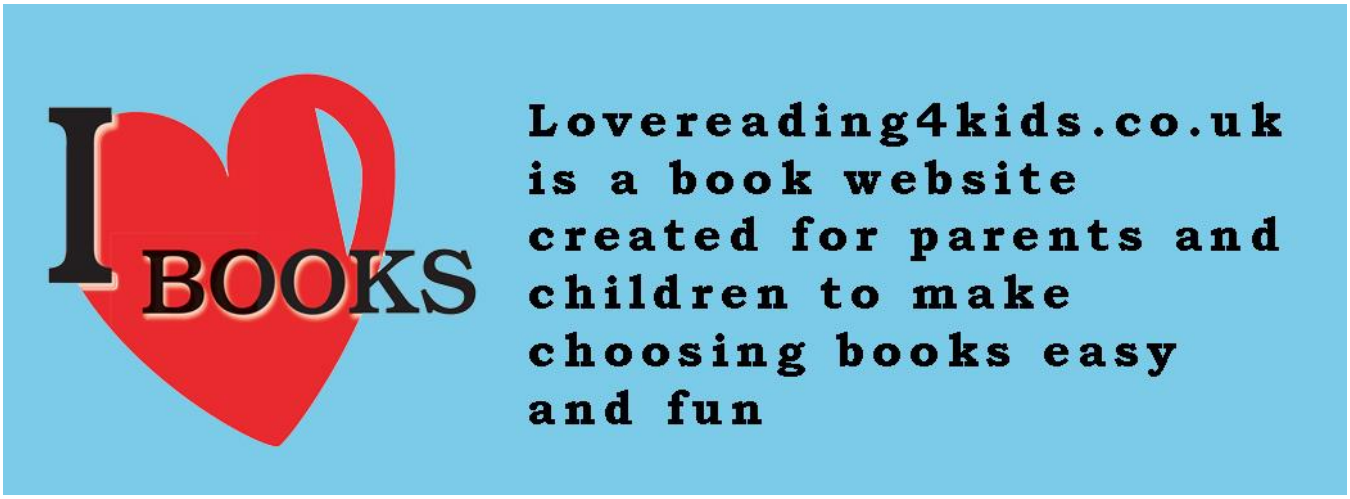


Opening extract from

What's My Name?

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Published by

Andersen Press Ltd

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This edition published in 2017 by
Andersen Press Limited
20 Vauxhall Bridge Road
London SW1V 2SA
www.andersenpress.co.uk

First published in 2014 by
Andersen Press Limited

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data available.

ISBN: 978 1 78344 509 7

Printed and bound in Singapore by
Tien Wah Press

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Chapter 1



The sun was a shiny yellow, the sky was vivid blue and the grass was greenest green – a lovely day had dawned over the castle.

The Little Princess was spending a quiet morning sitting in her comfy bedroom armchair busily trying to sew up a hole in her teddy's ear.

Poor Gilbert was getting rather old and thread-'bear'.

The Queen was happily making cucumber sandwiches for tea. She liked to help Cook from time to time.



But not everyone was having a lovely day. The King was pacing up and down the throne room,

scratching his head and frowning. He had been doing this all morning.



Up and down. Up and down. Backwards and forwards. Wearing the carpet out and making his shoes squeak.



Something was troubling him; he was trying to find the answer to a difficult question. Suddenly he stopped in his tracks and said, "I know what! I must call a meeting of the most important people in the land, they will know what to do."



And so he did. But he didn't tell the Little Princess.

The Queen was the first to come running in.



She was followed by the Maid, the Prime Minister, the Admiral, the General, Scruff the dog, the Little Prince, Puss the cat, the Doctor and the Gardener, plus two snails that were stuck to the Gardener's boots, and a duck who had just come in to see what all the fuss was about. "*Quack!*" it said, absent-mindedly.





There was a lot of noise as the royal household talked loudly amongst themselves, until the King raised his hand and declared, "I have asked you here today to help me answer a very important question . . ."



He paused, took a deep breath, then said, "The Little Princess has reached a certain age and a certain size, and she is not so little a princess anymore. We cannot keep calling her Little Princess when she is clearly *not* little and—"

"Stop waffling, dear!" said the Queen, beginning to fidget with boredom.



So the King coughed and tried again. "We have been calling our daughter 'Little Princess' for too long. We must call her by her proper name now and . . ."

The King was drowned out by a gasp of horror from everyone.





"But we can't do that, darling!" said the Queen, looking worried. "You do remember what her proper name is, don't you? We had to name her after the Old Duchess, and she had the most frightful name. An awful name . . . indeed an *ugly* name."

"That's very true, dear. I'd forgotten. Very ugly," muttered the King thoughtfully.

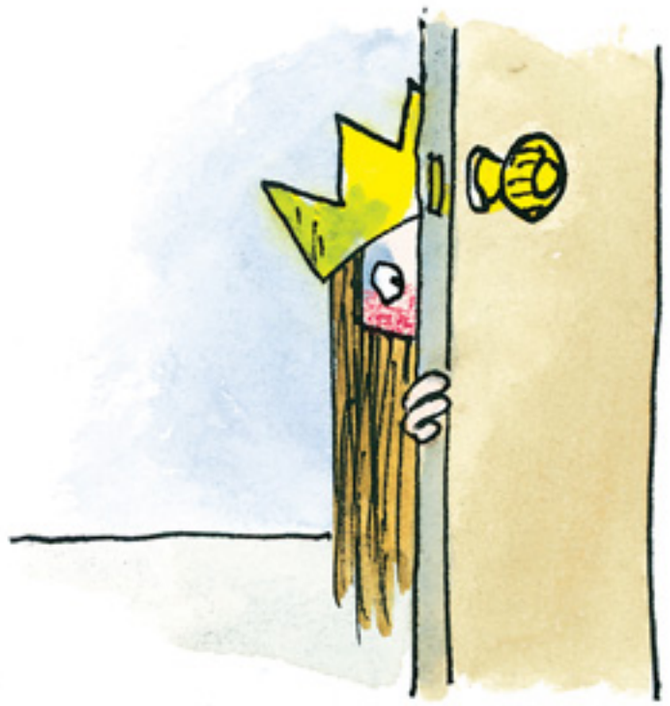
Meanwhile, the Not-so-Little Princess was still in her room. Suddenly, her tummy rumbled VERY loudly.

She decided to go to the castle kitchens to find Cook to ask for some royal nibbles. Mmmm! A toasted banana sandwich – that was her very best favourite.

But Cook wasn't there.



And the Maid wasn't in the living quarters.



And the dog wasn't in his basket.



And the Gardener wasn't in the garden.

Where was everybody?

