The Tale of the Troublesome Toad



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Nelson Literacy Directions

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The Tale of the Troublesome Toad



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Meet the Characters

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Monsieur la Verrue

A rather vain toad.



Monsieur Cheval

A simple farm horse.



Mademoiselle Jument

A stylish horse.



Monsieur Lapin

The village baker.



Mademoiselle du Merle

A young bluebird.



Madame Minette

A cat.



Monsieur le Canard

A well-dressed duck.

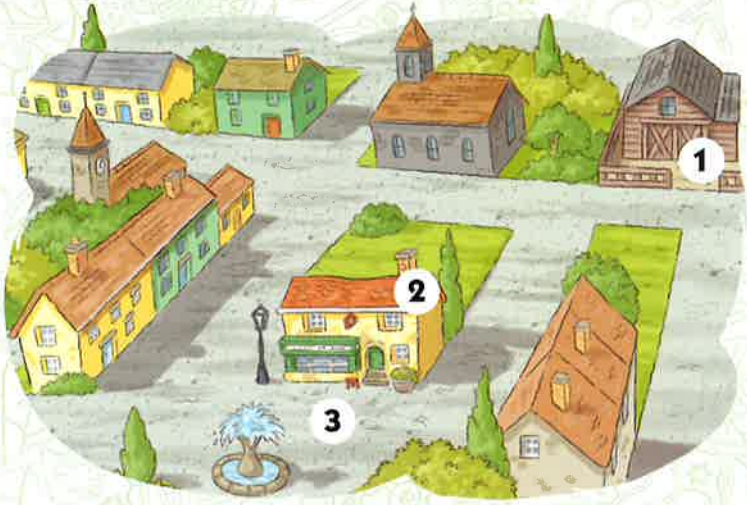
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Dear Reader

Sometimes, your friends may tell you how you should look, behave or do things. They're only trying to be helpful, but sometimes it's better just to be yourself. After all, if they are true friends, they will like you for who you are, not who you could be. Here's a fable about why you should not always listen to well-meaning advice!

Quentin Flynn
Author

The Village Square



1. Monsieur Cheval's barn
2. Lapin et fils bakery
3. The Beauchamp bus stop

1 A Magnificent Toad

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Monsieur la Verrue was standing on an old suitcase on the banks of a pond. He gazed at his reflection in the glassy pond.



He checked that all his magnificent warts were still in place. His slimy grey lips curled into a toady grin and he winked at himself with a giant bulging eye. Then he blew up his throat and let out a loud burp.



"Rrraarp! Ah, that feels better!" he said.
He looked around to check no one had heard him.
"Starting the morning with a bowl brimming
with slug-o-pops always makes me burp."

He stared back into the water.
Satisfied that he could not be
a more handsome toad,
he clambered off his suitcase.



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Monsieur la Verrue peered up at the sun, which had risen just above the treetops. Resisting one last admiring glance at himself, he grasped the handle of the suitcase. He headed for the bus stop.

"A week's holiday in Beauchamp," he croaked to himself. He leaned nonchalantly against the sign that said "Arrêt d'autobus".

"Oh, I am looking forward to getting on the bus."

"Rrraarp!"



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Monsieur la Verrue cast his eyes upwards. "Someone should change those wooden signs to metal ones," he thought to himself. "One simply cannot see one's reflection in a wooden sign!"



Resigned to not preening himself in the reflection of the sign, Monsieur la Verrue practised his nonchalant pose. Then he tried a nonchalant and haughty pose, which involved lowering his eyelids until his eyes were just slits. Then he tried a nonchalant and disdainful pose, which involved curling the corners of his lips downwards. He was about to try a nonchalant and imperious pose, which involved raising his nostrils skywards, when he was interrupted by the sound of a loud *toot* and a bus door swishing open.

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"Oops, sorry!" called the bus driver. "I didn't mean to catch you in the middle of ... of ... Didn't your mother tell you to go before you left the house?"

Monsieur la Verrue spluttered indignantly. He picked up his suitcase and climbed aboard the bus, with a look that he hoped was haughty, disdainful and imperious all at the same time.

He saw an empty seat next to a rather well-groomed and stylish passenger.

"She'll be pleased to have me sitting next to her," he thought with a smile.

"Bonjour, Mademoiselle," he purred as he slid into the spare seat. "My name, in case you did not already know, is Monsieur la Verrue."

"Bonjour, Monsieur la Verrue," she replied. "I am Mademoiselle Jument."

Monsieur la Verrue detected a slight air of unease about Mademoiselle Jument's greeting, but he was used to that. It was not often that ordinary folk got

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to sit next to a toad as spectacularly magnificent, sophisticated and handsome as he was.

He popped his suitcase under the seat. He settled back with a satisfied "Rrraarp". He allowed Mademoiselle Jument to bask in his greatness.



"Rrraarp!"