

# ANTONIN DVOŘÁK

By Carole L. Cooney

Antonin Dvorak was a famous musician and composer. His love for music started the day he was born. A fire broke out in his house. Quickly, his father rushed mother and little baby across the street to a neighbor's house. The fire was put out and then a musical celebration began. As Antonin grew, his father taught him how to play the violin. He became so good at playing that he joined the town's band.

**Settings:** The Dvorak home; Sasha's house

**Characters:**

Narrator

Frantisek, father Dvorak

Anna, mother Dvorak

Captain

Sasha, a neighbor

Antonin

**Narrator:** The day Antonin was born a fire broke out in his house.

**Frantisek:** Fire! Fire! Mother, there's a fire in the back room. Come quickly, Mother. Take these blankets and wrap little Antonin. Let's run across the road to Sasha's house.

**Anna:** (wrapping blankets around the baby) Oh! Come little Antonin. No need to be frightened. No need to cry.

**Narrator:** Frantisek led Anna to Sasha's house. Sasha was anxiously waiting in the front yard with outstretched arms.

**Sasha:** Anna, what happened? Give me the baby. Come inside. We'll put little Antonin in our cradle. Please, sit down Anna. Let me get you some hot tea to calm your nerves.

**Anna:** All I know is that Frantisek rushed into our bedroom shouting, "Fire! Fire!" I bundled up the baby and we ran here. I'm afraid to look at our house. I wonder if it is still standing. Where is Frantisek?

**Sasha:** I think he's outside with Zednek waiting for the firemen.

**Narrator:** Moments later, the fire truck arrived. The Captain gave orders to the men.

**Captain:** Aim the water to the back of the house. I think the fire is small so this won't take very long. Sasha, I'm glad you sent your son, Leo, to my house. He must have run the entire way.

**Sasha:** Yes, Leo's a smart boy and knows all the fastest ways around the neighborhood. I'm proud of you, Leo.

**Captain:** I'm glad we were able to come so quickly because the fire hasn't grown very big.

**Frantisek and Anna:** Thank you for getting the firemen here, Sasha. Leo, you did a wonderful thing! How can we ever repay you?

**Narrator:** Just then, the Captain told the family about the fire.

**Captain:** Mr. and Mrs. Dvorak, the fire is out. It was quite small and there isn't much damage. The men are now cleaning up the mess and soon you'll be able to return home.

**Frantisek:** Thank you, Captain. Please give our thanks to the men as well.

**Anna:** We are so grateful to have such good neighbors.

**Sasha:** Your house is saved, little Antonin is safe. Now it is time to celebrate! We must celebrate the birth of little Antonin and we must celebrate the saving of your house. It's time for a little music for singing and dancing!

**Frantisek:** A splendid idea, Sasha. Let's ring the town's bell, spread the good news and ask all of our neighbors to bring their instruments. A little food and drink would be welcome, as well.

**Narrator:** Soon all of the neighbors gathered with instruments, chairs, tables and lots of food and drink. Many hours were spent playing, singing and dancing to celebrate the good news. As Antonin grew, his love of music grew too. At an early age, his father taught him how to play the violin. One day he asked Antonin a very important question.

**Frantisek:** Antonin, next Saturday there will be a wedding. Would you like to play your violin with the town's band?

**Antonin:** Yes, Father! I would, I would! Thank you for asking me.

**Frantisek:** Here is the music we shall play. Need I ask you to practice it?

**Antonin:** No, Father. I shall practice it *every day* so that I'll know it by heart.

**Frantisek:** That's a good boy. I shall be very proud of you playing in the town's band, because you play very well and you will be the youngest musician.

**Antonin:** Thank you, Father.

**Narrator:** From that day on, Antonin joined his father to play for every wedding and other celebration in the town's band. This love of music led Antonin to learn how to play many musical instruments, attend music schools and finally become a famous musician and composer.