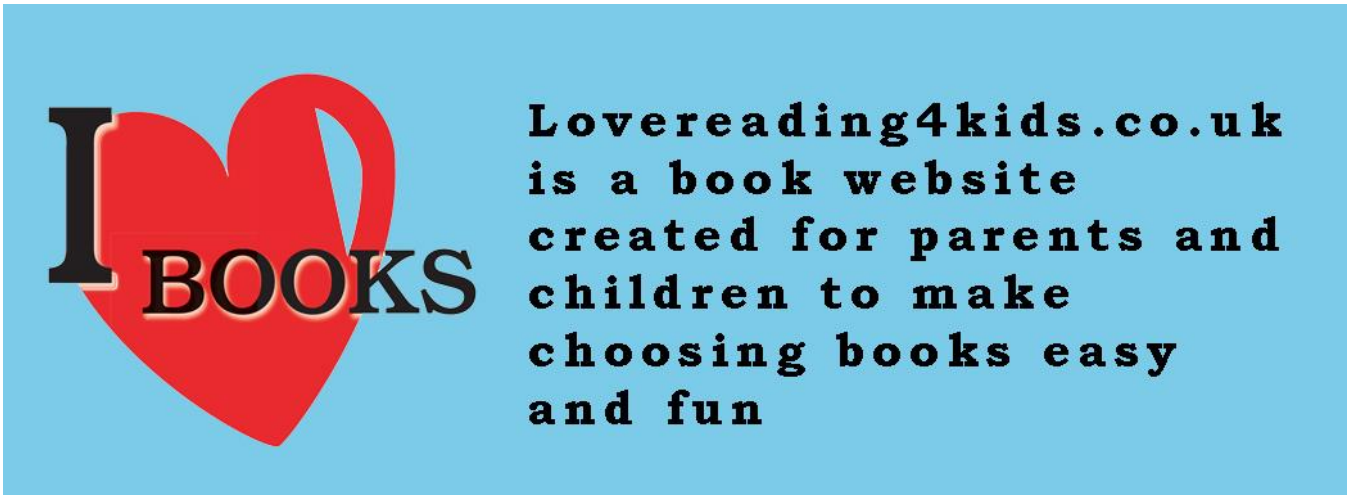


Opening extract from

The Bolds to the Rescue

Written by

Julian Clary

Illustrated by

David Roberts

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For my parents,
Peter and Brenda Clary

JC

For my nephew,
Joel Roberts-Maloney

DR

Chapter 1

A word of warning before I start: it's probably best to keep this book away from grown-ups. They just won't understand it. They'll say it's 'a load of *silly nonsense*!' or ask, 'Why don't you read something more sensible?'

Well, grown-ups *aren't* always right. (I'm a grown-up myself, so I should know.) They read *boring* newspapers and tedious, thick books with no pictures and no jokes in them where nothing interesting happens, *ever*.

So much happens in THIS book, I'm not even sure where to begin. It is a *very unusual*

book. As you are about to find out. But unusual doesn't mean it is *silly* or a load of nonsense. It is a *true* story. Make no mistake about it. *You* will understand that. Grown-ups won't.

And if a grown-up happens to be reading this *to* you as a bedtime story, then they must keep their remarks to *themself*.

There, then. I've got that off my chest, so let's *begin*.

Have you ever heard of the Bolds? I'm sure you probably have. They're a *lovely* family who live at 41 Fairfield Road in Teddington. They're always *laughing*, always joking. Mr Bold works in the local Christmas cracker factory, writing the jokes; Mrs Bold makes and sells *elaborate* hats at the local market; and their twins, Betty and Bobby, are such sweet, adorable children.



Also living with them are Uncle Tony and Miranda, who they rescued from a safari park. Yes, that's right, a safari park – you *did* hear me correctly. Because the Bolds are a rather unusual family who do unusual things. We all have secrets, but their secret is *BIGGER* and *hairier* than most . . .



You see, behind closed doors they're not a family like yours or mine. A *human* family. Oh dear me, no. They're a family of hyenas *pretending* to be humans – from the tips of their furry ears right down to their paws.

No one knows. Except us.

You're probably in shock. Indeed, so was I when I first heard about them, but in actual fact it's not as shocking as you might think. There are a lot of animals out there living their lives pretending to be humans. Giraffes who stack shelves in Waitrose, pigs who eat popcorn noisily all the way through films in the cinema, bulldogs who work outside nightclubs. In fact, the Bolds' next-door neighbour, Mr McNumpty, is an animal too. A grizzly bear.



And whilst he and the Bolds have had their differences in the past, he's now firm friends with them and pops over most evenings for a game of dominoes and a couple of chops.

Except for Tuesdays. There are no games of dominoes that night because Tuesday nights in the Bolds' neat semi-detached house are very special. Tuesday nights are 'Grooming Night'. You might think this means face packs and manicures, but you'd be wrong: in fact the Bolds, and deaf old Uncle Tony, and Miranda the marmoset monkey, all sit in a circle, scratching, rubbing and nibbling each other, making sure all the loose fur comes out and any bits of mud or fluff that might be lurking there are removed. Not to mention the fleas . . .

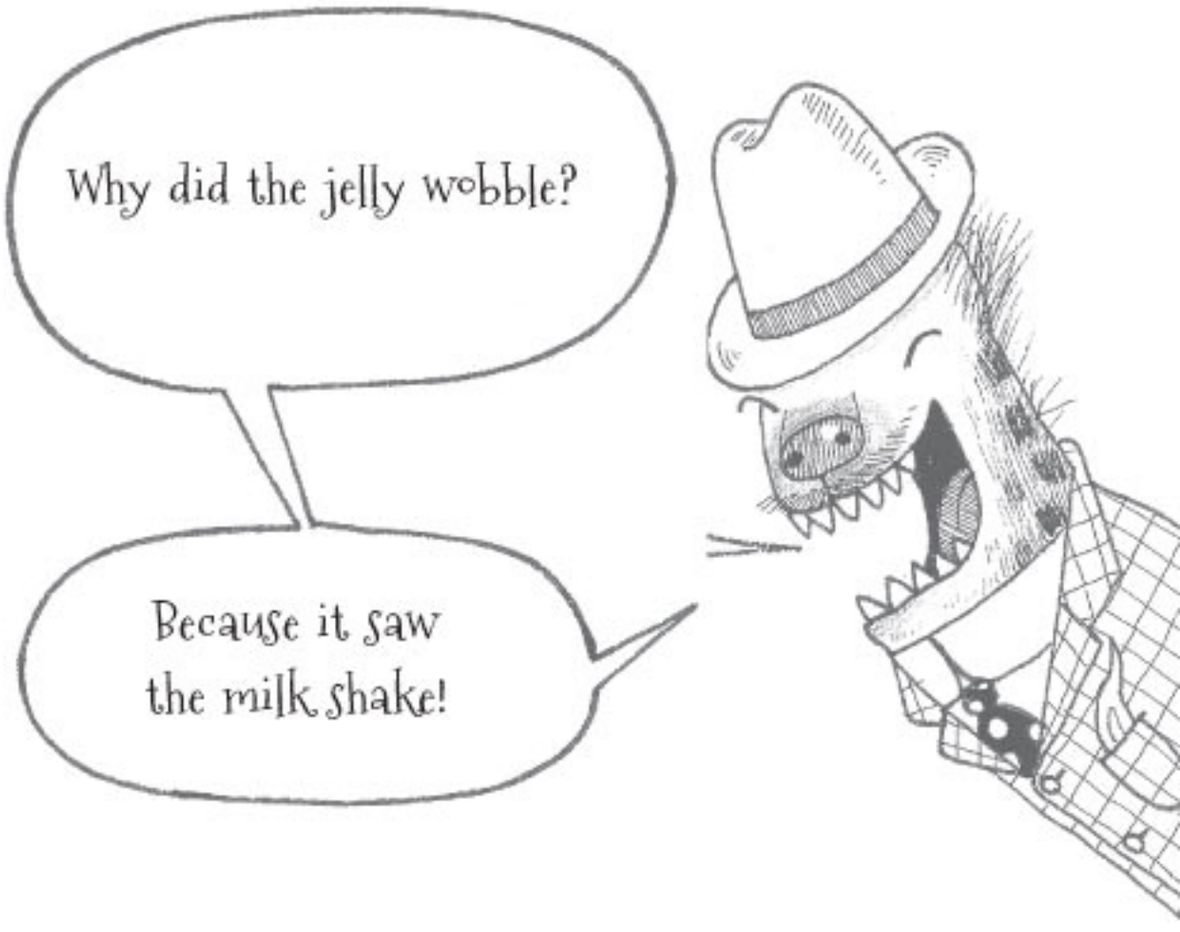


Obviously they have to make sure the curtains are drawn and no one peeps in. Although we humans sometimes scratch and itch too, we aren't often seen lying on our backs while our mothers nibble at our tummies with sharp teeth, or found licking each other's ears with big, long tongues that reach right across our faces to the other ear and beyond.

Enjoyable and good for the Bolds as this is, the activity tickles too, so everyone at Number 41 ends up giggling and whooping with laughter. This just gets them in the mood to listen to some of Mr Bold's latest jokes:



Or:



And before long, on Tuesday nights in 41 Fairfield Road, everyone is rolling on the floor in laughter.

Now, one Tuesday evening, once the grooming was done and the twins had gone to bed, Mrs Bold went to the bathroom to brush her teeth and wash and moisturise her friendly, furry face. The moment she sat on the toilet seat she thought she heard a faint cough followed by a splashing sound. She cocked her ear to one side and listened intently. Hyenas have very good hearing.

Then she blinked in confusion as she realised the sounds she was hearing were coming from beneath her . . . from inside the toilet bowl!

But before she could jump up to take a look she felt a little nip on her bottom.

'Shrieeek!' she cried, and shot up into the air. She then peered cautiously into the lavatory.



A head with two huge green eyes and a very long snout peered up at her, and in a deep, gravelly voice said: 'So sorry! It's only little me!'

Whatever this creature was, he or she seemed to have a LOT of teeth . . .

