

The Full Moon Song

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All of a sudden the strange sound faded in just as it was getting dark, like slowly turning up the volume on a gigantic sound system. Every person in the whole world heard it but no one could tell where it was coming from. It seemed to be both quiet and loud, gentle and strong and very near but very far away, all at the same time.

Everybody stopped what they were doing to listen. It sounded like music, but with notes that nobody had heard before, that you couldn't whistle or sing or write down to play on a piano. Most people agreed it was beautiful but a few moaned about it being too loud and it keeping them awake at night.

Then it stopped, and everybody went back to their normal lives like it was a dream - going to school, working in offices and factories, growing things in fields, feeding families, looking after people, knocking down old things and building up new ones.

When the music suddenly came back a few weeks later, people were even more surprised than the first time. "It's back!" they all shouted, and then stood in silence and listened like before, hypnotised by its strangeness. Some grumbled "*That racket again!*"

But not everybody was surprised. Some people had a feeling it might come back and were ready for it this time. They had prepared sophisticated machines for listening and recording. The most powerful computers in the world were given the job of analysing the sound and finding out just where it was coming from.

It didn't take long for all this high technology to work it out. A presentation was prepared and broadcast live on television and the internet - *everybody* was watching. A serious woman stood behind a lectern and declared "We can confirm that the sound is coming from the Moon, when it is full."

It was given a name - the Lunar Synodic Non-linear Harmonic Frequency Emitting Phenomena, or L.S.N.L.H.F.E.P. for short, but that didn't catch on so most people just called it the Full Moon Song

and when it began every month they sat and listened to it with their eyes closed, feeling dreamy and calm.

Actually not *everybody* had their eyes closed. Some people listened to it in research laboratories while staring at screens full of numbers, algorithms and computer diagrams of sound waves. The L.S.N.L.H.F.E.P. was such an extraordinary and strange thing that it needed to be studied and understood. Maybe it could help us to cure diseases, provide endless energy or feed the world. Perhaps it could be used to defend ourselves or attack our enemies.

It didn't take long for big arguments to start, between those that said we should just relax and enjoy the Full Moon Song for what it was and others who told everyone they should cover their ears and do NON-STOP SHOUTING because the music was weird and alien and hearing it was Very Bad for us. There were many who wanted to learn its secrets and use it for the good of humanity, and of course quite a few who wondered if it could be used to make money or blow things up.

In the end no one could agree on anything but most sensible people thought we should probably try to find out more about it, for good or bad. A team of the brightest and bravest astronaut-scientists would be sent to the Moon and they would land and see what was making the sound, then try to bring it back with them. This caused quite a bit of worry because everyone had seen scary films about aliens on other planets and knew it could all go very very wrong indeed.

At last the team left the Earth and were finally in place on the surface of the moon just before it was full. They had listening devices to identify exactly where the sound was coming from, and powerful robots to pick up whatever was making it and put it in a sort of box like a sound-proof prison cell that not even the biggest, scariest, most ravenous alien could get out of. The world watched, listened and waited.

Right on time, the sun shone fully upon the moon, and its face was entirely lit-up. The world waited full of trepidation and wonder for the Full Moon Song to fade in (apart from the moaners, the grumblers and the NON-STOP SHOUTERS of course). The astronauts waited as well, though too busy and concentrated on their task to have much wonder in them. And the robots waited with the sound-proof box, full of nothing but metal, plastic and programming.

At last, some people thought they could hear the music fading in very slowly and quietly but it was just their imagination and anticipation playing tricks. Nothing was fading in. For the first time in ages, there was no music, no sound at all coming from the Full Moon. The astronaut scientists checked their equipment. The robots waited with the sound-proof box lying open.

The world went quiet and held its breath. And then... had to breath out again or everyone would faint. It was a big breath of relief and calm, or of anger and disappointment. “Why do we have to ruin *everything?*” said some. “Thank goodness that’s all over!” said others. “Well what a waste of time, what’s for tea?” said a few.

Just to be sure, the astronaut-scientists waited until the full moon had passed, then blasted off back home to Earth tired and defeated, leaving the robots and the sound-proof box on the moon, ready to spring into action when the L.S.N.L.H.F.E.P. came back.

But it never did. Eventually people forgot all about it and got on with their lives - going to school, working in offices and factories, growing things in fields, feeding families, looking after people, knocking down old things and building up new ones. The Full Moon Song got a page on Wikipedia and it was almost as if it had just been a dream, or at least a strange TV program we’d half-remembered from when we were little. All the working and growing and feeding and looking after and knocking down and building up just carried on.

Eventually the robots that were waiting on the moon switched off. Cosmic dirt had slowly built up on their solar panels and their batteries ran out of power. Their electronic eyes and ears closed down, their metal arms and legs drooped and fell limp, and the robots collapsed gently to the ground, making little clouds of moon dust that fell in slow motion back to the surface.

Then, only when the robots had powered-down forever, and when nobody was left on Earth that could remember the last time it had happened, the sun fell on the face of the moon and the strange sound faded in again. Everybody stopped what they were doing to listen. It sounded like music, but with notes that nobody had heard before. It sounded like something from a dream, or a strange TV program we’d half-remembered from when we were little. The Full Moon Song had come back.

About the author:

Chris is originally from Bradford and studied illustration and graphic design at Bradford College of Art. In 2000 he moved to France where, amongst other things, he was an English teacher before working in newspaper layout and design.

When his children were small he realised he loved the picture books he read to them, sometimes even more than his children did – the Picture Book Bug had truly bitten.

Chris has since written and illustrated several books and is currently thinking about the next one, probably with a cuppa in hand at home near Limoges.