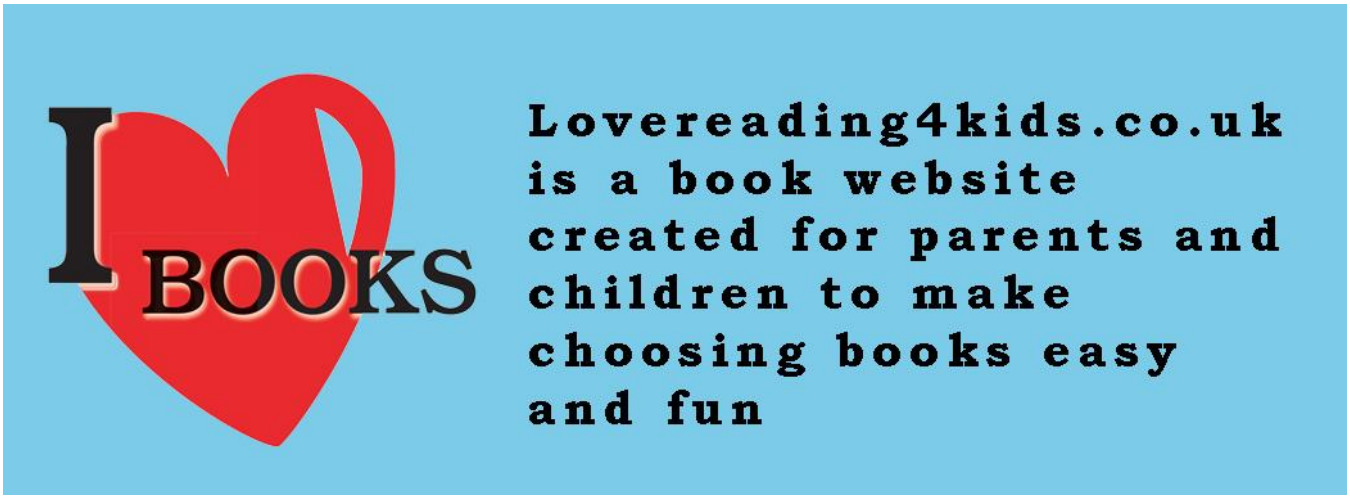


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THE KING'S PUDDING



In the middle of the rainforest, the morning sun shone through curtains of lush green leaves. Birds sang, frogs croaked and gibbons whooped and screeched between the trees.

Little Mouse Deer stepped cautiously down to the river to drink. The rainforest was a dangerous place, what with crocodiles in the water and scorpions and snakes in the undergrowth...





In the starry dark, Ivan walked around the garden, singing songs. Just before dawn, the sky grew bright. A beautiful fiery bird swooped down to the tree, seizing an apple in her long beak.

Ivan leaped up to catch her, but she pulled free. He was left clutching a single feather from her tail.

The king was astonished to hear Ivan's story, and his brothers could hardly contain their envy.



"What a marvel!" sighed the king. "If I had that bird, I would be the envy of a dozen kingdoms."

"I will find her for you," said his eldest son at once. "Go, saddle my horse and summon my servants. I will set out this instant."

A few days later, the tin soldier and the paper ballerina were married.

All the toys were invited to the wedding.

There was singing and dancing until dawn – and Tom never knew a thing about it.

"Hooray for the happy couple!" they shouted.