

The Pumpkin, Mr. Big

(version 1)

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Once upon a time there was a pumpkin. He was the teeniest, tiniest pumpkin ever seen—no bigger than a peanut—even smaller! But he grew. He grew and he grew and he grew until he was the biggest pumpkin ever seen. He was HUGE—so huge that all the other pumpkins lying in Farmer John’s field called him Mr Big.

One day—it was Halloween day—a busload of children came to the pumpkin patch. They were noisy. They were loud. A whole giggle of girls and a boisterous of boys ran here and there, laughing and screaming and choosing their pumpkins. Every single one of those boys and girls came to Mr Big and declared, “This pumpkin’s mine!” —but when they tried to lift him up he was much, much too heavy.

Then they went away. The children went away and left the biggest pumpkin sitting by himself in the empty field.

Twilight came. All over the world pumpkins were being carved and lit up and filled with light. But not Mr Big. He sat alone and all on his ownsome.

“Sniff, sniff,” he sobbed, a tear running down his fat cheeks. “No one wants me.”

Just then along came a mouse. His name was Jeremy Mouse and with him was his whole family.

“Why are you crying?” asked Jeremy Mouse.

“Because I was left behind,” said Mr Big. “After all my growing I won’t get to be a proper Halloween pumpkin.”

“Don’t worry,” said Jeremy Mouse. “We’ll help,” and with that the Mouse family nibbled and nibbled and nibbled on Mr Big. They nibbled him eyes, and they nibbled him a nose, and they nibbled him a big grinning mouth full of falling-out teeth.

"There," said Jeremy Mouse, "all done," and everyone stood back to admire their work — but by then the sun had gone down and it was too dark to see.

"I wish I could glow," said Mr Big. "That's what pumpkins do on Halloween night. Then you'd see me properly."

"Let's call Tiptoes Lightly," said the Mouse children. "She's a fairy. She'll know what to do."

So they held hands and sang:

*"Tiptoes Lightly,
Quick as you know —
Help Mr Big
And set him aglow!"*

In an instant Tiptoes was there.

"Mouselings, mouselings!" she cried. "Gather sticks and straw!"

So off the mouselings scampered and gathered sticks and straw. Then Tiptoes lit a fire inside Mr Big and he began to glow.

"Ho-Ho-Ho!" said Mr Big, sounding a bit like Santa Claus. "What a nice glow!"

And he did glow — a beautiful, deep, rich and sumptuously orange glow.

"Hurray!" called all the mouselings, dancing round and round Mr Big. "Hurray for Mr Big's glow."

Not long after, two gnomes, Pine Cone and Pepper Pot, turned up with a bag of mini marshmallows. They all sat around the fire inside Mr Big and toasted marshmallows and roasted pumpkin seeds and told stories till their tummies were full and it was far, far, far past children's bedtime.

And Mr Big? He was as happy as a Halloween pumpkin can be, and he grinned and he grinned and he grinned all night long!