she heard it.