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Opening extract from

Henry Pond the Poet

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This book is super readable for young readers beginning their independent reading journey

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Chapter 1
Pride of the Toads

Henry Pond was a poet. All the other toads in the neighbourhood were very proud of this fact. When they spoke of him they never referred to him as just “Henry Pond”, much less plain old “Henry”. They always called him “Henry Pond the Poet”.

Toads take their family names from their places of birth, the water in which they hatched from spawn to tadpole. “River” is a common surname for toads, as are “Lake” and “Pool”. There are a few families who affect double-barrelled names such as “Mill-Pool” or “Duck-Pond”. “Pond” is probably the commonest surname of all, but everyone agreed that Henry’s gift for poetry was most uncommon.

Everyone croaked whenever Henry's name was mentioned. They never missed a chance to mention it at the top of their voices in front of such lesser creatures as frogs and newts.

Two toads might be sitting side by side, saying nothing, staring vacantly out of their bulgy golden eyes, when a frog would chance to hop past.

Right away the two toads would start a loud conversation between themselves.

"Forgot to tell you," one might say. "Met Henry Pond the Poet yesterday."

"Not Henry Pond the Poet?" the other would ask.

"Yes. What a talented toad, eh?"

"Indeed he is. Sure to win first prize at the Eis-TOAD-fod," the first toad would boast.

"Makes you proud to be one of us, what?"

And then the frog would say, in a tone of amazement, "A poet? A toad that makes up poems?"