

# The Adventures of Mr Big

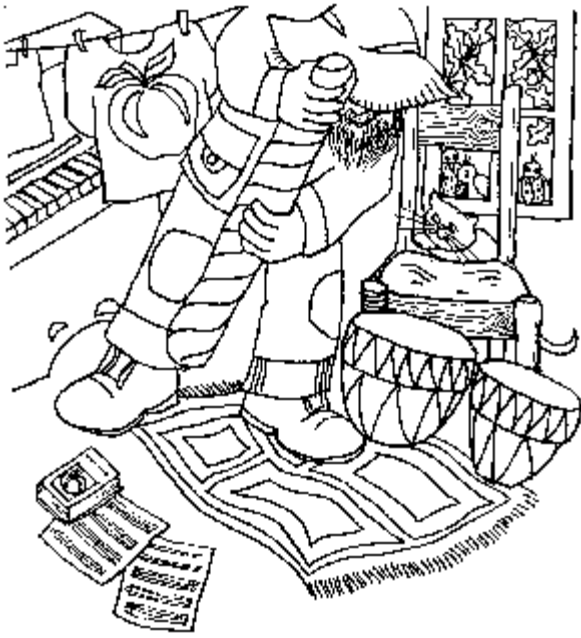
Written by Amica Adams and illustrated by Laura Barnes

Mr Big was the smallest man you could ever meet! He lived all by himself in a little brick house surrounded by a large and wild garden. The garden was the home to all of the plants that weren't welcome anywhere else. There were prickly black-berry bushes covered in fruit in the summer, and dogweed bushes with fuzzy



flowers that smelled like old cheese. Large purple cauliflowers with droopy leaves trailing on the ground grew next to furry wormwood that Mr. Big put inside his house when he had a cold. He said that the wormwood cleared his nose and made his head feel better.

The garden was also full of little animals who scuttled around under the safe cover of the plants. Sometimes if you went outside in the early evening, you could hear the rustling of mice settling into their nests for the night, and crickets singing their loud lullabies. Or the soft sound of a snake as he slithered over the grass to his warm bed of leaves.



But Mr Big still felt that there was something missing. The creaky piano, the bongo drums, the rain shaker, the whistling kettle, and his other instruments, all sounded a bit flat. Mr Big decided he needed something else. He stood on a chair to reach the top shelf of a cupboard

where he kept his money, and carefully counted out a pile of coins. He put them into one of his pockets, where they made a jangly noise when he moved. He carefully hung a water bottle from his other side, in case he got thirsty on his adventure.

When Mr Big put one leg forward, the coins rattled, and when he put the other leg forward, the water in the bottle splashed loudly. When he



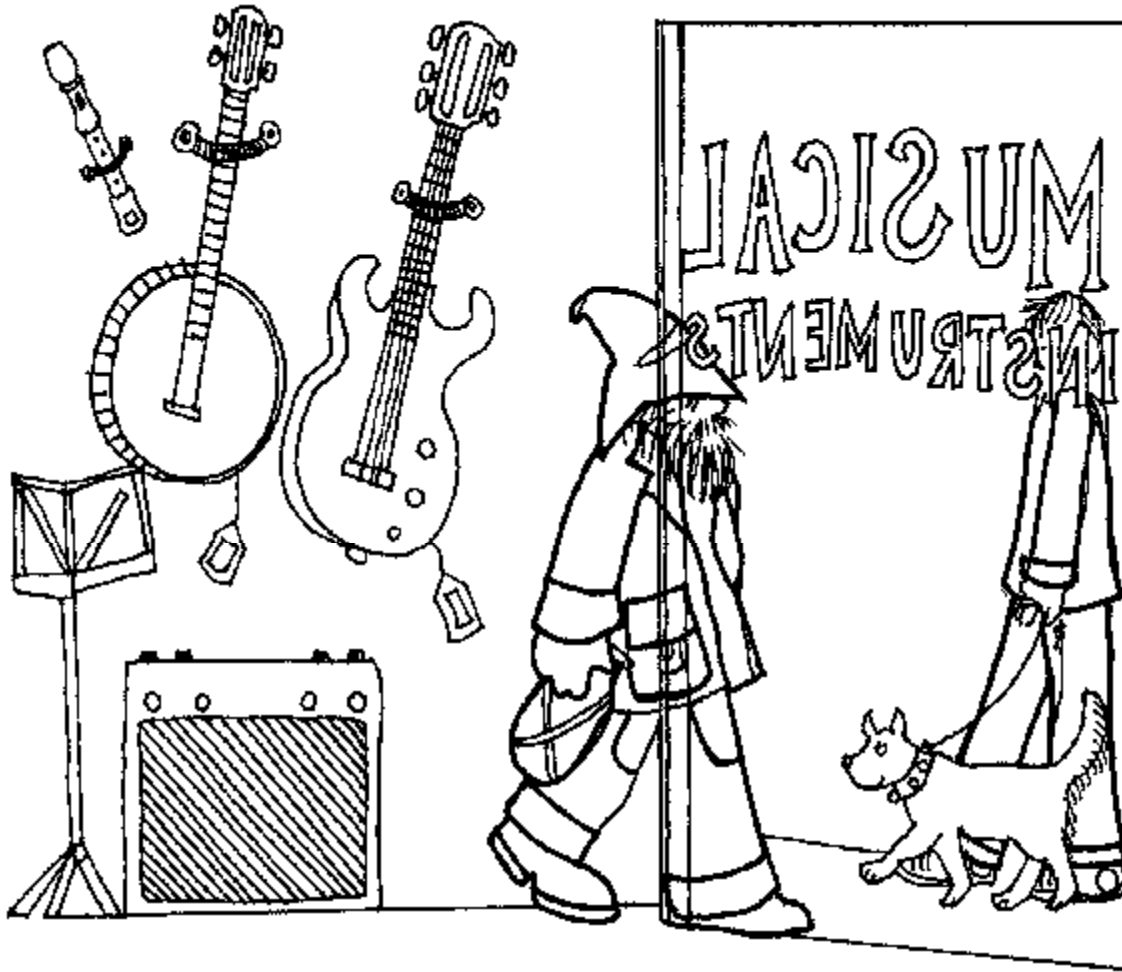
started walking, the coins and the water made a special music. Sometimes he would change the way he was walking just to hear the coins and water make their special music:

“Splosh, clink, clink, splosh,  
 Clink-splosh, clink-splosh,  
 Splooooosh clink-clink,  
 Cliiiiink splosh-splosh.”

The people on the street watched him in surprise – they had never seen a man making music as he walked.



Mr Big went into the biggest music store he could find. It had every musical instrument he had ever heard of, and even some he hadn't.



He walked right up to the counter, where a young man in a green striped jacket was working. The man peered down at Mr Big.

"I'd like to buy a musical instrument, please," said Mr Big.

"Yes sir. What are you looking for?" the young man asked.

"I would like a super-duper music mobile..." said Mr Big.

"I haven't heard of one of those before," muttered the man.

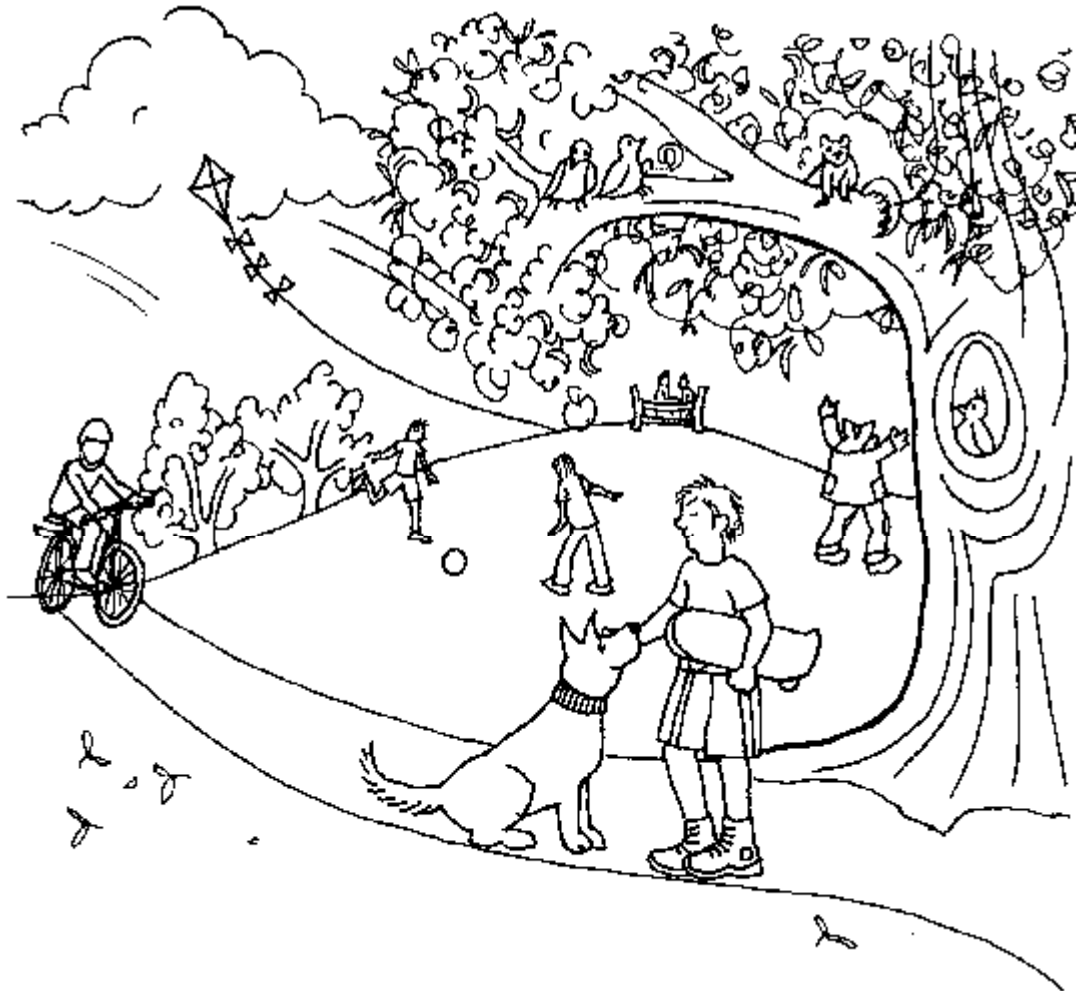
"Well, have you got something that will make my creaky piano, bongo drums, whistling kettle, and rain shaker sound sweet?"

"I'm sorry," said the man, "but I have nothing like that."

Mr Big looked sad. He turned around and walked out of the store, making a sad "splish-clink-splish-clink" as he went.

He went to the park where the children of the town were playing with their friends. Mothers and fathers were talking and laughing with each other, and dogs of all sizes, shapes and colours jumped and ran in the bright sunshine.

Mr Big started to feel better. He sat and listened to the sounds in the park. A flock of birds in a tall sycamore tree chirped and twittered, and the blue sky seemed to hum along – a soft, whispering, hushed song that got louder when the



breeze rustled the leaves of the trees. And from time to time other things would join in – dogs barking, a young woman singing softly to her baby, and the laughter of small children.

Suddenly Mr Big sat up. He listened closer, and even closer. A large smile slowly came over his face, wrinkling his brown eyes at the corners.

He had found the missing music he was looking for!

He rushed back to his home, the coins in his pocket and the water in the bottle making a hurried “clink-splish-clink-splish” as he ran down the street.

He ran through his wild and overgrown garden, full of plants not welcome anywhere else, and into his little brick house. He opened the windows wide, wide. He stood very quietly. He heard the crickets singing lullabies to the baby mice,



the smooth slithering of snakes over the leaves, the rustling of the breeze through the tall grasses, and the “plop, plop” of acorns as they fell from the huge acorn tree at the foot of the garden.

Mr Big tiptoed over to the creaky piano, and started to play very softly – so softly that he could still hear the crickets singing outside. He tapped his bongo drums in time with the falling acorns, and he shook his rainmaker so that it sounded like a gentle sprinkling of rain. The music was beautiful.

Sometimes, though, you will hear him playing his music so loudly, you might think that there is a whole crowd of people banging on bongo drums, clanging his old piano, and rattling out a loud tune. And you might even hear the next door neighbour’s cat hissing!

## Things to Do

1. What was the music Mr Big found which was around him all the time?
2. Next time you are in the garden or the park or the countryside, shut your eyes and see how many sounds from nature you can hear. Listen to the different songs the birds sing, or to the wind in the trees, the hum of bees, the rustle of a small animal scurrying among the leaves, somebody laughing. Water can make many different sounds: light and tinkling when it is trickling over stones, roaring when it falls as a waterfall, or pitter-pattering against the window when it rains.
3. When you have listened to the natural sounds around you, try humming some of them.
4. You may like to make up a tune to go with the words of the prayer of Bahá'u'lláh below.



"I am O my God  
but a tiny seed  
which Thou has sown  
in the soil  
of Thy love...."



“...in every meadow hear a song...”  
Bahá'u'lláh

