

That's the Ticket, Cricket!

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This copy, 2022.

For Benjamin "Jack" Monroe, for always moving to your own beat.

This version is for audiences preferring visual descriptions in placement of images. Descriptions are designated as Descriptive Text or "DT:". Now, without further ado, I hope you enjoy That's the Ticket, Cricket!:

"Jumping" Jack Monroe was a cricket.

DT: Jack stands with a broad smile. He wears shoes, pants, and a vest, but is most certainly a cricket.

And like all Crickets, he loved to hop and chirp and dance and sing.

"I sing to the rhythm of passing trains.

I dance to the buzz of flying planes.

I chirp with cars and ships from Spain."

DT: Jack dances on a hillside joyfully with a plane overhead, train speeding by, car driving toward a bridge, and ship navigating the river. A city stands on the horizon.

Jack loved the rhythms of the world so much, he even clapped with the thunder and skipped in the rain.

DT: Jack sings in the rain as he swings around a light post like Gene Kelly in the film Singing in the Rain. Musical notes dance through the air and then pop to Jack's surprise, after all:

There was only one problem. Jack had never heard real music.

Sure, he'd heard about music from his cousin's nephew's dog's flea's aunt. But she lived in an old opera house. Jack lived in the middle of nowhere. He'd never heard an orchestra, rock band, or hip-hop artist.

DT: Jack stands before a complicated map trying to follow the route of his cousin, nephew, aunt, uncle, dogs and fleas and ends in the question you're probably asking yourself now:

WHAT?

He could only sit and imagine how real music must sound. That is, until one day...

DT: Jack sits on a grassy hillside wondering how he might reach his fullest potential and be the cricket he is within his heart.

One day, as Jack sat chirping in his usual way, he heard a voice singing that was not his own. It was a new and wonderful sound, and it came from a nearby house.

DT: Musical notes float through the air from a nearby house. Jack stands on a blade of grass mesmerized.

Jack knew the old man who lived in the house didn't like crickets, so Jack tried to be very quiet as he snuck through the door.

DT: Jack tip-toes toward a door. A man with a beard sits at a desk writing.

But inside, a radio played the most beautiful music.  
DT: Jack floats through the air, guided by the musical notes.

It was the melody Jack had longed for all this time.  
It caused a SNAP! in Jack's cricket mind.  
And, his world exploded into rhythm and rhyme:  
KERSNAP!  
DT: Jack is hypnotized with music exploding from his heart.

"How I like this new-found beat.  
How it makes me move my feet.  
I can't help but dance and sing.  
I can't help but do my thing."  
DT: Jack dances around the room, banging on drums. The old man tries to continue writing.

Jack jumped up, and Jack jumped down. Jack kicked his legs all around. But Jack's singing was stopped by a furious sound.  
DT: The old man crumples his piece of paper.

"Get out. Get out with chirping about.  
Get out, right out, or I'll scream and shout!"  
The old man threw pencils, and he threw a pen. He threw some books, both fat and thin.

But in the end, wouldn't you know, there was just one thing left to throw.  
"Oh, no!" Jack cried. "Not the radio!"  
DT: Jack holds up his hands and in a gesture to stop the old man.

It barely missed Jack with a thunderous crash.  
One-million-six-hundred pieces landed: Smash! Bash! Trash!  
DT: Jack dodges the radio as it explodes against the wall.

Then there was silence throughout the house.  
Jack snuck out as he'd snuck in, quiet as a mouse.  
DT: The old man seems sad as he stands over the broken pieces of his radio.

"I wish my sound wasn't so bad,"  
Jack said, feeling horribly sad.  
"I wish my music didn't make people mad.  
I'd rather my music made people glad."  
DT: Jack walks in the rain with his head hung low.

In a flash, Jack knew just what to do.  
His plan was brilliant and sure to work, too.  
"I'll follow this road the world around.  
I'll search and find my own true sound."  
So Jacked hopped up with a chirp and a skip,  
the start of a great journey, a wondrous trip.  
DT: Jack stands upon a lightbulb with his great idea.

At first, Jack thought he'd made a huge mistake.  
He thought finding music would be a piece of cake.

Then out of the breeze a song did play.

Jack hopped faster. He was headed that way.  
It was a thrashing sound with a metallic beat.  
It shook the ground beneath Jack's feet.  
DT: Jack hops toward a house with the roof shaking off to the rhythms of music.

"We play heavy music that comes from the soul.  
We love to rock our rock and roll.  
Super fast rhythms to bob your head.  
Rock then roll right out of bed."  
DT: A rock and roll and plays music in the garage with wires snaking across the ground and amplifiers stacked three high.

Jack got so excited that he jumped right out.  
He started to dance and started to shout,  
"I like that rhythm, that thrash and beat.  
I think your sound is pretty neat.  
Let me jump in and join your band.  
Let me jump in and lend my hand."  
DT: Jack dances around the musician's feet.

Jack danced around and sang real loud.  
He felt all happy and really proud.  
Then, Jack looked up. The hand stopped playing.  
In fact, they stood laughing, hissing and saying,  
"You call that music? You call that rock?  
I can't believe it. I'm in shock.  
'Screech,' 'Scratch,' 'Chirp' is all I hear.  
Get that cricket out of here."  
DT: The musicians laugh at Jack as they mock him.

They kicked Jack out and slammed the door,  
and rocked their music louder than before.  
DT: A foot kicks Jack in the bottom, and he flies through the air. (Don't worry, only his pride is hurt).

"Aw, here we go again," Jack thought in tears.  
Jack cried until a new sound tickled his ears...  
"Spin Spin Clap,"  
"Spin Spin Clap,"  
DT. Again, Jack walks in the rain with his head down, but this time, music notes float in his direction, calling him forward.

"Spin, spin, clap,  
It's time to rap.  
Jump up, get down to the hip-hop sound.  
Hip-Hop is the music to move you around.  
Hip-hop is the beat to make you dance.  
So, hip and hop and shake those pants."  
DT: A break dancer spins with acrobatic skill as a hip-hop artist sings into a microphone.

Jack took their advice.  
He didn't think twice.  
He started to swing  
and started to sing,

“My name is Jack. I’m hip, and I hop.  
I like that beat. Now, don’t you stop.  
I’m out on a quest to learn how to play.  
Can you teach me this music? Whadda ya say?”  
DT: The DJ, Dancer, and Hip-hop artist watch as Jack dances with a spin.

“Spin, Spin, Clap.  
Did a cricket just rap?  
You’ve got a lot of courage, Lil Cricket Man.  
You’ll find your sound. I believe you can.  
Don’t discourage, and don’t you frown.  
Just hip and hop straight up downtown.”

The group pointed the way to Music City,  
where Jack would hear sounds both ugly and pretty:  
the music of the world, sounds of delight.  
They didn’t know if Jack could make it, but he might.  
He just might,

It was a long and difficult journey for poor ol’ Jack.  
Sleet, rain, and hail fell Smack! Smack! Smack!  
DT: Jack trudges through sleet, rain, and hail (while wearing a football helmet).

But at the city limit, Jack cheered up quick.  
He could already hear the sound of music.  
DT: Jack celebrates at the border of Music City.

Musicians played horns out in the streets  
while tap dancers tapped impressive beats.  
Music poured from passing cars,  
some from hotels, and some from bars.  
Jack saw theaters, stages, and opera houses.  
Heard singing and laughter from passing spouses.  
Jack heard so many a magical tune.  
He just had to sing, and Soon! Soon!  
DT: Jack listens to a jazz musician as buildings tower around.

Jack jumped up to join the fun.  
He started to skip and started to run.  
He started to chirp and started to sing.  
Someone shouted, “Stop that racket, you noisy thing.”  
DT: A business man shakes his fist as Jack hops away.

But that didn’t break Jack’s spirits. It didn’t ruin his cheer.  
He found a place with flamenco music, very near.  
He walked right in with a “Clappity, Clap, Clap.”  
But a woman said,  
“Por favor, please shut your trap.”  
Then, Jack was thrown out for his terrible noise,  
a little disheveled, but he kept his poise.  
DT: Jack claps his hands above his head similar to the flamenco dancer several feet away.

Jack leapt into a steakhouse with Honkey Tonk.  
He screamed, “Yippee! Yeehaw! Yee Yonkayonk!”

DT: Jack, wearing spurs and a big belt buckle, waves his cowboy hat as he does the two-step with others.

Then, Jack played a sound close to blue grass,  
But they didn't like it, so they kicked his... keister right down yonder.  
DT: Jack flies through the air after another kick to the bottom.

Jack's feelings were hurt but filled with glee  
when he heard the sound of a symphony.  
The orchestra had everything: horns and strings,  
Sweet melodic tunes and thunderous rings.  
"Now, here is a group that I can be a part.  
So many instruments, where do I start?"  
DT: Jack sings on a chair among the orchestra. The conductor fumes with rage. Smoke shooting from his ears.

Jack sang happily, up on the stage,  
then he heard a voice screaming, filled with rage:  
"Stop! Stop! What is this slop?  
What's that noise, that gurgle and pop?  
What's that racket,  
that screech and scratch?  
That cricket, there! Catch it! Catch!"  
DT: An usher escorts an angry Jack out of the opera house, holding him out between two fingers and his nose upturned.

Jack wandered the city with no place to go.  
He had nothing without music, nothing to show.  
Jack missed the melodies, symphonies, and jams.  
All he heard now was the sound of the door slams.  
DT: Jack walks upon newspaper racks full of "Bad News" and "Worse News."

Through honking horns, car alarms, and people in feud,  
Jack searched until he found a sound that fit his mood.  
DT: Jack stands before a house of Blues.

Jack walked inside. He didn't dance or sing.  
He just sat and listened to the Blues King.  
"I got the blues.  
I got the blues I just can't lose.  
Feels like forever since I was last home.  
Feels like forever since I started to roam.  
I got the blues. I got the blues that I just can't lose."  
DT: The Blues King plays on the stage as Jack walks in.

Jack knew this story. He knew it well.  
He thought of the stories he could tell.  
He thought about the music he used to make.  
No one said then, "You make y head ache."  
DT: Jack sits upon a chair watching the Blues King and a singer play the blues on stage.

Before Jack knew it, the king had stopped playing.  
He scooped Jack up, smiling, and saying,  
"Hey little friend, why you so down?"

Why, you might be the saddest man in town.”  
At first, Jack didn’t answer. He bowed his head.  
Then, he looked up and quietly said,  
“I’ve got the blues. Man, have I got the blues.  
I’ve got the blues that I can’t lose.”  
DT: Jack sits upon the palm of the Blues King with his head down.

“Well, come on up and tell us all about it.  
Might do you some good to stand up and shout it.”  
DT: The Blues King smiles at Jack.

“I’m afraid you may not like my song.”  
DT: Jack explains.

But the Blues King said,  
“Don’t worry. We’ll help you along.”

And, Jack sang,  
“I got the blues.  
I got the blues that I just can’t lose.  
I came downtown to find my own sound,  
been looking all over, looking all round.  
I can’t seem to find it here or there.  
I’ve been kicked up, thrown down, out of Everywhere.  
I got the blues.  
I’ve got the blues that I just can’t lose.”  
DT: Jack sings his heart out into a microphone.

When Jack finished, no one said a word.  
“I guess I sound awful, but then... I guess you heard.”  
DT: The audience seems shocked with mouths hanging agape.

Jack started to leave, but the King said,  
“Stop! Hey wait, where are you going, small fry?  
Come back on this stage. Now, don’t you cry.  
You need a little practice, but you play from the heart,  
And that, my friend is the hardest part.  
You have style and rhythm and lots of pizazz.  
You know, I think your sound might be jazz.  
So get back up here. Let’s all jam.  
Let’s teach young Jack, ‘Zibbie Doo Bop Bam.’”  
DT: Blues King and his companion gently stop Jack from leaving.

And they played their music the rest of the day,  
Jack would laugh and dance and say,  
“I had the blues.  
I had the blues that I just couldn’t lose.  
But I made some new friends who helped me out.  
Now I’m getting better, and there is no doubt.  
I had the blues.  
I had the blues that I just couldn’t lose.”  
DT: Jack dances on a stool as the musicians perform around him.

The musicians agreed that Jack had improved.

They liked him a lot, and the audience approved.  
But they felt Jack should know one very last thing:  
“Talent is good, but practice gives you swing.”  
DT: Audience cheers at Jack singing on stage.

So, Jack practiced his music, every hour, every day,  
And his hard work paid off, I’m proud to say:  
He played all the way to Broadway.

DT: A line of people down the street waiting to get inside to see the amazing Jumping “Jack”  
Monroe. At the front of the line stands the old man from the beginning of this very tale. The  
man who threw his radio.

The End.