

Chip and the Sky Band





Boy spots the cloud man first. 'Up there!' he yells, pointing at the sky. 'There is a man in the clouds!' Girl and I **stare** up. And there he is. A big, fluffy shape floating in the **air** above us, waving like he knows us. 'He is waving at me,' says Boy. 'He is waving at all of us,' I say. 'No,' says Boy. 'Just me.'

We flop down in the grass to look. Boy lies on his belly with his chin in his hands. Girl sits up, her eyes wide. I stretch out on my back and watch the clouds drift and shift. The man is gone. 'Maybe he is **scared** of us,' Girl whispers. 'Clouds do not get **scared,**' says Boy. 'He is just... loading.' Even the beasts in the grass stand very still, like they are waiting too.

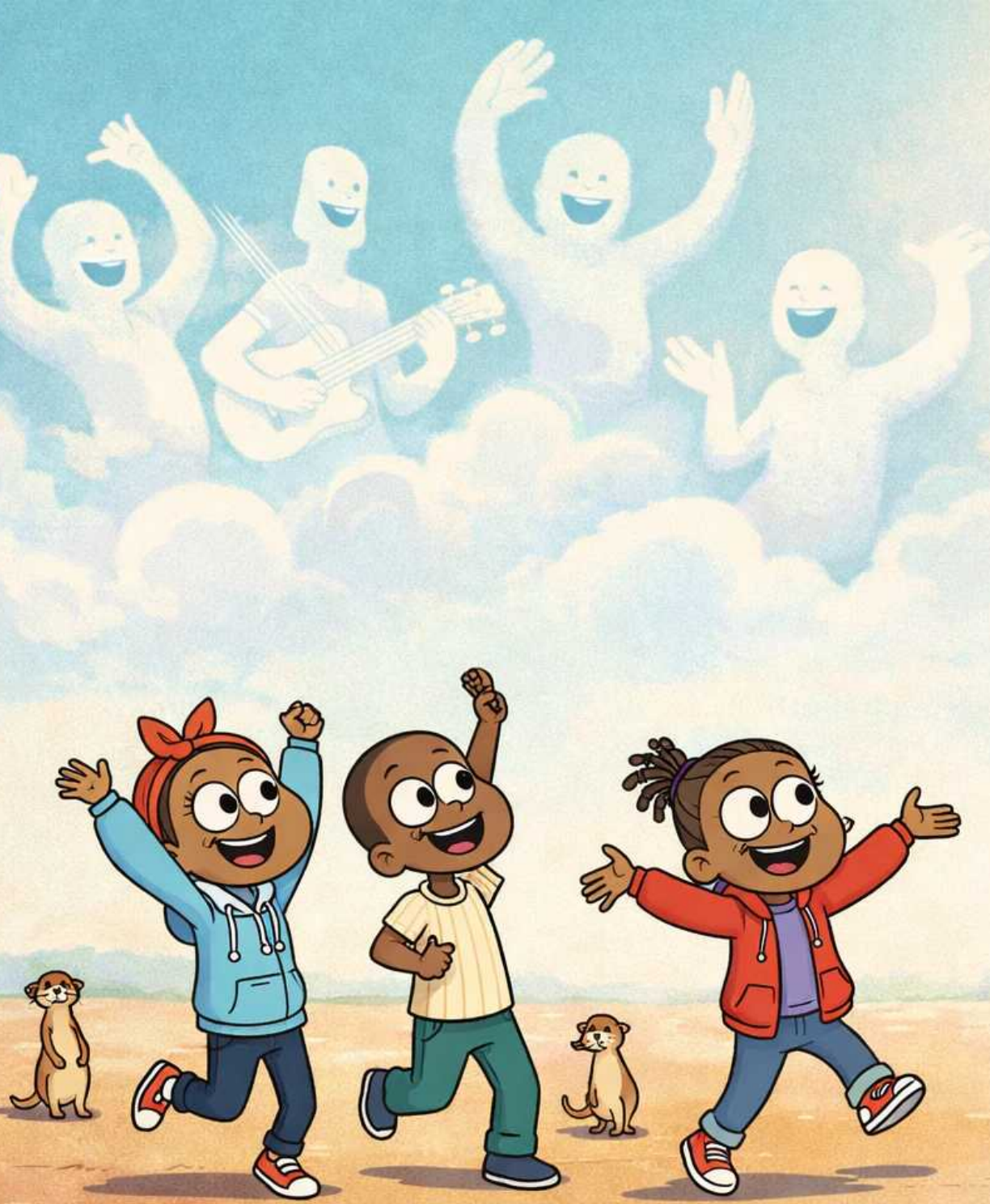




Then he comes back with a friend. Two cloud shapes leap and spin in the **air** like a big, fluffy dance **pair**. They kick their cloudy legs. They swing their cloudy arms. They are doing a jig. 'I know this one!' I jump up and dance along with them. A kitten hops at my feet too. Her hops look more like flops, but she does her best. It looks like the clouds are copying me. I grin. 'No. I am copying them.'

The cloud people stop dancing.
They plant their big fluffy feet,
throw back their heads, and sing.
No sound comes down. But their
mouths are wide open and their
arms are out, and I **dare** anyone
to say it is not the loudest, silliest
song in the sky. Boy sits up and
points. 'They are singing! I bet it
is a big, silly song!' The birds on
the ground tilt their heads, like
even they want to make out the
song.





Then the sky fills up. Cloud drummers. Cloud horn players. A full cloud band, grinning down at us with big puffy smiles. The drums boom. The horns **blare**. And this time we can feel it. A deep, rolling boom, boom, boom that makes the ground hum under our feet. 'Dance!' yells Girl, and we do not wait. Boy bounces. Girl spins. I kick my legs so high that my sock slips off. Even the beasts are bobbing, and I am not making that up.

The drummer gets louder and louder. The sky turns dark grey, then almost black. That fun boom turns into a crack of thunder that shakes our teeth. 'Um,' says Girl, as fat raindrops smack her hand. 'I think the band is mad.' 'Bands do not get mad,' says Boy. But his voice shakes. Lightning **flares** and splits the sky. The cloud drummer pounds harder, and the rain comes down hard and fast. It is a bit **scary** now.



'Run!' I yell. We bolt for the house. Girl is fastest. Girl is always fastest. Boy pumps his arms fast. Rain soaks us. It drips from my **hair**. The door is open, with gold light spilling out. Two wet dogs run with us. They want inside too. We tumble in just as the sky gives its biggest crack yet.



We kick off our wet socks.
Splat. Splat. Splat. Five wet
socks by the door. One is still
out in the grass! We dance in
our **bare** feet on the dry floor.
Boy grabs a towel and swings
it over his head. 'I am the cloud
man!' he yells. 'I am the cloud
lady!' Girl swings her red towel
and almost hits a lamp. I wave
my blue towel like a flag. 'I am
the full cloud band!' We dance
and drip and laugh until the
floor is almost a swimming pool.





Mum and Dad find us in the middle of the show. 'There were cloud people up there!' says Boy, opening his mouth wide to show them. 'They sang like this.' He takes the biggest breath he can and lets out a sound that is mostly just yelling. 'They did a jig,' I add, dancing **carefully** around Dad. 'There was a big band,' says Girl. 'Drums and horns and all. And then. A storm!' Dad grins. Mum laughs. 'We could feel the thunder,' she says. 'But we missed the show!'

'Not for long,' says Dad. He goes and gets his big drum. Boom. Boom-boom. Boy grabs a pot. Clang. Clang. Clang. Girl finds a pan. Bang. Bang. Bang. Mum grabs my hands. We leap and spin and laugh, like a **pair** of cloud dancers. It is louder than the storm. It is sillier than the clouds. For one perfect, noisy minute, we are the best band in all the land. Well, the best band in the living room. Same thing.





Later, the house is quiet and the moon hangs low. I peek out the window one last time. The clouds are silver now, soft and still. Right there, tucked between two of them, the cloud man is on his back with his eyes closed. Arms folded. Feet up. Fast asleep. 'Goodnight, cloud man,' I whisper. Then I creep into bed next to Boy and Girl, and we close our eyes too. **Somewhere** up in the **air**, I bet he is dreaming about us.



Chip and the Sky Band

Chip and his friends spot something amazing floating in the sky: a puffy cloud man, waving right at them. Soon he's joined by a whole band of cloud dancers, drummers, and singers putting on the wildest show anyone has ever seen. But clouds that big can turn awfully dark, awfully fast. What happens when the fun in the sky suddenly turns scary? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 112: air, are, ear /air/), this book practises words like 'stare', 'scared', 'hair', 'dare', and 'somewhere'.

Phonics Focus: air, are, ear /air/

air, bare, blare, carefully, dare, flares, hair, pair, scared, scary, somewhere, stare

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