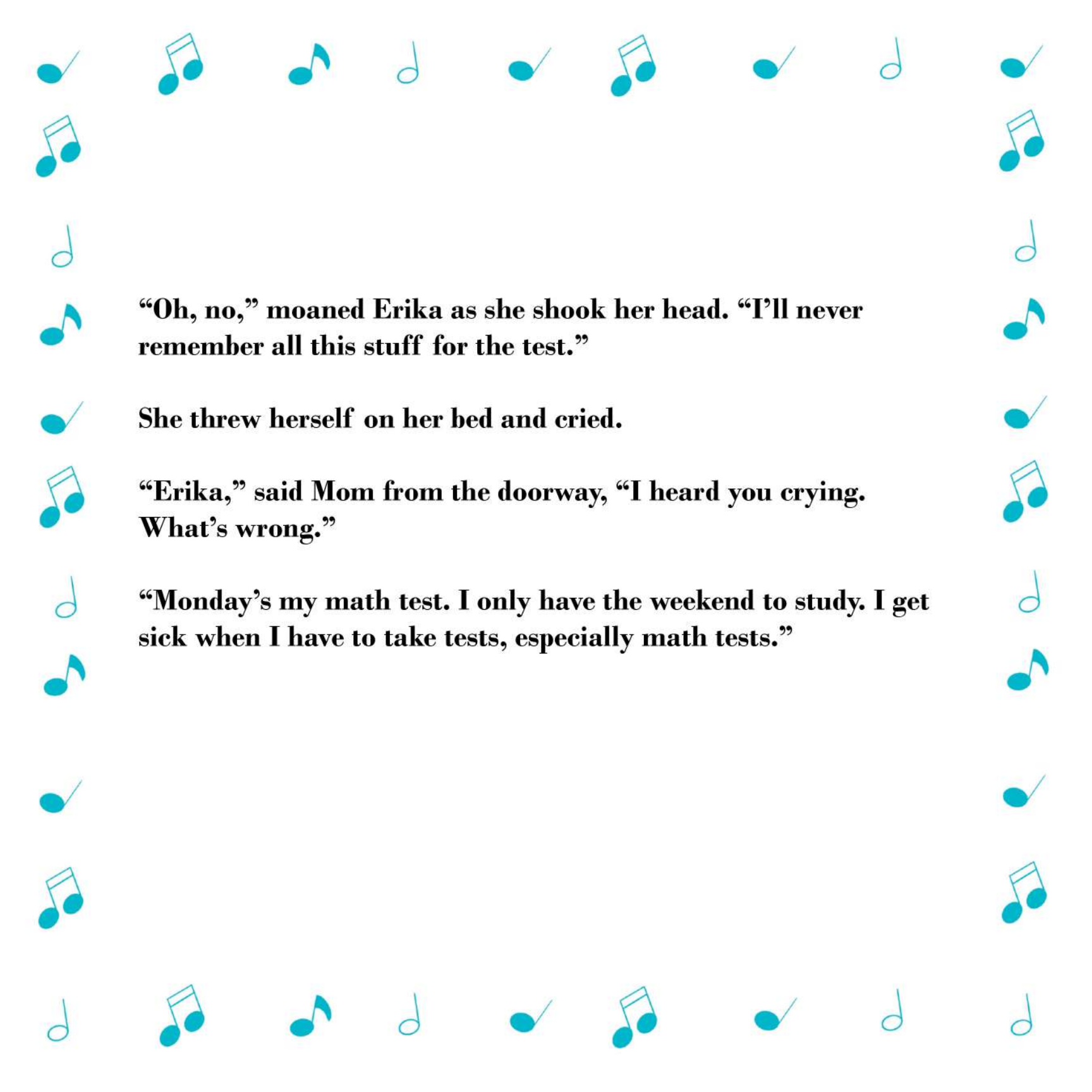


Musicat presents  
**ERIKA'S ANXIETY**





**“Oh, no,” moaned Erika as she shook her head. “I’ll never remember all this stuff for the test.”**

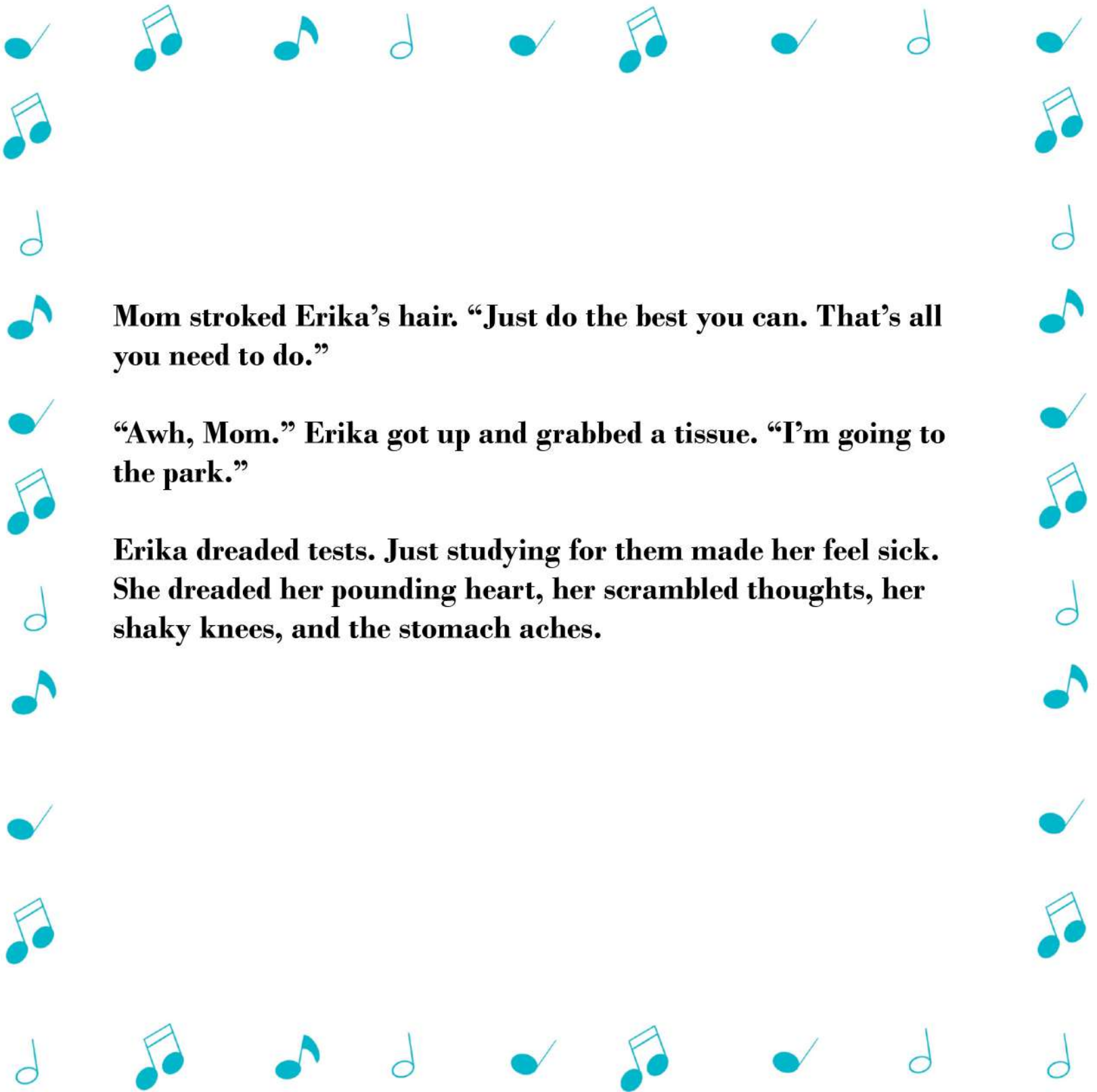
**She threw herself on her bed and cried.**

**“Erika,” said Mom from the doorway, “I heard you crying. What’s wrong.”**

**“Monday’s my math test. I only have the weekend to study. I get sick when I have to take tests, especially math tests.”**



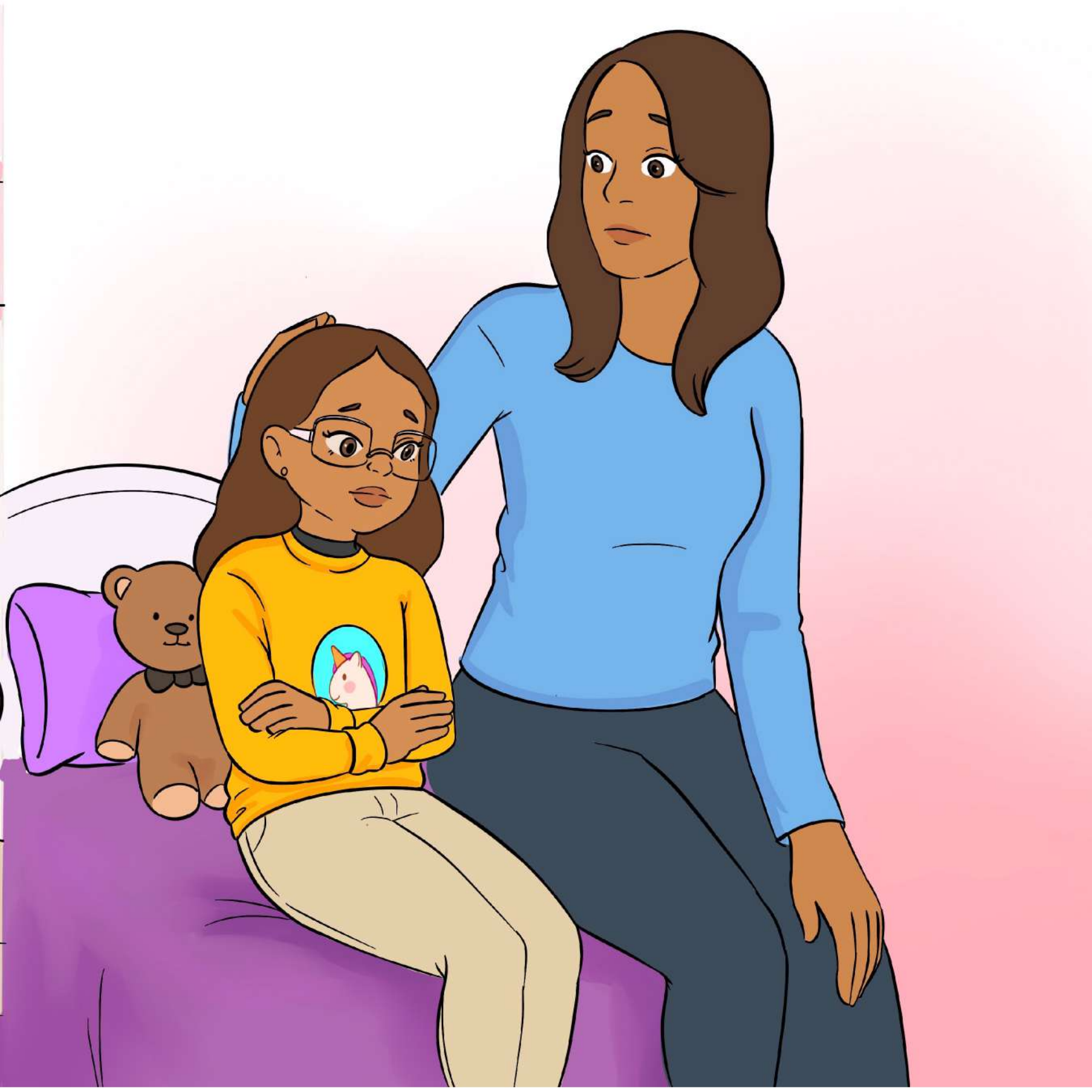


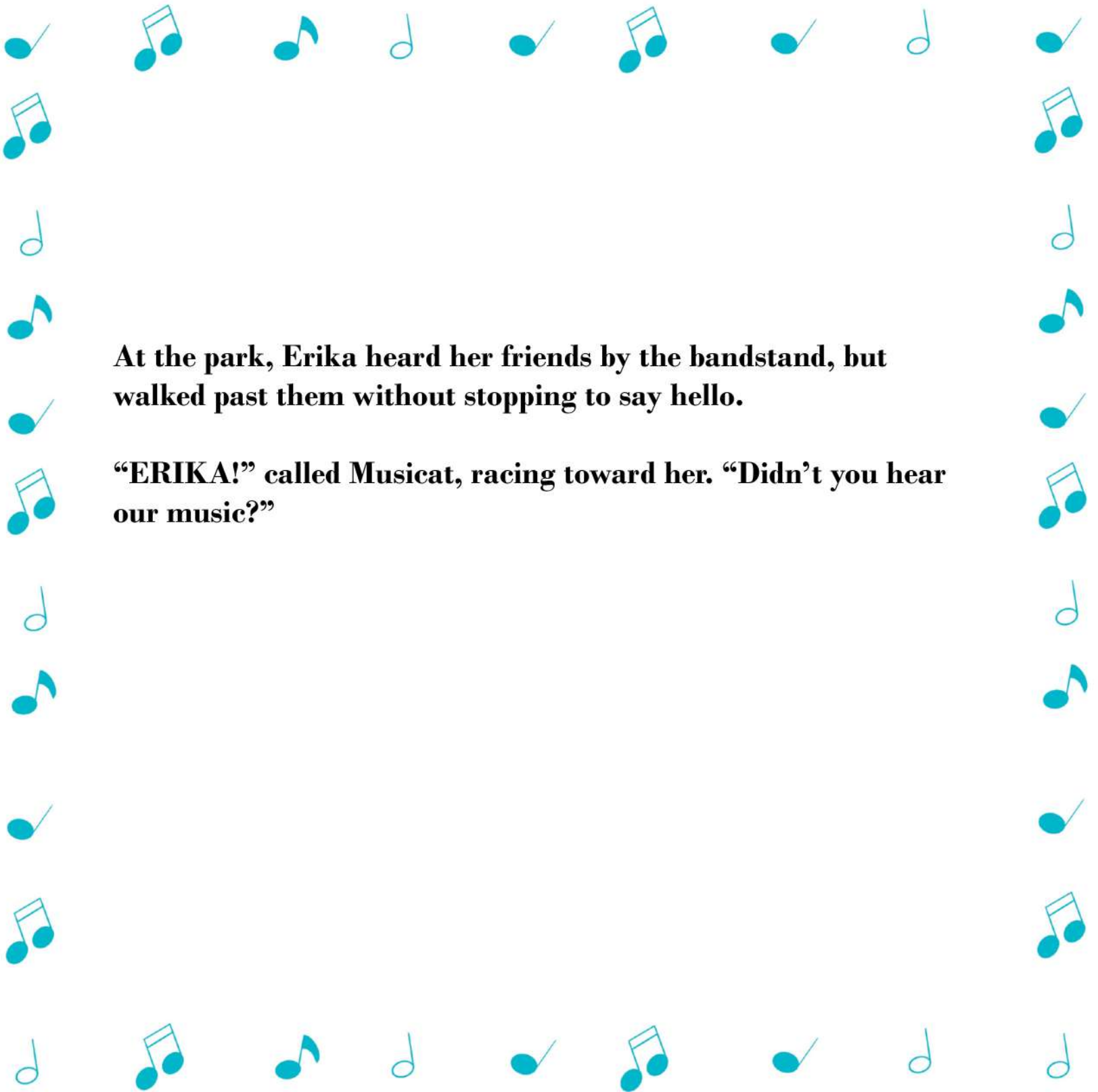


**Mom stroked Erika’s hair. “Just do the best you can. That’s all you need to do.”**

**“Awh, Mom.” Erika got up and grabbed a tissue. “I’m going to the park.”**

**Erika dreaded tests. Just studying for them made her feel sick. She dreaded her pounding heart, her scrambled thoughts, her shaky knees, and the stomach aches.**

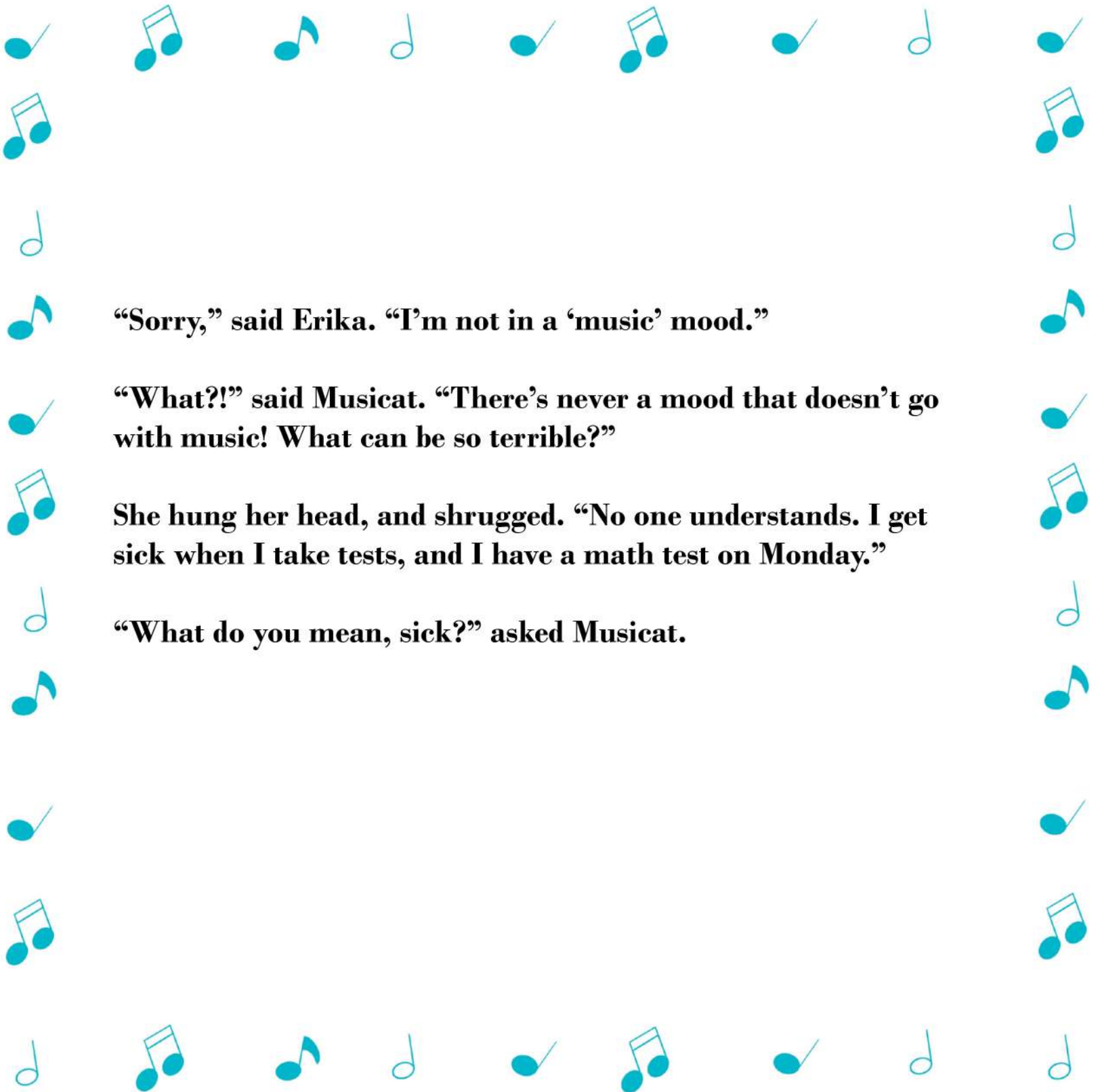




**At the park, Erika heard her friends by the bandstand, but walked past them without stopping to say hello.**

**“ERIKA!” called Musicat, racing toward her. “Didn’t you hear our music?”**





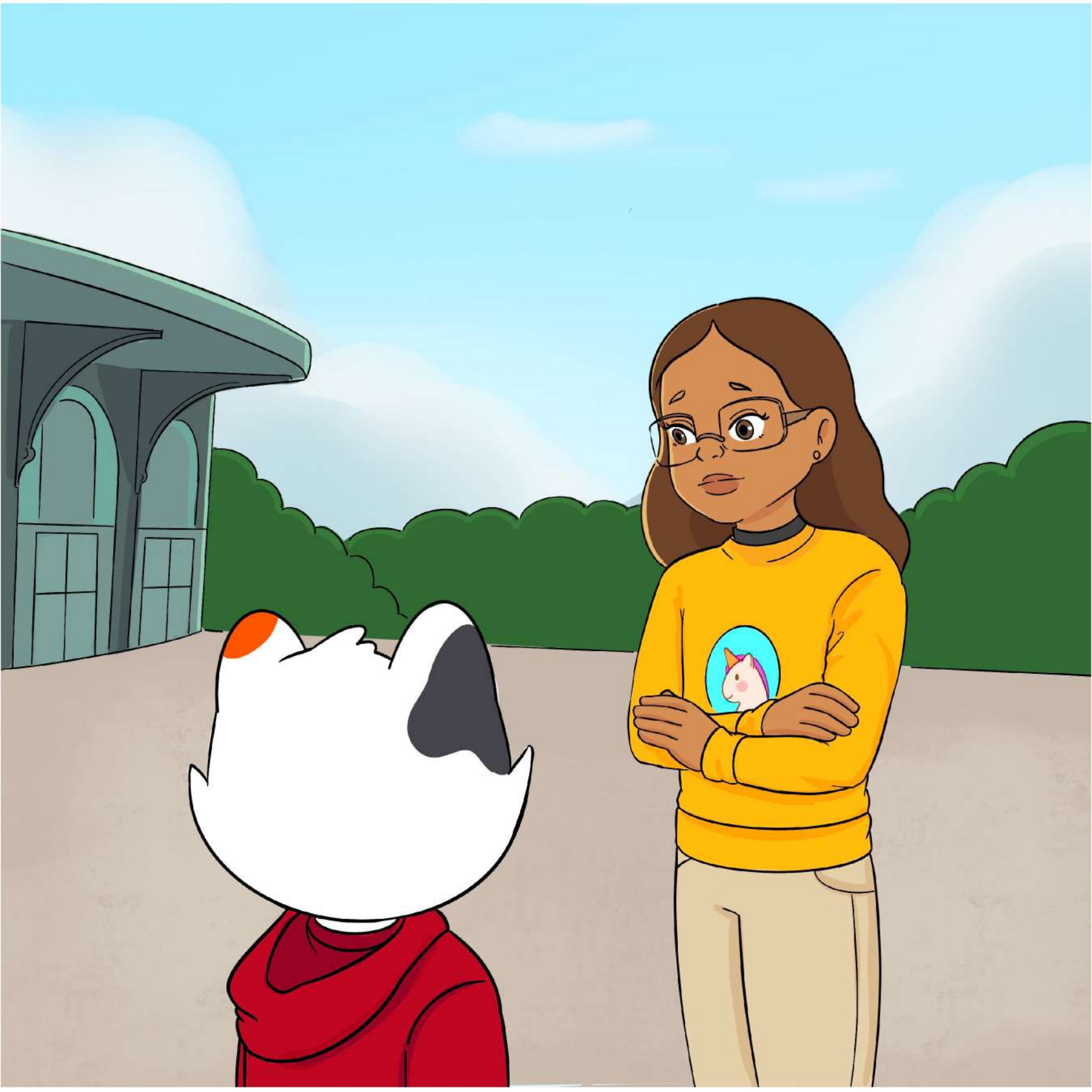
**“Sorry,” said Erika. “I’m not in a ‘music’ mood.”**


**“What?!” said Musicat. “There’s never a mood that doesn’t go with music! What can be so terrible?”**

**She hung her head, and shrugged. “No one understands. I get sick when I take tests, and I have a math test on Monday.”**

**“What do you mean, sick?” asked Musicat.**





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**Erika hesitated. She didn't want to tell her friend because everyone thought she was silly to be afraid of tests.**


**“Please tell me,” said Musicat.**

**“Well... my heart races, my stomach and head hurt, my thoughts get jumbled up, and my legs get like jelly. It's horrible. I feel like I can't breathe when I have to take a test.”**

**Musicat rubbed his chin. “That reminds me of Jazzy Cat. He'd get sick before a concert. Sometimes he'd throw up and couldn't play.”**

**“Really?” Erika looked over at Jazzy. “But I've seen him playing in front of an audience.”**





**“Oh, sure, now he can handle it, after learning how and with music.”**

**“Huh?” asked Erika.**

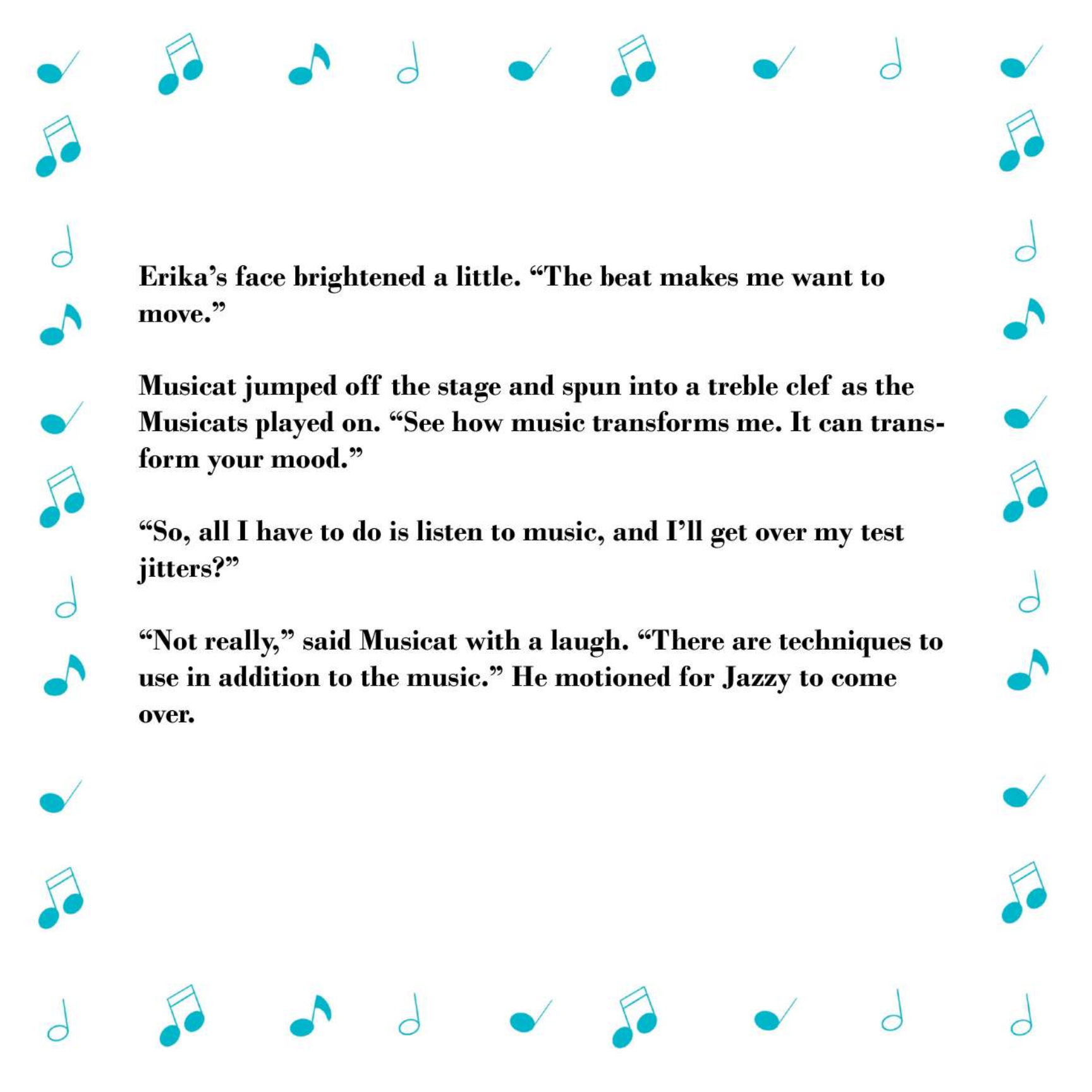
**“Come on. Let me show you.” Musicat led Erika to the bandstand. “What type of music makes you feel good?”**

**“I don’t know. I’m too upset to think about it.”**

**Musicat smiled and strummed his guitar. The other Musicats joined in. “Okay, how does that make you feel?”**







**Erika's face brightened a little. "The beat makes me want to move."**

**Musicat jumped off the stage and spun into a treble clef as the Musicats played on. "See how music transforms me. It can transform your mood."**

**"So, all I have to do is listen to music, and I'll get over my test jitters?"**

**"Not really," said Musicat with a laugh. "There are techniques to use in addition to the music." He motioned for Jazzy to come over.**





A decorative border of various musical notes, including eighth notes, quarter notes, and beamed eighth notes, surrounds the text on all sides.

**“Jazzy, please tell Erika how you reduced your stage anxiety.”**

**“Sure,” said Jazzy. “Music helped a lot. I feel happy and relaxed when I listen to certain music. I also take slow, deep breaths when I feel anxious.”**

**“Didn’t you also think positive thoughts?” asked Musicat.**

**“That’s right. I still do,” said Jazzy. “Whenever I feel anxious, I tell myself that I’m strong and calm. I repeat it over and over.”**

**“I don’t know,” said Erika. “I guess I’ll give it a try.”**

**At home, Erika listened to soft classical music while she studied for her test. Hmm, she thought. I don’t feel like crying. I feel relaxed.**





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**At school on Monday, it was another story.**

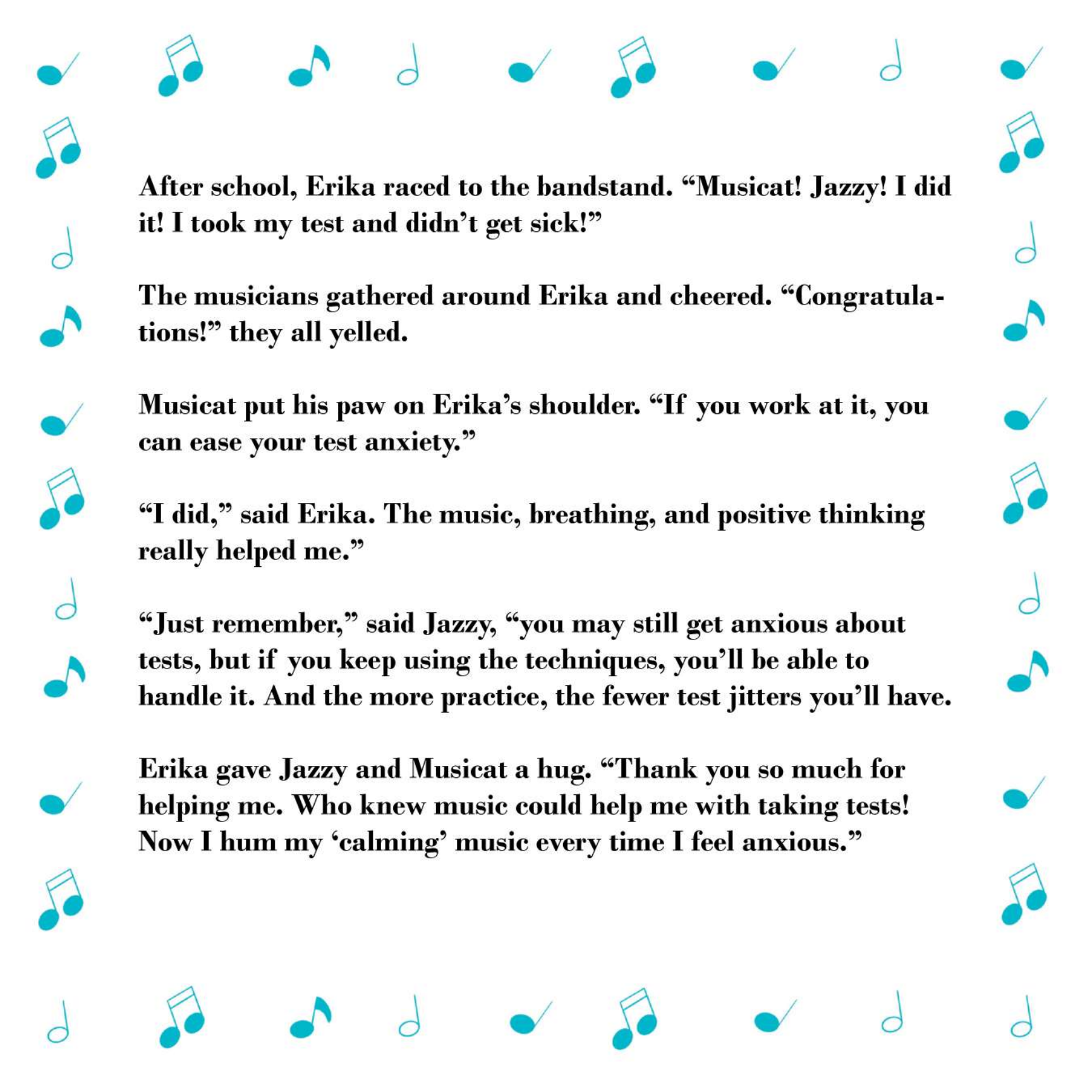
**Erika practiced positive thinking, but when the teacher handed the class the test, Erika’s anxiety soared. Her heart pounded, her stomach got queasy, and her head hurt.**

**“I can’t do this,” Erika yelled. “I can’t take this test. I can’t think.” She ran into the hallway, and then remembered what Jazzy told her.**

**Erika took slow, deep breaths, then told herself she was strong and calm. She also hummed her ‘calming’ music.**

**After a few minutes, she felt better and was able to go back into the classroom to take the test.**



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**After school, Erika raced to the bandstand. “Musicat! Jazzy! I did it! I took my test and didn’t get sick!”**

**The musicians gathered around Erika and cheered. “Congratulations!” they all yelled.**

**Musicat put his paw on Erika’s shoulder. “If you work at it, you can ease your test anxiety.”**

**“I did,” said Erika. The music, breathing, and positive thinking really helped me.”**

**“Just remember,” said Jazzy, “you may still get anxious about tests, but if you keep using the techniques, you’ll be able to handle it. And the more practice, the fewer test jitters you’ll have.**

**Erika gave Jazzy and Musicat a hug. “Thank you so much for helping me. Who knew music could help me with taking tests! Now I hum my ‘calming’ music every time I feel anxious.”**







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