

The Muffin Man

START

Do you know the muffin man, The muffin man, the muffin man,

Do you know the muffin man, Who lives on Drury Lane?

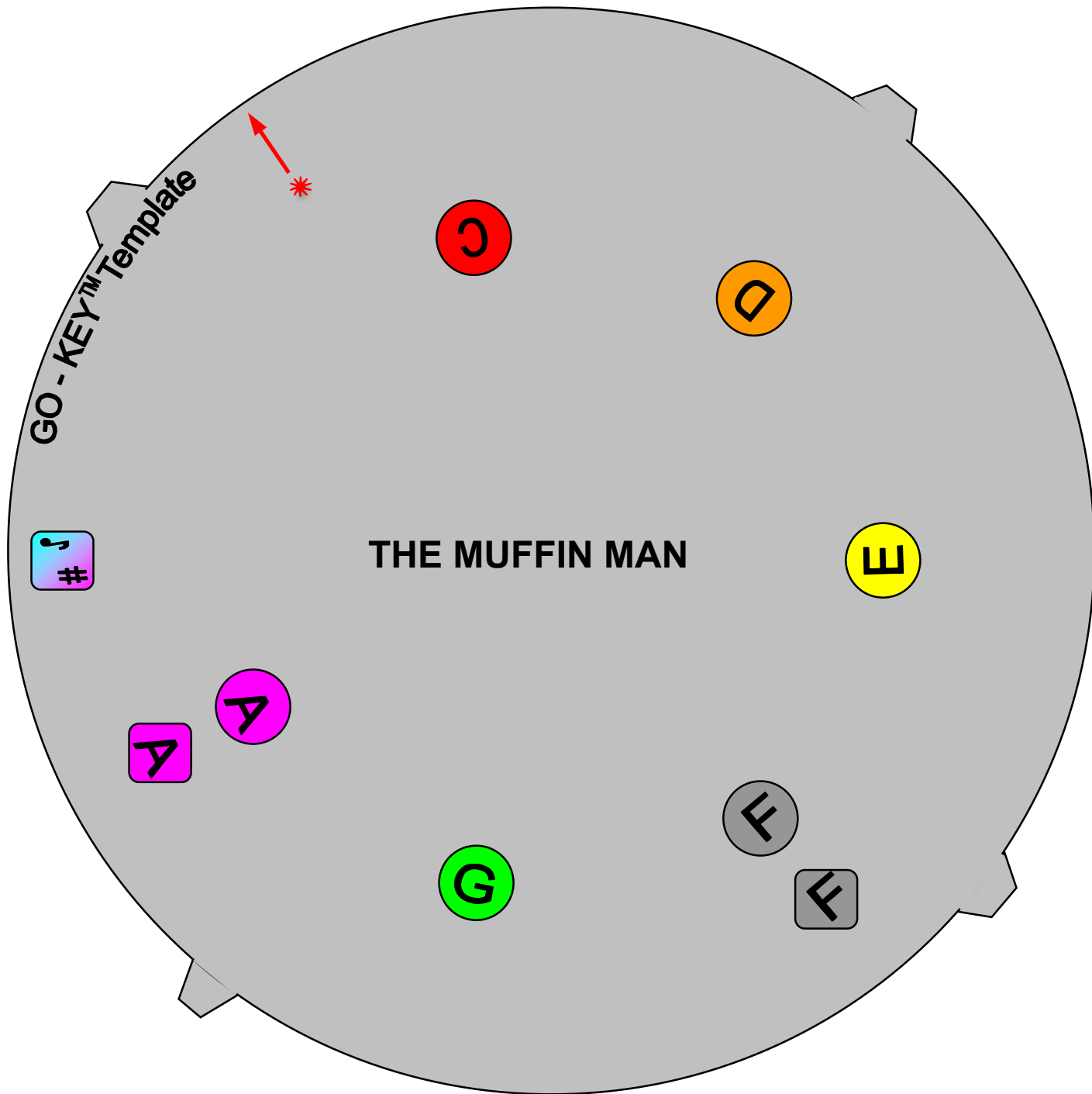
Yes I know the muffin man, The muffin man, the muffin man,

Yes I know the muffin man, Who lives on Drury Lane? END

Lyrics

Do you know the muffin man,
 The muffin man, the muffin man,
 Do you know the muffin man,
 Who lives on Drury Lane?

Yes, I know the muffin man,
 The muffin man, the muffin man,
 Yes, I know the muffin man,
 Who lives on Drury Lane.



History and Origin

"**The Muffin Man**" is a traditional nursery rhyme, children's song, or children's game of English origin. The rhyme was first recorded in a British manuscript circa 1820, that is preserved in the Bodleian Library with lyrics very similar to those used today:

Do you know the muffin man?
The muffin man, the muffin man.
Do you know the muffin man
Who lives in Drury Lane?

Victorian households had many of their fresh foods delivered, such as muffins, which were delivered door-to-door by a muffin man. The "muffin" in question was the bread product known in the United States as English muffins, not the much sweeter cupcake-shaped American variety. Drury Lane is a thoroughfare bordering Covent Garden in London. The rhyme and game appear to have spread to other countries in the mid-nineteenth century, particularly the US and the Netherlands. As with many traditional songs, there are regional variations in wording; for example, another popular English version substitutes "Dorset Lane" for Drury Lane, while in the Dutch version (entitled *Zeg ken jij de mosselman*), mussels are substituted for muffins, and Scheveningen for Drury Lane.

Game

The game associated with the song has changed at least three times including: as a forfeit game, a guessing game, and a dancing ring. In *The Young Lady's Book* (1888), Matilda Anne Mackarness described the game as:

The first player turns to the one next him/her, and to some sing-song tune exclaims:

"Do you know the muffin man? The muffin man, the muffin man.
Do you know the muffin man who lives in Drury Lane?"

The person addressed replies to the same tune:

"Yes, I know the muffin man. The muffin man, the muffin man.
Oh, yes, I know the muffin man, who lives in Drury Lane."

Upon this they both exclaim:

"Then two of us know the muffin man, the muffin man," and so forth.

No. 2 then turns to No. 3, repeating the same words, who replies in the same way, only saying, "Three of us know the muffin man," and so forth. No. 3 then turns to No. 4, and so on round the room, the same question and answer being repeated, the chorus only varied by the addition of one more number each time.

Verses beyond those described in the book have been sung. For example, the song may be concluded, "We all know the Muffin Man ..."