What Is That
Big Thing?

Sam lives deep down in a dark cave. His mum tells him, 'The land up top is not safe yet, Sam.' But today is his birthday, and Sam has a plan. 'I will go up and seek a pal,' he says in a low, soft **voice.** He grips the rocks and creeps up into the sunlight. So bright! So green! Sam is so **excited.** 'This will be the best day ever!'

Down the path, Ben, May and Meg play by the trees. Ben **glances** up. A big, big thing is out there! 'Look!' he hisses. The kids crouch low and peek past the leaves. May gapes. 'What is that?' The big thing comes down the path. And it is so, so big!

Sam **prances** into the **place** with a big grin. Then he spots a bike by a hut. It has a shiny little bell. 'Ooh!' Sam gasps. He has never had a bike. He gives it a pat. Well, a soft pat for Sam. He waves at the lane. But no one is out. 'Come out! Come and play! I am very, very **nice!'**

Ben's legs shake. 'Is it a bad thing?' he hisses. 'It has my bike!' says May. Sam does not aim to crush the bike. He just has a wish to tap the little bell. But his fingers are too big. Crunch! Ben **winces.** 'The bike is smashed!' he yells. 'Run!'

Ben grabs the bike and goes **racing** back home. May and Meg dash after him. 'Wait!' Sam calls. 'Don't go!'

But a big boy's **voice** is very loud. It shakes the windows and the roof, and a flock of birds scatters from the trees. The kids run and run.

Sam stands in the yard. No one turns back. Not one.

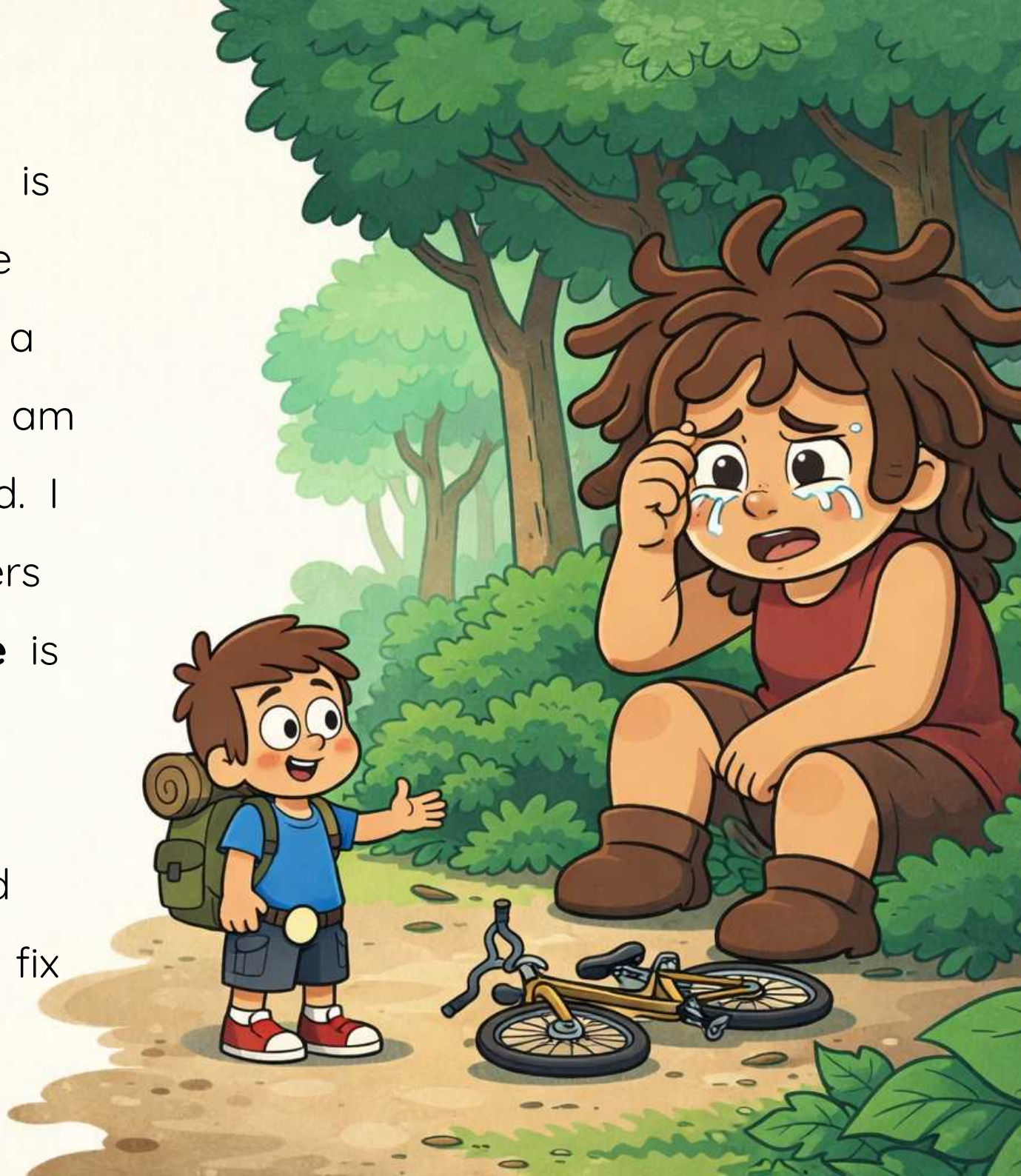
Sam looks at his big hands and **winces.** Hands this big can smash a bike. 'I just wish to play,' he says. His **voice** comes out soft. So soft, from a boy so big. Then big drops run down his **face.** Not little drops. Big, big drops that splash down like rain.

In the hut, the kids cling to Ben. A sound drums on the roof. Splash, splash! 'Is it rain?' asks May. Ben creeps to the window and peeks out. Big drops **bounce** off the roof and the grass, but the sky is blue. 'That is not rain,' says Ben.

Ben slips out and sits by the hut. He has the bell from the bike in his hands. Out past the **place,** he can see the big, big thing in the grass. 'He is not a bad thing,' says Ben. 'He is a boy. A big, big boy. He just has a wish to play with us, and we did not give him a **chance.'** Ben looks down at the bell. He feels bad. So bad.

Ben goes up the path. He can see Sam now, with his **face** in his hands. Sob after sob shakes the trees. Leaves swirl up high. Ben gulps. His legs wish to run. His legs have good sense. But this is his **chance** to be brave. 'I will speak to him,' says Ben.

Ben calls up, 'My name is Ben!' Sam lifts his **face.** It is red and wet, and his nose drips like a stream. What a mess! 'S-Sam,' he sniffs. 'I am sorry. The bike is smashed. I smash all things. My fingers are too big and my **voice** is too loud. I am too much.' 'Too much? No. Just big,' says Ben with a grin. 'And don't fret. It is a **cinch** to fix a bike.'



'Come and play with us, Sam,' says Ben. Sam gapes like a big fish. A pal! This is Sam's big wish! A grin fills his **face.** A big, wide grin! Sam is so **excited.** He has a wish to jump and shout and **dance.** But he must not crush his new pal. 'Yes! Yes, I will,' he says, as soft as he can.

They play all afternoon. At sunset, Sam takes his new pals to his cave for a feast. Food fills the cave. So much food!

'Look at all this food!' says Ben from up high on Sam. May stands on a rock, arms up. 'This is the best!'

'Have a feast!' says Sam. Then he grins. 'But don't let me tip the jug. Last time, splash! Wet cave!' The kids all grin and clap. And for the first time, Sam does not feel too big. This is the **nicest** day ever.

SOFT C

What Is That Big Thing?

Sam has lived his whole life underground, and today he's finally brave enough to crawl into the sunlight to find a friend. When his enormous new footsteps lead him into a village, will the children who spot him see a monster, or a boy who just wants to play? Written for Jolly Phonics classrooms (Step 3, Unit 2: soft c as in city), this book practises words like 'chance', 'dance', 'nice', 'face', 'prances'.

Phonics Focus: <soft> <c>

bounce, chance, cinch, dance, excited, face, glances, nice, nicest, place, prances, racing, voice, winces

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