

# *Mister Big and the Gophers*

## *A Halloween Shadow Puppet Play*

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*This short tale was written as a shadow puppet play for grade seven to share with the children of pre-school and kindergarten age. The speaker, visible to the audience, reads the story line, and the refrain (itlaics) is chanted by the puppeteers behind the screen. Further staging tips are found at the end of the tale.*

Once upon a time there was a pumpkin.

*'Hey-ho!' said Rowley.*

He grew and he grew and he grew until he was the biggest pumpkin in the whole wide world. Everyone called him Mister Big.

*'Hey-ho!' said Rowley.*

On Halloween night along came a gopher.

*'Hey-ho!' said Rowley.*

"Mister Big! Mister Big!" called the gopher. "All the pumpkins are bright and glowing—why are you so dark and dreary?"

*'Oh, no,' said Polley.*

"I'm too big," said Mister Big. "The children came to the pumpkin patch, but I was much too big to take away."

*'Oh, yes,' said Polley.*

"Then I will help," said the long-nosed gopher.

*'Hey-ho!' said Rowley.*

He gathered his friends—John and Jack and Jill and Jenny and Jeffrey and Jelly Bean. They nibbled and nibbled and nibbled him eyes.

*'Hey-ho!' said Rowley.*

They nibbled him a nose.

*'Hey-ho!' said Rowley.*

They nibbled him a big laughing grin with falling-out teeth.

*'Hey-ho!' said Rowley.*

"But where's my glow? I need to glow!" said Mister Big. "A Halloween pumpkin has to glow!"

*'Oh, yes,' said Polley.*

So his gopher friend climbed up to the sun, up to the sun climbed he.

*'Hey-ho!' said Rowley.*

He took a nibble and stole a glow, and down from the sun climbed he.

*'Hey-ho!' said Rowley.*

He put the glow inside Mister Big, and Mister Big began to shine!

*'Hey-ho!' said Rowley.*

"Ho-ho-ho! I'm all aglow," said Mister Big, smiling from ear to ear.

*'Hey-ho!' said Rowley.*

"Hurray!" cried the gophers, waving their tails. "Hurray for Mister Big!" and they danced around him all night long while the biggest pumpkin, Mister Big, grinned and grinned and grinned.

*'Hey-ho!' said Rowley-Polley,*

*That's the end of our Halloween story!*

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A single, large pumpkin appears. It has pre-cut eyes, nose and mouth which are covered with a piece of cardboard. The gophers are done by holding a hand up with the index and middle fingers extended to make the ears and the remaining fingers are held together to make the face. When the gopher goes to the sun the puppeteer takes a lamp with him in one hand and creates the light and shadow with the other.