



For James and Olivia Howie
Vicki Howie

With much love to Bori
Krisztina Kállai Nagy

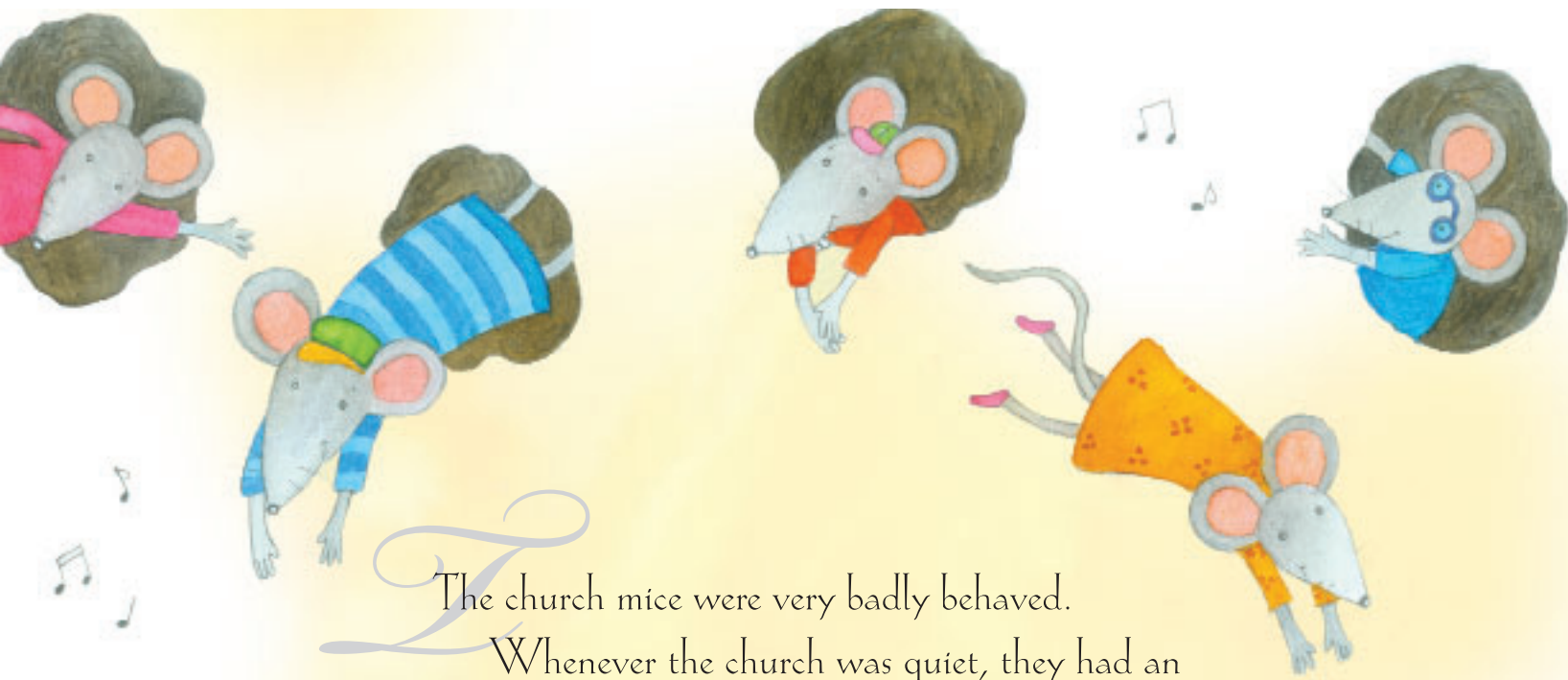
SILENT NIGHT

by Vicki Howie
illustrated by
Krisztina Kállai Nagy



Long ago,
inside a dusty mousehole
hidden in the church of St Nicholas,
which stood in the village of Oberndorf,
beside a river that rushed helter-skelter
through a land of music, mountains and snow
called Austria,
there lived a large family of mice.





The church mice were very badly behaved.

Whenever the church was quiet, they had an absolute riot.

They chased each other up and down the pulpit. They swung on the bell ropes and frayed the ends.

Worst of all, they nibbled here and nibbled there until there were holes in skirting boards, kneelers and choir robes *everywhere*.



But whenever Franz Gruber, the organist and choirmaster, played his rousing music on the church organ, the mice went scampering back to their mousehole, shaking with fright—for organ music sounds like thunder to a tiny mouse.

