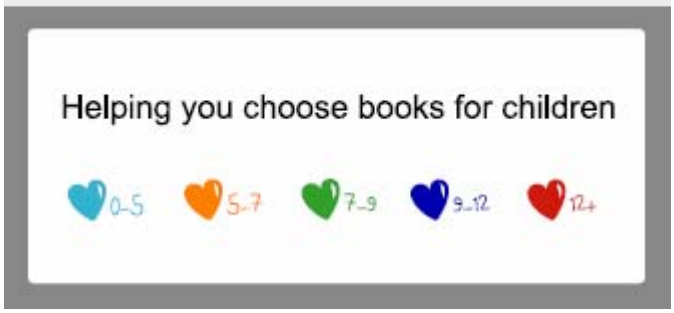
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Opening extract from

A Hat Trick of Horrid Henry

Written by

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HORRID HENRY'S HIKE

Horrid Henry looked out of the window. AAARRRGGGHHH! It was a lovely day. The sun was shining. The birds were tweeting. The breeze was blowing. Little fluffy clouds floated by in a bright blue sky.

Rats.

Why couldn't it be raining? Or hailing? Or sleeting?

Any minute, any second, it would happen...the words he'd been dreading, the words he'd give anything not to hear, the words –

'Henry! Peter! Time to go for a walk,' called Mum.

'Yippee!' said Perfect Peter. 'I can wear my new yellow wellies!'

'NO!' screamed Horrid Henry.

Go for a walk! Go for a walk! Didn't he walk enough already? He walked to school. He walked home from school. He walked to the TV. He walked to the computer. He walked to the sweet jar *and* all the way back to the comfy black chair.



Horrid Henry walked plenty. Ugghh. The last thing he needed was more walking. More chocolate, yes. More crisps, yes. More *walking*? No way! Why oh why

couldn't his parents ever say, 'Henry! Time to play on the computer.' Or 'Henry, stop doing your homework this minute! Time to turn on the TV.'

But no. For some reason his mean, horrible parents thought he spent too much time sitting indoors. They'd been threatening for weeks to make him go on a family walk. Now the dreadful moment had come. His precious weekend was ruined.

Horrid Henry hated nature. Horrid Henry hated fresh air. What could be more boring than walking up and down streets staring at lamp posts? Or sloshing across some stupid muddy park? Nature smelled. Uggh! He'd much rather be inside watching TV.

Mum stomped into the sitting room.

'Henry! Didn't you hear me calling?'

'No,' lied Henry.

'Get your wellies on, we're going,' said

Dad, rubbing his hands. 'What a lovely day.'

'I don't want to go for a walk,' said Henry. 'I want to watch *Rapper Zapper Zaps Terminator Gladiator.*'

'But Henry,' said Perfect Peter, 'fresh air and exercise are so good for you.'

'I don't care!' shrieked Henry.

Horrid Henry stomped downstairs and flung open the front door. He breathed in deeply, hopped on one foot, then shut the door.

'There! Done it. Fresh air *and* exercise,' snarled Henry.

'Henry, we're going,' said Mum. 'Get in the car.'

Henry's ears pricked up.

'The car?' said Henry. 'I thought we were going for a walk.'

'We are,' said Mum. 'In the countryside.'

'Hurray!' said Perfect Peter. 'A nice *long* walk.'

'NOOOO!' howled Henry. Plodding along in the boring old park was bad enough, with its mouldy leaves and dog poo and stumpy trees. But at least the park wasn't very big. But the *countryside*?

The countryside was enormous! They'd be walking for hours, days, weeks, months, till his legs wore down to stumps and his feet fell off. And the countryside was so dangerous! Horrid Henry was sure he'd be swallowed up by quicksand or trampled to death by marauding chickens.



'I live in the city!' shrieked Henry. 'I don't want to go to the country!'

'Time you got out more,' said Dad.

'But look at those clouds,' moaned Henry, pointing to a fluffy wisp. 'We'll get soaked.'

'A little water never hurt anyone,' said Mum.

Oh yeah? Wouldn't they be sorry when he died of pneumonia.

'I'm staying here and that's final!' screamed Henry.

'Henry, we're waiting,' said Mum.

'Good,' said Henry.

'I'm all ready, Mum,' said Peter.

'I'm going to start deducting pocket money,' said Dad. '5p, 10p, 15p, 20 – '

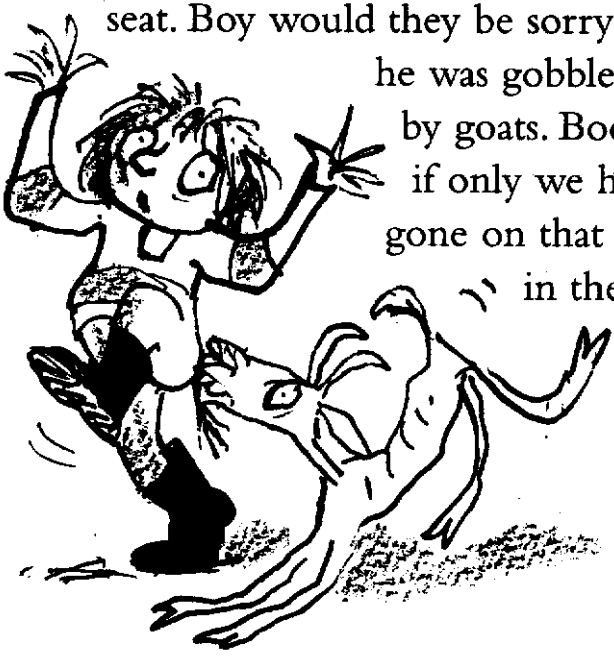
Horrid Henry pulled on his wellies, stomped out of the door and got in the car. He slammed the door as hard as he could. It was so unfair! Why did he never get to do what *he* wanted to do? Now he would miss the first time Rapper Zapper had ever slugged it out with Terminator

Gladiator. And all because he had to go on a long, boring, exhausting, horrible hike. He was so miserable he didn't even have the energy to kick Peter.

'Can't we just walk round the block?' moaned Henry.

'N-O spells no,' said Dad. 'We're going for a lovely walk in the countryside and that's that.'

Horrid Henry slumped miserably in his seat. Boy would they be sorry when he was gobbled up by goats. Boo hoo, if only we hadn't gone on that walk in the wilds, Mum would wail.



Henry was right, we should have listened to him, Dad would sob. I miss Henry, Peter would howl. I'll never eat goat's cheese again. And now it's too late, they would shriek.

If only, thought Horrid Henry. That would serve them right.

All too soon, Mum pulled into a carpark, on the edge of a small wood.

'Wow,' said Perfect Peter. 'Look at all those lovely trees.'

'Bet there are werewolves hiding there,' muttered Henry.



'And I hope they come and eat *you*!'

'Mum!' squealed Peter. 'Henry's trying to scare me.'

'Don't be horrid, Henry,' said Mum.

Horrid Henry looked around him. There was a gate, leading to endless meadows bordered by hedgerows. A muddy path wound through the trees and across the fields. A church spire stuck up in the distance.

'Right, I've seen the countryside, let's go home,' said Henry.

Mum glared at him.

'What?' said Henry, scowling.

'Let's enjoy this lovely day,' said Dad, sighing.

'So what do we do now?' said Henry.

'Walk,' said Dad.

'Where?' said Henry.

'Just walk,' said Mum, 'and enjoy the beautiful scenery.'

Henry groaned.

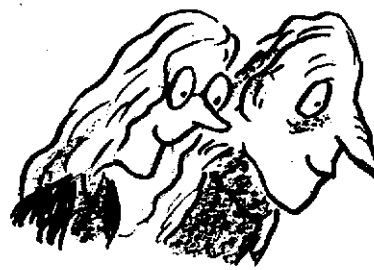
'We're heading for the lake,' said Dad, striding off. 'I've brought bread and we can feed the ducks.'

'But *Rapper Zapper* starts in an hour!'

'Tough,' said Mum.

Mum, Dad, and Peter headed through the gate into the field. Horrid Henry trailed behind them walking as slowly as he could.

'Ahh, breathe the lovely fresh air,' said Mum.



'We should do this more often,' said Dad.

Henry sniffed.

The horrible smell of manure filled his nostrils.

'Ewww, smelly,' said Henry. 'Peter, couldn't you wait?'

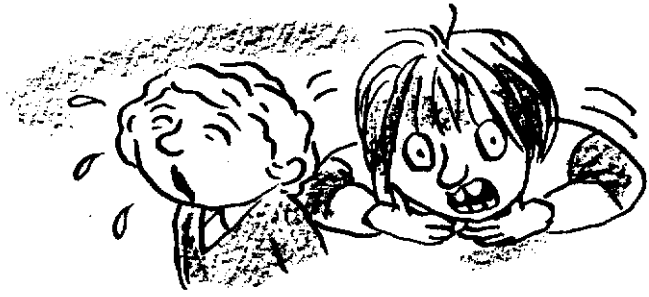
'MUM!' shrieked Peter. 'Henry called me smelly.'

'Did not!'

'Did too!'

'Did not, smelly.'

'WAAAAAAAAA!' wailed Peter. 'Tell him to stop!'



'Don't be horrid, Henry!' screamed Mum. Her voice echoed. A dog walker passed her, and glared.

'Peter, would you rather run a mile, jump a stile, or eat a country pancake?' said Henry sweetly.

'Ooh,' said Peter. 'I love pancakes. And a

country one must be even more delicious than a city one.'

'Ha ha,' cackled Horrid Henry, sticking out his tongue. 'Fooled you. Peter wants to eat cowpats!'

'MUM!' screamed Peter.

Henry walked.

And walked.

And walked.

His legs felt heavier, and heavier, and heavier.

'This field is muddy,' moaned Henry.

'I'm bored,' groaned Henry.

'My feet hurt,' whined Henry.

'Can't we go home? We've already walked miles,' whinged Henry.

'We've been walking for ten minutes,' said Dad.

'Please can we go on walks more often,' said Perfect Peter. 'Oh, look at those fluffy little sheepies!'

Horrid Henry pounced. He was a zombie biting the head off the hapless human.

'AAAAEEEEEE!' squealed Peter.

'Henry!' screamed Mum.

'Stop it!' screamed Dad. 'Or no TV for a week.'

When he was king, thought Horrid Henry, any parent who made their children go on a hike would be dumped barefoot in a scorpion-infested desert.

Plod.

Plod.

Plod.



Horrid Henry dragged his feet. Maybe his horrible mean parents would get fed up waiting for him and turn back, he

thought, kicking some mouldy leaves.

Squelch.

Squelch.

Squelch.

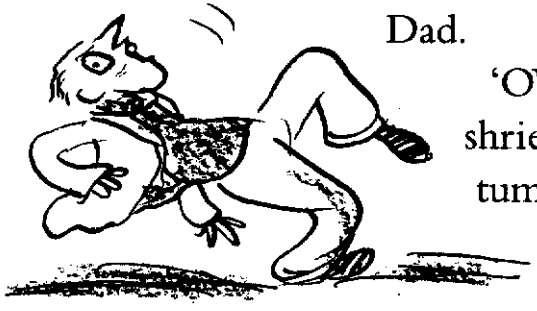
Oh no, not *another* muddy meadow.

And then suddenly Horrid Henry had an idea. What was he thinking? All that fresh air must be rotting his brain. The sooner they got to the stupid lake, the sooner they could get home for the *Rapper Zapper Zaps Terminator Gladiator.*

'Come on, everyone, let's run!' shrieked Henry. 'Race you down the hill to the lake!'

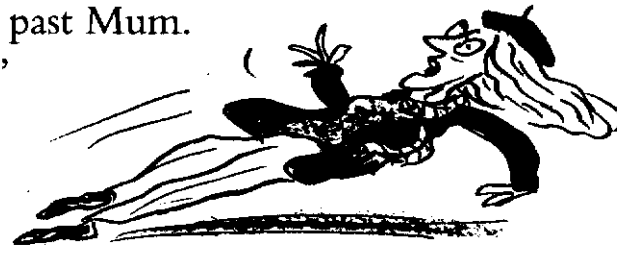
'That's the spirit, Henry,' said Dad.

Horrid Henry dashed past Dad.



'OW!' shrieked Dad, tumbling into the stinging nettles.

Horrid Henry whizzed past Mum.



'Eww!' shrieked Mum, slipping in a cowpat.

Splat!

Horrid Henry pushed past Peter.

'Waaa!' wailed Peter. 'My wellies are getting dirty.'

Horrid Henry scampered down the muddy path.







'Wait Henry!' yelped Mum. 'It's too slipp – aaaiiieeeee!'

Mum slid down the path on her bottom.

'Slow down!' puffed Dad.

'I can't run that fast,' wailed Peter.

But Horrid Henry raced on.

'Shortcut across the field!' he called. 'Come on slowcoaches!' The black and white cow grazing alone in the middle raised its head.

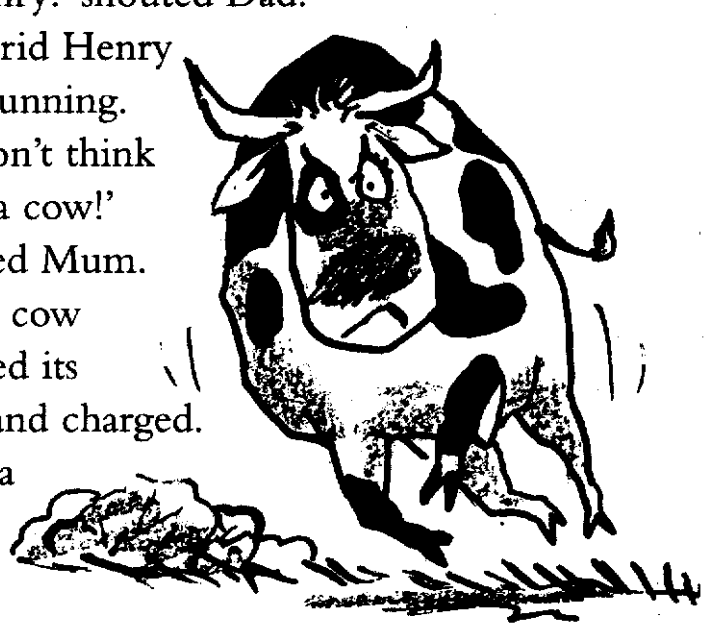
'Henry!' shouted Dad.

Horrid Henry kept running.

'I don't think that's a cow!' shouted Mum.

The cow lowered its head and charged.

'It's a bull!'



yelped Mum and Dad. 'RUN!'

'I said it was dangerous in the countryside!' gasped Henry, as everyone clambered over the stile in the nick of time. 'Look, there's the lake!' he added, pointing.

Henry ran down to the water's edge. Peter followed. The embankment narrowed to a point. Peter slipped past Henry and bagged the best spot, right at the water's edge where the ducks gathered.

'Hey, get away from there,' said Henry.

'I want to feed the ducks,' said Peter.

'*I* want to feed the ducks,' said Henry. 'Now move.'

'I was here first,' said Peter.

'Not any more,' said Henry.

Horrid Henry pushed Peter.

'Out of my way, worm!'

Perfect Peter pushed him back.

'Don't call me worm!'

Henry wobbled.

Peter wobbled.

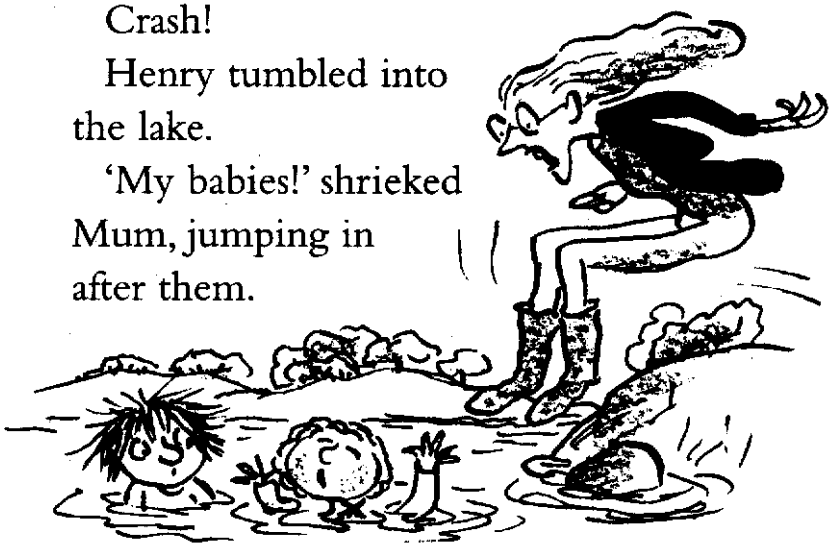
Splash!

Peter tumbled into the lake.

Crash!

Henry tumbled into the lake.

'My babies!' shrieked Mum, jumping in after them.



'My – glug glug glug!' shrieked Dad, jumping into the muddy water after her.

'My new wellies!' gurgled Perfect Peter.

Bang!

Pow!

Terminator Gladiator slashed at Rapper Zapper.

Zap!

Rapper Zapper slashed back.

'Go Zappy!' yelled Henry, lying bundled up in blankets on the sofa. Once everyone had scrambled out of the lake, Mum and Dad had been keen to get home as fast as possible.

'I think the park next time,' mumbled Dad, sneezing.

'Definitely,' mumbled Mum, coughing.

'Oh, I don't know,' said Horrid Henry happily. 'A little water never hurt anyone.'

