

FROM WHERE I SIT

JOHN COONEY

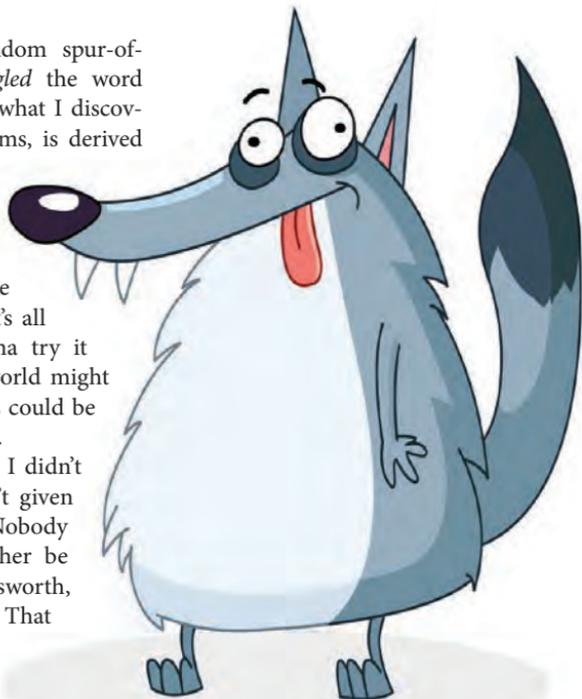
Little Wolf

I've sometimes felt envious of people who have important-sounding names ... names that have meaning ... names that imply 'somebody' instead of just 'anybody'. And while the name 'Cooney' has served me well for more than half-a-century, it's never really helped me stand out from the crowd. But all that is about to change ...

Last week, on a random spur-of-the-moment, I *Googled* the word 'Cooney'. And guess what I discovered? My surname, it seems, is derived from an old Gaelic word meaning 'little wolf'. Which immediately rang all sorts of bells.

'Little Wolf' – yes, I like that, I really do. And if it's all right with you, I'm gonna try it for a while. I think the world might respect me more, and this could be the beginning of greatness.

The truth is, of course, I didn't choose my name. I wasn't given a list to look through. Nobody asked me if I would rather be Ramsbottom or Fogglesworth, Bracegirdle or Knutt. That decision was made for me. And, come to think about it, most decisions were ...



FOR ONE MINUTE THERE, YOU BORED ME TO DEATH.

I didn't choose my ancestors. Those long-distant immigrants weren't thinking of *me* when they saved up their pennies, hitched up their skirts, climbed onto leaky boats and sailed across the Pacific. They didn't ask *me* if I wanted to be their great-great-grandson and carry on the family name. But I am ... and I have ... and I trust I've done them proud.

I didn't choose my parents. No one asked me if I'd prefer a policeman or a poultry farmer instead of an accountant for a dad ... a fashion-queen or an opera-singer instead of a shoe-shop-lady for a mum. I didn't get to vote on whether I had two sisters or 10, twin brothers or none. I mean, think of the *possibilities!* I might have been an only child, sole heir to the throne, and inheritor of the family fortune! Except I wasn't – and there isn't.

I didn't choose to be a post-war baby. I didn't put a ring around 1948 and say, "Keep that year free!" If the decision had been left to me, I might have picked 1861 or 1357. But it wasn't. And I didn't. Which is why I'm only 65 today – not 152 or 656.

I didn't plan my conception. I didn't even ask to be *born*. But I'm very glad I was, because you have to be born to be glad, eh!

I didn't choose to grow up in this age of emails and websites, space shuttles

and laser beams. I could've just as easily grown up in the Victorian Era, the Industrial Revolution, or the Ice Age – or been a Viking, a medieval monk, or a Neanderthal Man. And I guess it wouldn't have bothered me. But I'm glad things worked out the way they did, because I'm kind-of fond of the 21st century.

I didn't choose to be '*he*' instead of '*she*' ... pink instead of brown ... short instead of tall – it just happened. I didn't select my hairy legs, or my hairless chest, or the mole on my chin, or my feet. I just got them – automatically – along with all the other bits which, over the years, I've become rather attached to.

I didn't choose to be *ME*. It's not my fault. My opinion wasn't asked. I could have been *you*, or the next bloke, or a billion other people. But I'm not. Yes: given the chance I might've made a few improvements. But no: I'm not about to complain. You see, *me* is who I is, and *me* is who I'll always be.

Just call me 'Little Wolf' from now on – okay? 

JOHN (GRAPEVINE'S FOUNDER & BIG CHEESE)
IS THE PROUD PART-OWNER OF 12 HEALTHY
GRANDKIDS – SO THE COONEY NAME AND DYNASTY
IS SAFE FOR THE TIME BEING.

THORT



***I thought I saw the light
at the end of the tunnel,
but it was just some jerk
with a torch, bringing me
more work.***