



## NAME TAGS

*A special Family Literacy Day story by Robert Munsch*

When Mercedes walked through the door, there were lots and lots of people. A lady said, "What is your name?"

"Mercedes."

"Oh what a lovely name. You must be very happy to have such a nice name."

And she made a name tag like this: MERCEDES.

"I can't read," said Mercedes. "What does this say?"

"It's your name," said the Lady.

"Good," said Mercedes, "And now I need a name tag for my brother and sister."

"What's your brother's name?" said the lady.

"His name," said Mercedes, "is 'UGLY'." So the lady made a name tag that said UGLY.

"And my sister's name," said Mercedes, "is BOSSY." So the lady made a nametag that said: BOSSY.

"Those are strange names," said the lady.

"No they are not," said Mercedes, "My sister is bossy and my brother is ugly and that is what I think their names should be."

Then Mercedes ran to her brother Michael, said "Here's your nametag," and stuck the nametag that said UGLY on Michael.

Then Mercedes ran to her sister Maite and said, "Here's your nametag," and stuck the nametag that said BOSSY on Maite.

So Michael walked into the room and somebody said, "Hello Ugly."

"Yikes!" said Michael, "What's wrong with my face?" and he ran into the washroom to look at his face. His face looked fine.

"Let's try this again," said Michael. He walked back into the room and a lady said, "Hello Ugly. How are you today?"

"Ahhhhhhhh!" yelled Michael, and he ran and hid under the table that held all the food.

Meanwhile Maite walked into the room and somebody said, "Hello Bossy."

"Yikes!" said Maite, "I don't even know anybody here and they think I am bossy." Then a man came up to Maite and said, "Hello Bossy. How are you today?"

"Ahhhhhhhh!" yelled Maite, and she ran and hid under the table that held all the food. Under the table Michael looked at Maite and Maite looked at Michael and then they screamed, "Ahhhhhhhhhh! Mercedes fooled us! She gave us wrong nametags."

So they made another nametag and said, "Look Mercedes! Here is another nametag. It says, 'Best Little Sister in the World'." And since Mercedes could not read, she put on the nametag. Actually, it said in quite big letters: 'BRAT.'

Now Mercedes was too little to read, but she was no dummy; so she went to a man and said, "What does this nametag say?"

"I don't know," said the man. "I can't read."

"HA!" said Mercedes. "All grownups can read."

"Well I can't read," said the man. "I really can't."

"So how do you know what your nametag says?" said Mercedes.

"Well," said the man, "I sort of thought that my nametag would say my name."

"Maybe not," said Mercedes "Come with me."

So they both went over to a lady and Mercedes said, "What do our nametags say?"

"Well," said the lady. "Your nametag says BRAT and his nametag says GEORGE."

"BRAT is not my real name," said Mercedes. "Please make me a nametag that says MERCEDES."

So the lady made Mercedes a nametag that said MERCEDES.

Then the man said, "Please make me a nametag that says ANDREW, because my name is not GEORGE, it is ANDREW."

So the lady made a nametag that said ANDREW.

"Good," said Mercedes, "Now we have our right names and I think I am going to go to school so I can learn how to read and write and I think you should go to school and learn how to read and write."

"A good idea," said the man. "I'm going to do that. I have been meaning to do that for a long time."

A little while later the man came up to Mercedes and said, "Here is another name tag for you."

"What does it say?" said Mercedes.

"It says ANGEL," said the man, "because you convinced me to go back to school to learn how to read and that makes you an ANGEL. I asked somebody else to write it for me."

"Good," said Mercedes. "I always wanted to be an Angel" and then she took her BRAT nametag and stuck it on her sister's back where the sister could not see it.

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*So Robert, whose ANGEL are you?*

I get to travel all over Canada and I meet lots of people who can't read and write, or who can't read and write well enough. On January 27, hundreds of thousands of Canadians celebrate Family Literacy Day. This national initiative - created by ABC Life Literacy Canada and supported by Honda Canada - promotes the importance of reading and learning as a family. In addition to participating in Family Literacy Day events in your community, you can help celebrate this special day and be someone's ANGEL by picking up a book and reading aloud to your parents, your sister, your best friend, your children, your grandchildren, or the kids next door. For more information on Family Literacy Day, or tips on how to practice family literacy in your home, visit the Family Literacy Day website at [www.familyliteracyday.ca](http://www.familyliteracyday.ca).

*Robert Munsch is honorary chair of Family Literacy Day. This story was created by him in honour of this special day, and is based on a real little girl named Mercedes.*

*Munsch is the author of 35 children's books, including The Paper Bag Princess, Thomas' Snowsuit and Love You Forever, which has sold over 18 million copies in North America. Munsch's first book, Mud Puddle, was published in 1979. Since then, he has sold more than 31 million books in over 10 languages. The recipient of numerous awards throughout his distinguished career, Munsch was honoured as a Member of the Order of Canada in 1999. For more information, visit [www.robertmunsch.com](http://www.robertmunsch.com)*