

Helping you choose books for children



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opening extract from
Anthony Browne's
King Kong

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published by
Picture Corgi

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ONCE UPON A TIME IN NEW YORK CITY the evening sky was growing dark and a thin veil of snow was falling. The streets were crowded; old men with shopping bags, couples out on dates, people going home from work. The city was a never-ending tide of human beings.



One person seemed to be swimming against that tide. He was Carl Denham, a film director, known as the craziest man in Hollywood. Denham always made his films in distant, dangerous places and rumours were spreading throughout the film world about his next film – it was to be his most ambitious yet.

Denham was about to go on location. He had a ship waiting at the New Jersey docks, due to sail at six the next morning. In fact, if the ship *didn't* sail, there would be trouble. The authorities had heard that guns and gas bombs were on board, so the ship would be searched.

But Denham didn't have the one thing he needed to make his film. It was going to be the best picture he'd ever made, but it needed a young, beautiful woman. He'd tried every acting agency in New York, and they had all turned him down. "You take too many risks," they said, "and you won't even tell us where you're going. No actress will take that job."

That was why Denham was walking the streets of New York, looking for the right face for his film; the face of Beauty. He looked into thousands of faces; faces in shops, faces on park benches, faces in cafés, faces in queues. Sad faces, happy faces. But not one of them was the right face, *the* face, for his greatest ever film.

