



Loud Lori

by Douglas Evans

Lori liked being loud. She liked to play loud games and sing loud songs. She talked loudly and chewed her gum loudly. When Lori watched TV, the sound was turned up high. When she took a bath, she splashed and splashed to make as much noise as possible. Lori never walked softly through her house, but stomped her feet. She never ate quietly, but chomped her food with her mouth wide open.

“Lori, please don’t scream in the backyard,” her mother said.

“I’m loud, and that’s that way I like it,” Lori replied.

“Lori, please don’t slam your desktop,” said her teacher at school.

“I’m loud, and that’s how I want to be,” said Lori.

Lori lived on a narrow street in a peaceful neighborhood. One day

she sat in her bedroom, banging on some bongos when her friend, Quinn, came to the front door. Quinn rang the doorbell, but Lori was drumming so loudly that she didn't hear it ring.

“Lori! Lori, it's me!” Quinn shouted. “Lori, I've come to play with you.”

When no one answered the door, Quinn stood below Lori's bedroom window and shouted louder, “Lori! Lori! Stop playing your bongos! Lori! Looooori!”

Meanwhile, Mr. Lynch, Lori's neighbor, sat in his living room watching TV.

“Can't hear my program through all that yelling outside,” he grumbled. “It's too hot to close the window, so I must turn up the volume.”

Mr. Lynch pushed the sound button on his TV remote until the TV drowned out the shouting next door.

At the same time, Zoe sat on the curb across the street. The teenager was listening to a baseball game on her radio.

“Mr. Lynch's TV is up so loud I can't hear the game,” she said.

She turned up the volume on her radio, and when she still heard the TV, she raised the sound level even higher.

Moments later, a window in Zoe's house flew open. Zoe's father, wearing a bathrobe, leaned out the window.

“Zoe! Turn that radio down!” he called out. “I can't take a nap with

all that racket! Can you hear me, Zoe? Turn down your radio!”

Although Zoe couldn't hear her father, Mrs. Barnswallow, who lived next door, heard him loud and clear. Mrs. Barnswallow sat at her piano, practicing scales. The yelling blocked out every note she played.

“Quiet! Quiet!” she sang out. “I must play my music louder just to hear the notes.” And she struck the piano keys harder.

Ting! Ting! Ting! went the piano, loud enough to drown out Zoe's father, who was shouting over Zoe's radio, that was turned up to cover Mr. Lynch's TV, with its sound raised to be heard above Quinn's calls to Lori, who was still banging on her bongos.

“I'm loud, and that's the way I like it,” Lori said.

At this point, Elsie Halfpenny drove down the narrow street in her compact car. While stopped at a stop sign, she turned up the rock music on her car stereo to hear it above Mrs. Barnswallow's piano. This led Tom Loblobby in the car behind her to honk his horn. The honks caused a poodle on the sidewalk to start barking, which set off a hound dog in the next yard howling.

Finally, Lori stopped her drumming. She sat still and made a face. The clamor coming through her bedroom window was tremendous.

“Such a noisy neighborhood,” she said. “Everyone is being loud. How rude! It's so noisy outside I can't hear a thing.”

Lori stepped to the window and spotted Quinn. She held a finger to

her lips, and Quinn stopped shouting. Almost at once, the TV sound stopped coming from Mr. Lynch's house, and Zoe lowered the volume on her radio. Zoe's father stopped yelling, and Mrs. Barnswallow played her piano softer. Soon, Elsie Halfpenny dropped the volume on her car radio; Tom Loblolly quit honking, and the two dogs grew quiet.

Lori listened to the silence.

"Much better," she said. "My neighborhood is quiet, and that's the way I like it."

Then Lori ran downstairs to play a game with Quinn, but not too loudly.