



MUNGO'S NEW HOME

by
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Illustrated by Malcolm Davis



As he sat on the toy shop shelf, Mungo Bear was worried.

Who was going to buy him for Christmas? Where would he end up? Would he get to sit on someone's comfy bed, taking pride of place on the pillow? Or would he join a pile of soft toys, unloved and unwanted. That would be terrible! Mungo Bear wanted to be loved. He wanted to be important to someone.

One day a girl came in with her mum. They had a list in their hands. The girl spotted Mungo.

'He's perfect!' she cried. 'So soft and furry.' She picked him up and tickled his nose.

'Let's take him then, Zoe,' said her mum.

Mungo was very relieved. They look nice people, he thought, as they took him to the cash desk. They'll look after me.





Zoe's house was brand new: red brick with a smart green door. The rooms were fresh and clean, the chairs were comfy, the rugs were soft. Fleetinglly, he caught sight of Zoe's bedroom. There was a pile of soft toys in the corner. Oh well, he thought. I could be happy here: nice place, nice people, lots of love and a pillow to sleep on.



But Mungo didn't get anywhere near the pillow. Instead he was put in a shoe box!

'I wish we could keep him,' sighed Zoe.

'You've got lots of toys,' said Mum, 'He'll make someone else very happy.'

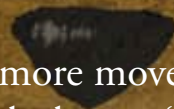
Mungo Bear was very disappointed. It was all he could do to keep the sadness inside his soft, podgy tummy. Fancy being put in a shoe box! And that wasn't all. Zoe put in a book and toothpaste as well - and a woolly hat at the bottom. She wrapped a flannel round his middle and tucked some pens and pencils around his head. Then she put in a toothbrush and the bristles tickled his nose. Mungo felt very sad and very squashed. Finally, Zoe put in a Christmas card and a photo and, just before the lid came down, Mungo could see a big sheet of sparkly wrapping paper, all ready to cover the box.

'Don't leave me like this!' he wanted to shout. 'I want to be loved!' But he had no voice.



After that, life was very dark. Mungo snoozed a lot of the time (at least when the toothbrush wasn't itching his nose). In between, he could feel himself being moved. At one point he could hear children's voices at school, then people singing in church. Later still, he heard the sound of heavy traffic as he was loaded into a big van. He awoke to feel the box being lifted up. The lid was opened and light flooded in.

'Ahh, isn't he sweet!' said a kind and friendly lady. Mungo looked about him. They were in a warehouse. Everywhere there were boxes and bears and books and dolls. Perhaps this was going to be his new home. But then the lady put him back in the box and it all went dark once more. Mungo couldn't believe it. He was on the move again. And the toothbrush was still tickling his nose!



Mungo lost track of time. There was more movement, more noise. At one point he felt like he was flying through the air. 'Perhaps it's a flying shoe box,' he thought. He drifted off to sleep. When he woke up, something had changed. It felt hot and stuffy. He felt himself lifted out and set down. There was the noise of a truck and a long journey along a very bumpy road. After what seemed like days, the truck finally came to a halt. But where was he?



‘Wait! When we’re ready, we’ll open them together.’

There were children’s voices. The shoe box had been lifted out and passed to someone else. He heard whispering.

‘What is it, Abu? Is it something nice?’

‘I think it’s beans,’ a boy replied.

Then Mungo felt a tap, tap on the box lid. Someone was drumming on the lid. The sound grew – there were lots of children drumming on their lids. There must be loads of shoe boxes here, thought Mungo. The drumming grew louder and louder and louder, until Mungo Bear was shaking with the sound.

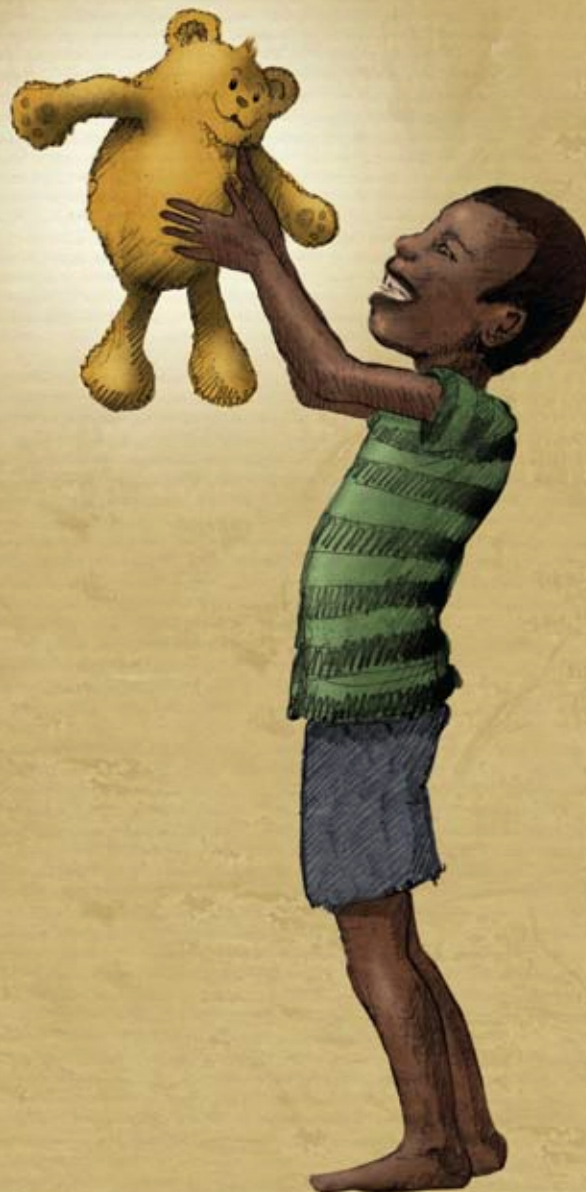
Suddenly a deep voice cried out ‘Enough - open!’ and screams of delight echoed round as the boxes were opened. The lid flew off. Out came the books, the pens, the flannel, the toothpaste and the toothbrush (oh, that was a relief) and Mungo found himself looking into a pair of big brown eyes. Some fingers reached in and gently stroked his nose.

‘Hello bear,’ said a boy.

‘Hello boy,’ thought Mungo. ‘Is this my new home?’

The boy – whose name was Abu – lifted Mungo out of the box .

‘This is my school,’ said Abu. He held Mungo up to look around. The school had no chairs or tables and the paint was peeling off the walls, but what it did have was lots of excited children, all opening boxes and discovering toys, musical instruments, clothes, paper, pencils, pens – things they’d never owned before.





Abu ran from the school down a bumpy red road, holding the box in one hand and clutching Mungo in the other. Would this journey never end? Abu ran to a mud hut and entered. This was not like Zoe's home. It seemed to be almost empty. It had a sand floor. No carpet. No sink, no tap, no electricity and certainly no pile of soft toys. Just two reed mats rolled up neatly in the corner, a scrunched up bit of paper wrapped in twine, and a very old man.

‘What have you got there, Abu?’ smiled the old man, taking the box from him.

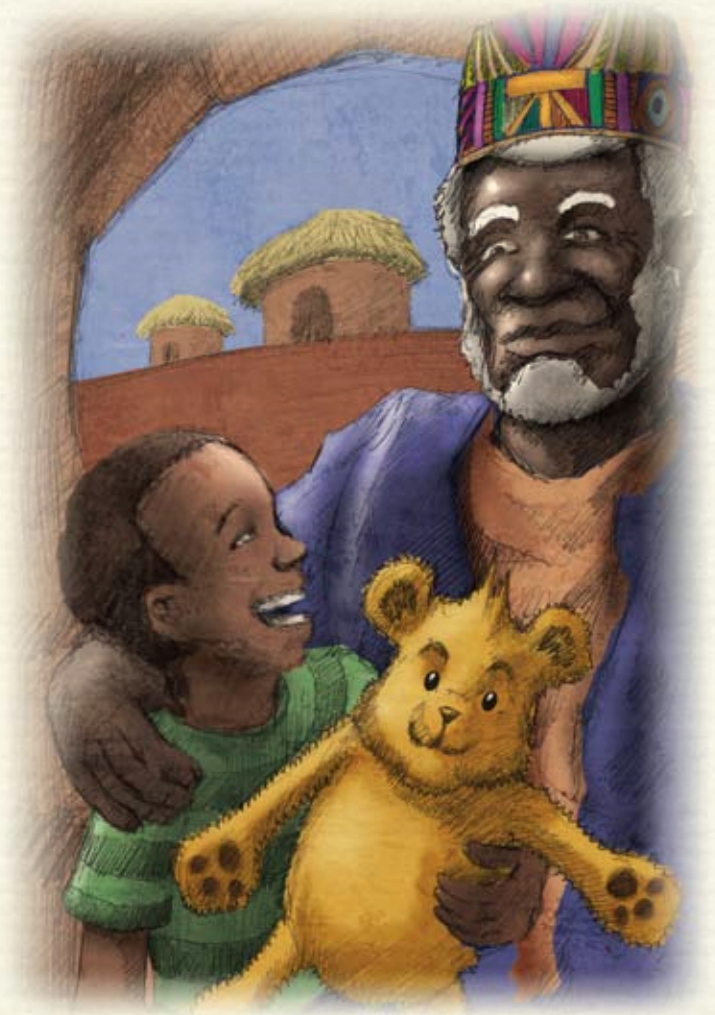
‘It’s a Christmas present, Grampy!’ replied Abu. ‘There are books for school, and pens to write with. Now I can be a doctor.’

‘What’s that?’ asked the grandfather, picking up the toothpaste.

‘I think it’s some kind of sweet. Try it, Grampy!’

‘Who gave you all these things?’

‘I don’t know’, said Abu, ‘Maybe this girl,’ he said, picking up Zoe’s photo. ‘And best of all, I have this bear!’ He drew Mungo to him.

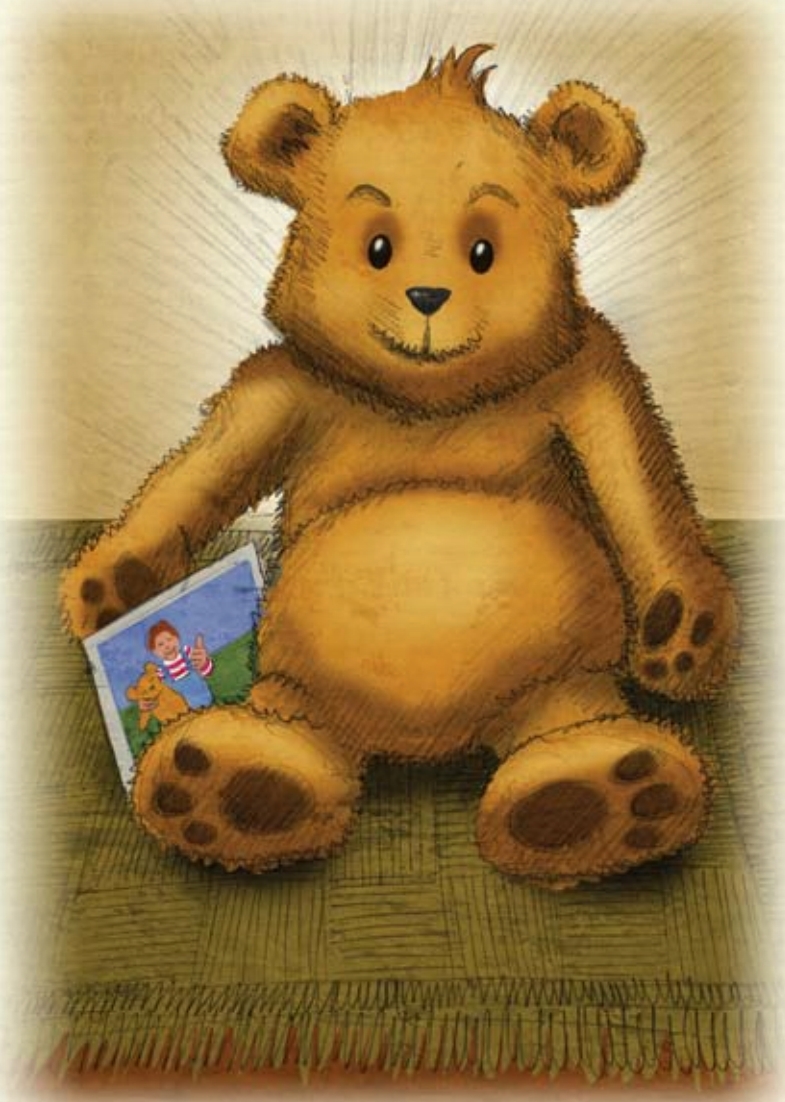


‘Somebody loves you, Abu,’ said his Grampy.

‘Yes,’ said Abu solemnly, stroking Mungo’s squished-up nose. ‘You do, don’t you, bear?’

And he unrolled his reed mat, and put Mungo in pride of place.

Then Mungo knew, that after all the excitement, all the sadness, all the bumps and bruises and bristles up the nose – he knew that he was finally home.





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Please use this story book to encourage children in your school to fill a shoe box this year. With the help of children in your school, we want to reach even more children in the poorest parts of the world in 2008 – children who could be receiving the first Christmas present they have ever received in their lives.

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