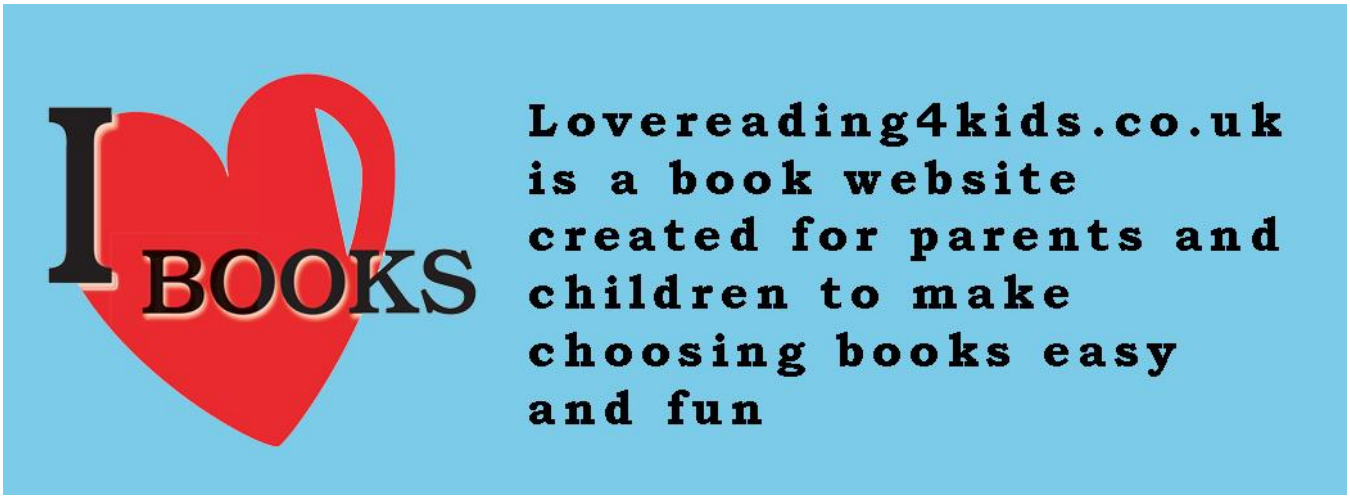


Opening extract from

King Coo

Written & Illustrated by

Adam Stower

Published by

David Fickling Books

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Lovereading4kids.co.uk

For my brother, Matt, who still climbs trees.

King Coo
is a
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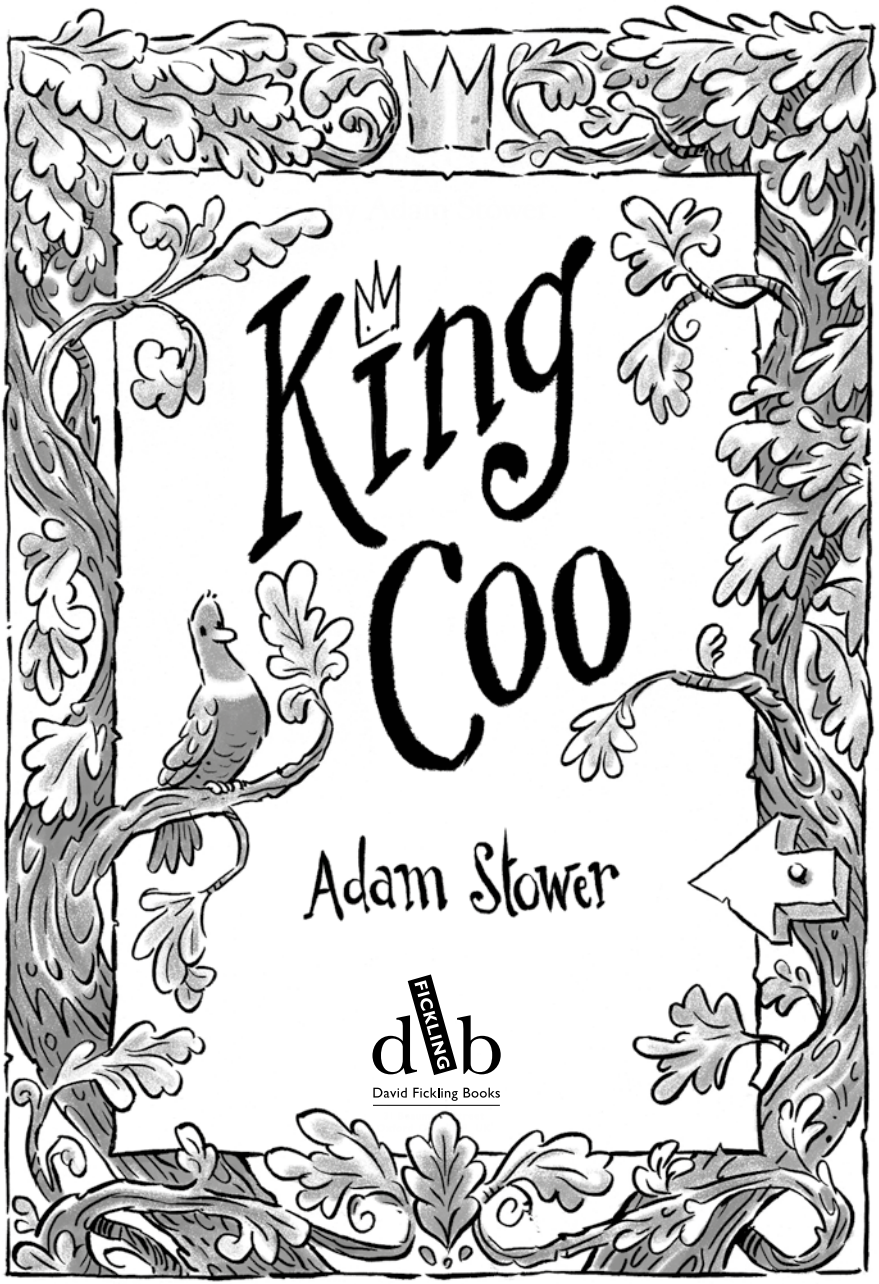
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Marmalade

Chapter One



It was breakfast time, and Ben Pole was halfway through a huge bowl of cornflakes. His dad was busy with the paper, mumbling something through a mouthful of toast and marmalade.


Ben Pole
cornflakes
clever in the noggin
On the lookout for bullies
BAG (I don't know WHAT's in here)
Skinny as a bean Pole
more cornflakes
sneakers, for ...um, well, sneaking
HA HA!
BEN as 3rd Tree in School Play: In his pants and painted green
Ben= VERY good at hiding
*
CAN YOU SPOT HIM:
at home?
at School?
No? See, I told you he is good at HIDING!

But Ben was lost in his own thoughts. He had things to worry about. Well, one thing really. Monty Grabbe. As school bullies go, Monty was up there among the worst of them, and Ben was an easy target. He was so small and skinny he had to lean into even the slightest breeze to stop himself from toppling over.

But he wasn't stupid.

He knew the trick to survival was to simply stay out of Monty's way. So Ben did his best to slip around the school unseen, slinking through the shadows, darting from bench to bin to bike rack like a ninja assassin. And so far, it had worked. The summer holiday was just around the corner. He had almost made it.

Suddenly, Ben's dad sat bolt upright in his chair.



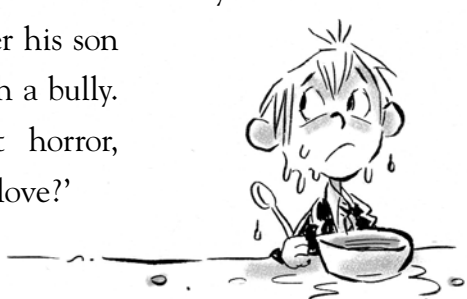

Look!
CITY★NEWS
CAVE-IN CAUSES
CHAOS!
CAVERNOUS
CRATERS CREATE
CRISIS!
MORE MYSTERIOUS SINKHOLES
HAVE APPEARED IN THE CITY!
THE POLICE ARE BAFFLED
THE NEW
SNAPSHUT 5000
ALL-PURPOSE TRAP
"PERFECT for gully AMBUSH"
— HUNTER

'There' been another one!' he said, holding up the paper and jabbing at the front page with a sticky finger. 'Ha! What about this then, son? It's a mystery, all right. Perhaps it's ALIENS!' he said, taking another enormous bite of toast and showering his belly with crumbs.

'You ALWAYS think it's aliens, dear,' said Mrs Pole, rolling her eyes and dabbing at Mr Pole's cardigan with a damp hanky.

'Well, whatever it is, people are getting worried,' said Mr Pole. 'The Mayor will be for the chop if he doesn't fix it fast!'

'Pfft! Serves him right,' said Mrs Pole, wiping milk off Ben's face. 'That Mayor Grabbe's a crook! It's no wonder his son Monty is such a bully. He's a right horror, isn't he, Ben love?'



Monty Grabbe

(son of Mayor Grabbe *)



MONTY'S TOP 3 MISERY-MAKERS



(* Mayor Grabbe is also a horrid wart hog)

Ben poked at his cornflakes and nodded weakly. Monty Grabbe was one of those school bullies who really enjoy bullying. Nothing cheered up Monty more than cramming some hapless squirt into a locker, or stripping a spindly lad of his lunch money and leaving him at the far edge of the playground folded into an awkward shape.

'Crikey!' said Mr Pole, handing Ben the paper. 'It says here Mayor Grabbe's offering a reward from the city bank of ONE BA-JILLION POUNDS to anyone who solves the mystery! And he's already hired a professional exterminator – some nasty looking goon called Ted Dedleigh. Here, look!'



'That'll give those aliens something to worry about, eh, Dad?' said Ben, but he wasn't really listening. He had Monty to worry about, and he was late for school too. So he scoffed the last of his cornflakes, grabbed his bag, and with a wave to his mum and dad headed out the door.

