



My friends and I gathered on Danny's front steps. Danny's mom had ice pops in the freezer at all times, so it was a good place to hang out on hot summer days. We licked our ice pops and enjoyed the peace and relaxation.

"I love summer vacation," said Ming.

"I love going to the beach," I said. "And I love watching fireworks on the Fourth of July."

"Now that you mention it, the Fourth of July parade is next week. Do you want to go?" Jasper asked us.

"Yes! We have to go! It's a tradition!" I said.

"I don't want to watch the parade this year," Danny said boldly. We all looked at him in shock. Danny loved the parade!

"I don't want to watch," he repeated. "I want to be *in* the parade!"



Sometimes Danny had wild plans. “But how can we be in the parade?” I asked. “We don’t have a car to pull a float or horses to ride. And none of us can sing or dance.” To prove it, I danced a silly jig and nearly fell off the steps.

“Let’s start a marching band!” said Danny.



“It’s the perfect solution!” I said. Danny was a really good drummer.

Lee was the first to ask the question. “How can we have a band?” she asked Danny. “We don’t have instruments, except for your drums. And you can’t bring your great, big, huge drum set to the parade.”

“We can make instruments!” Danny insisted. “We’ll have a trash can band. We’ll gather up old junk and turn it into instruments.”

We knew better than to raise any objections. Once Danny had a plan, there was no use trying to stop him.

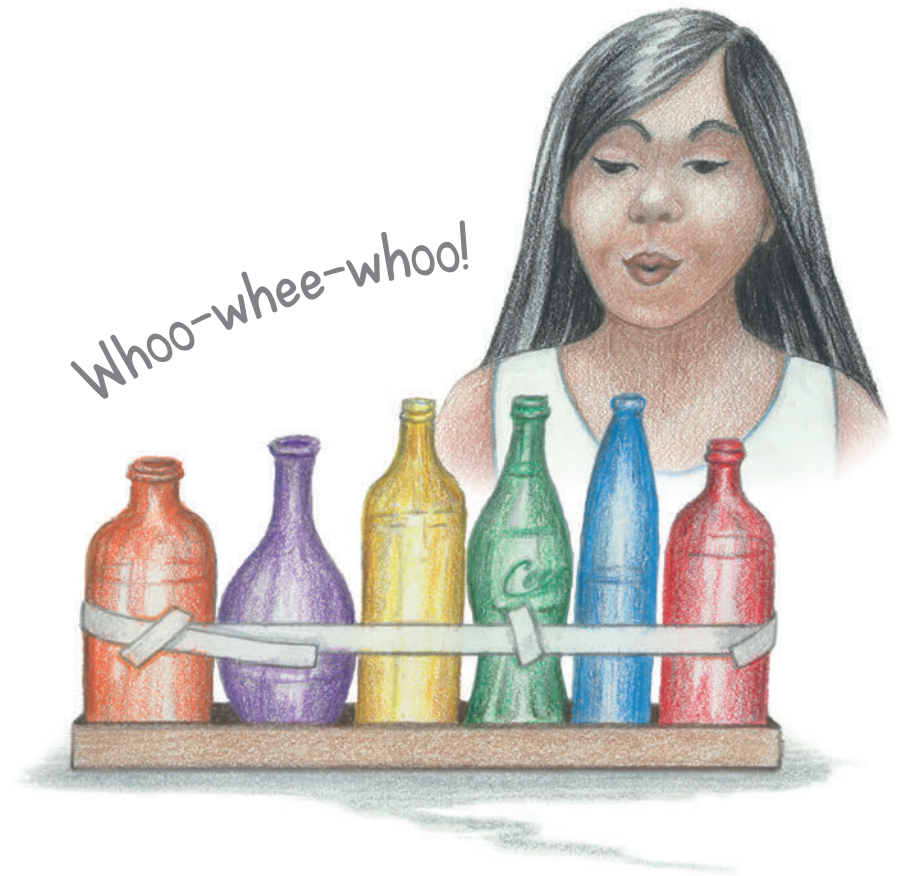
Danny described what we needed to find and we swung into action. “Meet you back here!” I called out as we all ran off in different directions.

Later that afternoon, we met back at Danny's house. We had gathered everything from pop bottles to trash cans to a shoe box. Ming made a donation of an old garden hose. Jasper tossed a funnel onto the growing pile. We had quite a selection to work with!

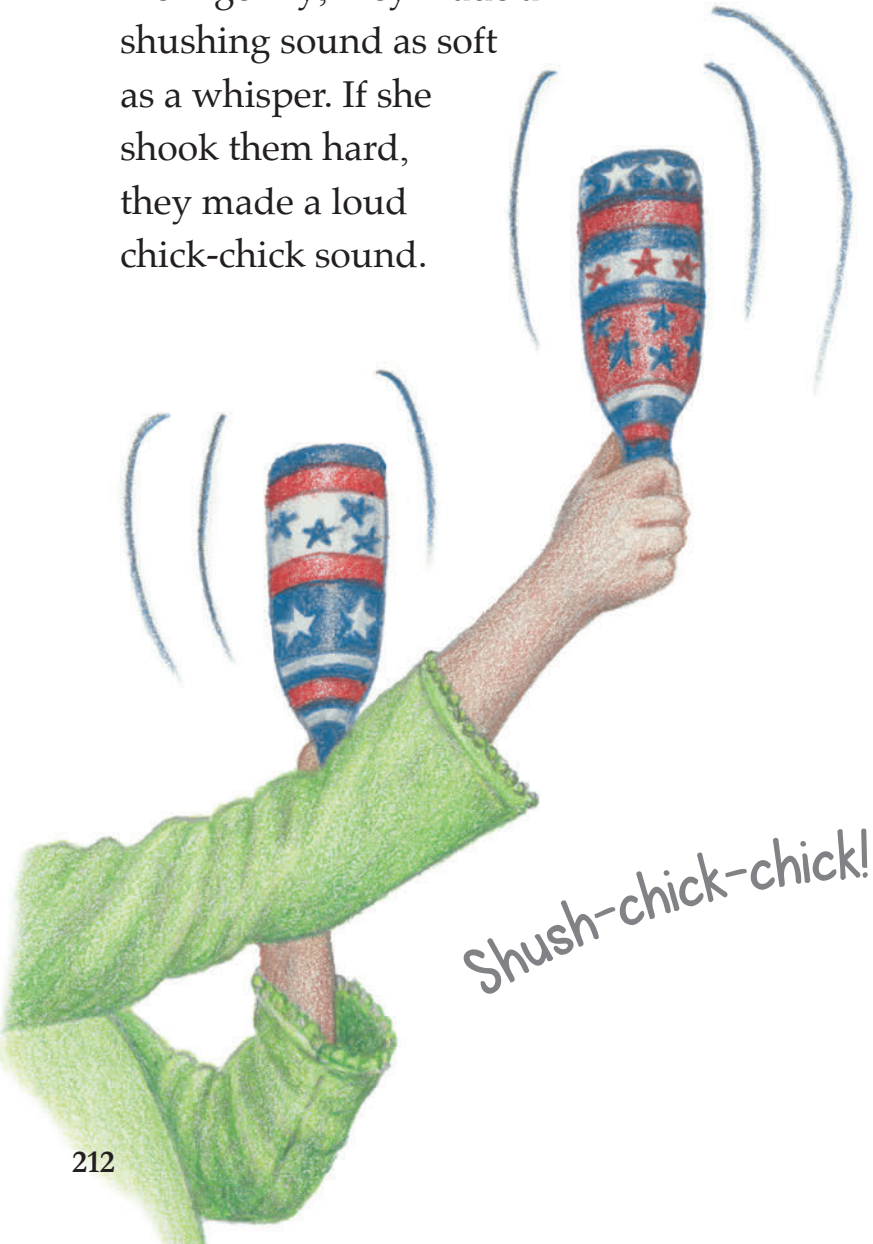


“This is a wonderful collection of objects,” Danny said. “We have lots of options. Let’s get to work!”

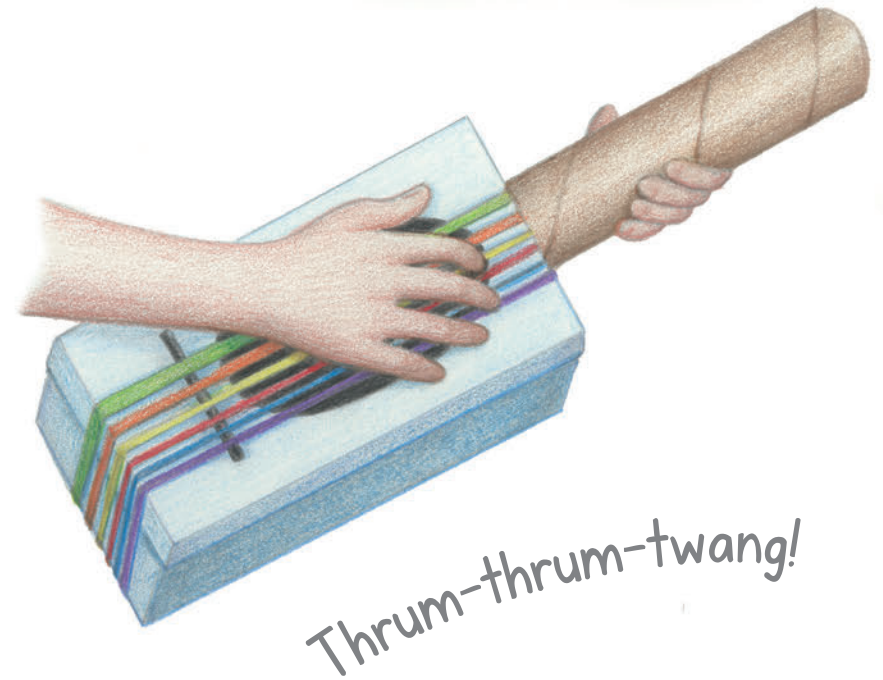
Ming made a flute from six glass bottles. She lashed them together with tape and filled them with different levels of water. Each bottle made a different tone as she blew over the top of it.



Lee made maracas out of plastic pop bottles. She painted them with bright stripes and stars and filled them part way with dried beans. Lee loved playing the maracas! If she shook them gently, they made a shushing sound as soft as a whisper. If she shook them hard, they made a loud chick-chick sound.



Jasper made a string instrument out of a sturdy shoe box and some rubber bands.

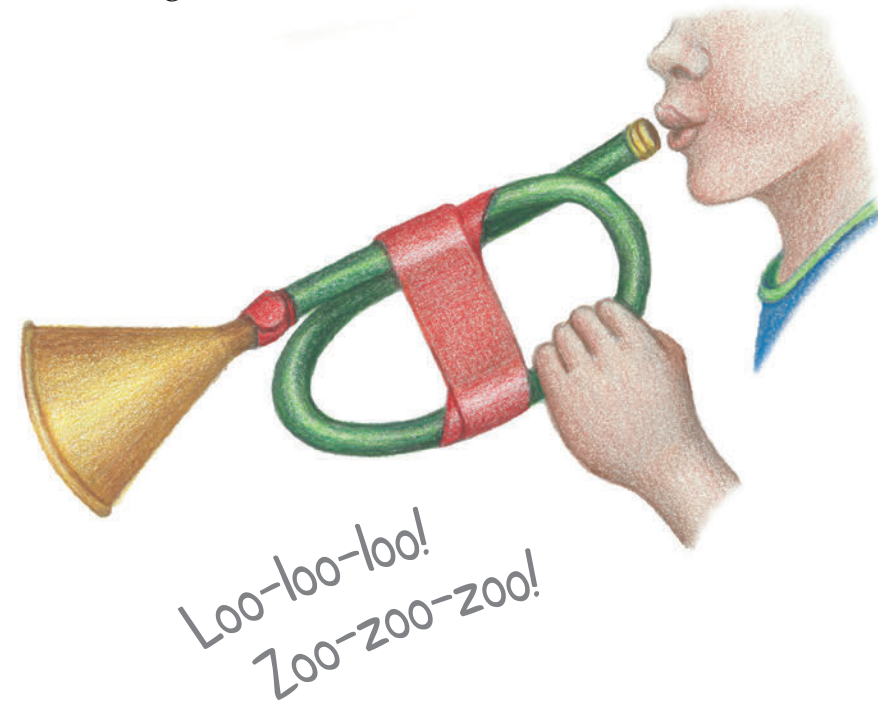


He placed the rubber bands in order from thinnest to thickest. He showed us how the thinner rubber bands made a higher-pitched sound and the thicker rubber bands made a deeper sound.

Danny made drums. He taped two small trash cans together with duct tape. For drum sticks, he used wooden spoons. He could make different sounds depending on the portion of the trash can that he hit. He tapped out a rhythm.



And I made a trumpet from a section of hose and a large funnel.



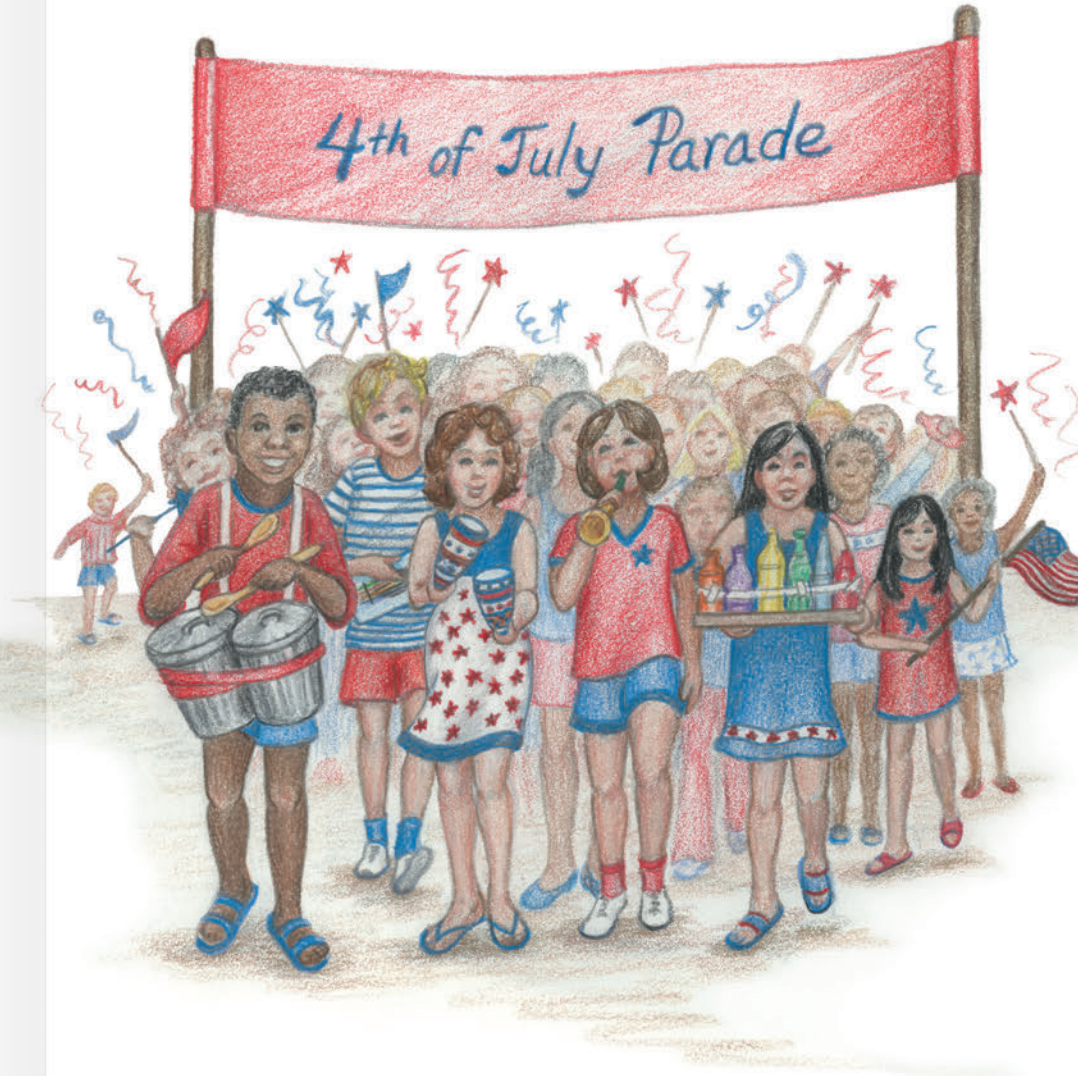
To play the horn, I blew into the hose while making a buzzing sound with my lips. I could make different tones by making different buzzing sounds. I couldn't wait to play it in the parade!

We practiced our instruments every afternoon.
Our band sounded pretty good!

On the day of the big parade, we hauled our inventions to the starting point in front of the fire station on Main Street. We found our location in the parade lineup between the candy float and the clowns.

We knew our moms and dads would be at the parade cheering for us, but we didn't expect what happened next.

Just a few minutes into the parade, a boy began marching next to us, tapping two sticks together. Then some girls joined in, shaking their water bottles in rhythm with us. Kids started riding their bikes behind our growing band.



Before we knew it, all the town kids were marching in the parade with us, tapping cans, blowing cardboard tubes, and shaking crumpled plastic bags. On the sidelines, grown-ups stomped their feet and clapped their hands, keeping beat with our trash can band.

I tapped Danny on the back to catch his eye and mouthed the words *way to go!* Danny grinned and kept up the rhythm with his drums. “Our next production will be at the county fair!” he yelled over the music.



The End

