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About the Author

Francesca Simon is universally known for the staggeringly popular Horrid Henry series. She is also the author of Costa-shortlisted *The Monstrous Child*, which she turned into an opera with composer Gavin Higgins for the Royal Opera House, and two picture books: *Hack and Whack* and *The Goat Café*. She lives in North London with her family.

About the Illustrator

Steve May is an animation director and illustrator. Steve has illustrated books by Jeremy Strong, Philip Reeve, Harry Hill and Phil Earle, as well as the Dennis the Menace series. He lives in North London.

For Timothy Sheader and Paul Wills,
creators of stage magic.
F. S.

To Mum, Jackie and Andy – thanks for all
the absurdity!
S. M.

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FRANCESCA SIMON
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PROFILE BOOKS

Characters

Hack



Whack

Bitey-Bitey



Twisty Pants



Dirty Ulf



Elsa Gold-Hair



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ELSA GOLD-HAIR'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

‘AAAARRRRRRRRGGGGHHHH!’

‘AAAARRRRRRRRGGGGHHHH!’

‘AAAARRRRRRRRGGGGHHHH!’

Terrible screams came from
the longhouse at the far end of
the village.

Hack stopped swinging her sword.

Whack stopped swinging his axe.

Bitey-Bitey, their wolf cub, stopped chewing Dad's new leather boot.



'That sounds like Dirty Ulf,' said Whack.

'AAAAARRRRRRRRRRGGGHHH AARRRGHHH! HELP! HELP! Save me!'

'That **is** Dirty Ulf,' said Hack. She waved her sword. 'We have to rescue her.'

Whack waved his axe. 'It must be an ogre,' he yelled, running.

'Or a troll,' shouted Hack.

'We're Hack and Whack, on the attack!' they bellowed as

they raced across the turf towards the screams, leaping over chickens and crashing into goats. Bitey-Bitey ran after them, howling and yowling.

The blood-curdling shrieks seemed to be coming from a tub on the porch outside Dirty Ulf's longhouse. There was something gurgling and spluttering and squealing and splashing inside the black water.

Dirty Ulf's mother stood there,

clutching a bar of soap.

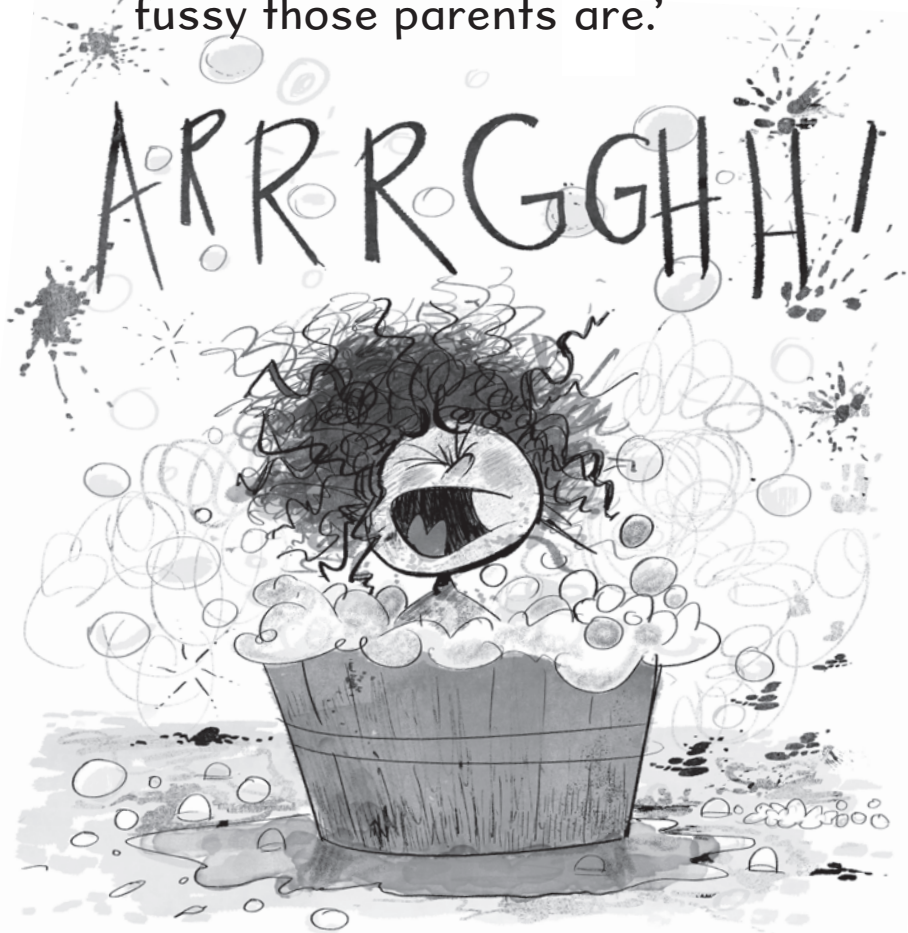
'Dirty Ulf is having a bath,' she said.

'I don't need a bath,' gasped Dirty Ulf, poking her head above the tub. 'I had one last year.'

Dirty Ulf's mum shoved her under the steaming water again.

'Why is she having a bath?' said Whack. Poor Dirty Ulf. No one hated water as much as she did.

‘Because she is going to Elsa Gold-Hair’s birthday party,’ said her mum. ‘And you know how fussy those parents are.’



‘Oh,’ said Hack.

‘Oh,’ said Whack.

This was the first they had heard about a party.

‘Now go away,’ said Dirty Ulf’s mother. ‘Nothing to see here. Stop screaming, Dirty Ulf!’ she screamed, attacking Ulf’s ears with a spoon.

‘N O O O O O O O O O O O O O O,’ howled Dirty Ulf.

Hack and Whack headed home.

‘What’s a birthday party?’
said Hack.

‘I don’t know,’ said Whack.

‘Birth-day. Birth-day. The day
you’re born? Why would you
have a party for that?’

Whack shrugged. ‘Elsa is
weird.’

Elsa liked sharing. Elsa liked
playing quietly. Elsa liked telling
everyone how naughty they
were. Elsa thought she was a
grown-up.

‘Well, I don’t want to go,’ said
Hack.

‘Me neither,’ said Whack.
‘It would probably be really
boring.’

‘Really, really boring,’ said
Hack. ‘Lucky we weren’t invited.’

‘Yeah,’ said Whack. ‘Lucky.’

Hack and Whack were just
about to enter their longhouse
when they heard loud voices
coming from within.

Hack put a finger to her lips.

‘Mum and Dad are talking about us,’ she hissed.

Hack and Whack crept close to the wattled wall next to the woodpile and cupped their ears.

‘Hack and Whack are the worst Vikings in the village,’ said Mum.

‘The very worst,’ said Dad.

Hack and Whack beamed.

‘But at least they’re not like Elsa Gold-Hair.’

‘Thank Thor,’ said Dad. ‘I

would die of shame to have such a goody-goody butter-face, hoity-toity salmon-flapper as **my** daughter.’

‘Gods forbid,’ said Mum.

‘Did you hear, they caught her **sharing** last week?’ said Dad.



‘Sharing?’ No! Her poor parents.’

‘Yes, sharing. Bragi Bread-Nose saw her. That girl will come to a bad end,’ said Dad.

‘Glad she’s not our daughter,’ said Mum. ‘I blame the parents.’

‘Not like us – firm but fair,’ said Dad.

‘Elsa’s a terrible example. Thank Thor Hack and Whack weren’t invited to her birthday party,’ said Mum.

‘I wouldn’t let them go even if they **had** been invited. Elsa Gold-Hair might influence them, and the next thing we’d know, they’d stop fighting and quarrelling and playing with their swords.’

Hack and Whack had heard enough. Mum and Dad **didn’t** want them to go?

‘We want to go to Elsa’s birthday party!’ they yelled, bursting through the door.