Helping your children choose books they will love

I ♥ reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from

Fizzlebert Stump and the Bearded Boy

Written by

A.F. Harrold

Published by

Bloomsbury Publishing

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

CHAPTER ONE

In which introductions are
made and in which the reader
is welcomed to the book

It began with a pair of false teeth, or rather it began *without* a pair of false teeth.

Actually, now I think about it, that's not exactly the beginning of the story. It might have begun with a red nose. A clown's red nose, the day *that* went missing. But really it began well before that too. I suppose it began with the letter



the Ringmaster received one Wednesday morning . . . or maybe it started before that, even.

Oh, beginnings are tricky, aren't they? You think you've got it pinned down and then you look again and there's some loose thread dangling out the other side. You tug on it and soon the whole thing's unravelled on the floor at your feet like a horrible jumper you got for Christmas.

For example, let's say you wanted to tell the story of why you were late for school this morning. You might start by saying you were late because you didn't leave the house early enough. That's pretty straightforward. But why didn't you leave on time? Maybe your little brother was making a nuisance of himself, and you needed to change your shirt because of the porridge. So, that's what made you late. But then, you might ask why the little brat was

being so annoying, and it might be because he didn't get enough sleep. There was that thunderstorm in the night and he's so soft that he's still scared of storms. Well, surely *that's* the beginning? But how did the thunderstorm get there? 'There was a cold depression over the Bay of Biscay,' the weatherman might say. 'But, where's the Bay of Biscay?' you might ask. 'Down near Spain,' he might explain.

But even blaming Spain for making you late for school isn't the end of it. Why do you have to go to school in the first place? After all, if you didn't need to go, you couldn't be late. So then you could look back at the history of education and find out who invented the first school (and why they decided it should begin so early in the morning). And on top of that, it might be worth asking your parents some questions. For



instance, why on earth did they want to get themselves another child, when they already had lovely little you? And your mother might say that she looked at you as a little baby, fast asleep in your cot, and worried you'd get lonely as you got older, and your father might rustle his newspaper and say that it wasn't his idea.

So, you see, beginnings really are hard things to pin down.

Now I think about it, the missing false teeth actually come later, much later (not until the end of Chapter Seven).

Before that there's a boy I ought to introduce. He's a normal enough lad, about *this* tall and *that* wide . . . But, oh dear, hang on – perhaps I'm still getting ahead of myself. I'm assuming that you know what a boy is. Maybe that's an assumption too far. Let's backtrack a little.





A boy is like a girl, but not as clean. Like a man, but not as tall. Like a dog, but not as hairy (usually). They wear clothes, run around noisily and wipe their noses up their sleeves.

This particular boy's called Fizzlebert. It's a silly name, I know. But his mum's a clown and his dad's a strongman, so, frankly, he's lucky he didn't end up with an even sillier one. He

spends his life travelling with the circus, and since most of his friends are circus acts with all manner of weird and wonky names and titles, he doesn't often think about the *Fizzlebertness* of his name. At least, not as often as I have to.

He's not the one who has to write this book, you see. It's a long word to type, 'Fizzlebert', although thankfully easy to spell, so I shouldn't really grumble. I mean, if I had to write 'bureaucracy' (a word I find almost impossible to spell in one go) on every page, well, then I really would have something to complain about.

But, fortunately, although in all circuses there is *some* bureaucracy, which is to say paperwork, Fizz's story doesn't involve the accountancy department, the Health and



Safety inspector's clipboard or the filing cabinet of performers' contracts which sits at the back of the Ringmaster's office-cum-caravan. Or not very much, anyway.

So, where were we? I think we'd got *this* far . . .

Fizzlebert Stump (who I most often just call Fizz in order to save on ink) is a boy who lives in the circus. He has a selection of library cards, a pen pal called Kevin, red hair, a dashing old ringmaster's frockcoat, and the ability to hold his breath for just as long as it takes an audience to become impressed by a small boy putting his head in a lion's mouth, and this book is the story of just one of his adventures.

And that's all I've got to say to get the introduction out of the way. Now, roll on Chapter Two, eh?

