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INSPIRED BY THE CHARACTERS OF

ROALD DAHL

THE TWITS NEXT DOOR



GREG JAMES & CHRIS SMITH

Illustrated by Emily Jones

PUFFIN



CHAPTER ONE

MRS TWIT FILLS THE TOILET WITH WASPS

Imagine what it must be like living next door to a pair of TOTAL **TWITS.**

What if you were unlucky enough to have **NOISY** twits as neighbours? The sort of people who play the trombone incredibly badly until four o'clock in the morning, or decide to start drilling into the walls while you're trying to have a lie-in?

Or imagine living next door to **NOSY** twits, who peer at you over the garden fence, or peep in through your windows while you're eating your tea.

What if some really **MESSY** twits moved in next door and filled their house with rubbish and

their garden with rusty old cars?

Worse still, what if you lived next door to some **SMELLY** twits? Or some **MEAN** twits? Or some completely **HORRIBLE** twits, who are mean to your cat, or jump out at you from behind the garden fence dressed as clowns for no good reason?

All these are foul in their own way. But what if you were to end up living next door to a pair of twits who are

NOISY,
NOSY,
MESSY,
SMELLY,
MEAN and
HORRIBLE?

Do such appalling people really exist?

Well, sadly, yes they do. Their names are Mr and Mrs Twit and here they come now.

BRACE YOURSELVES.

Mr Twit has a face like a warthog's hairy armpit and a personality to match. There are many disgusting things about him, all the way from his dirty feet up to the hair on his head, which looks like the nest of the world's least house-proud bird. But the most disgusting thing about Mr Twit is his beard. It is as stiff and bristly as an old boot brush. And – even worse – it's full of the tiny morsels of food that miss Mr Twit's mouth as he eats his loathsome lunch or his sloppy supper. Clumps of **CURDLED** custard and puddles of **PUTRID** porridge nestle deep among the stubbly whiskers. And if he fancies a quick snack in between meals, Mr Twit simply sticks out his slimy tongue and sends it snaking through the beardy undergrowth in search of a tasty treat.



That's enough about that for now. It's too revolting to think about for more than a few seconds without getting a cramp in your brain. But there's more. You heard us mention **DIRTY FEET** a moment ago. Speaking of those, let's take a look at Mrs Twit.

Mrs Twit is a foul, screeching bundle of pure hideousness. She has a face like a scrunched-up elbow and her dress looks like a sack that fell on hard times sometime in the late eighteenth century. If you ever caught sight of her toenails, you would run home screaming for your mummy no matter how old you are. Mrs Twit's hobbies include shouting at kittens and knitting jumpers for puppies. She doesn't give the jumpers to the puppies, though – she makes the puppies



watch while she sets fire to them. That's the kind of thing Mrs Twit does for entertainment.

Mr and Mrs Twit live in a house that they built themselves, and as this story starts they do not have any next-door neighbours. That shouldn't come as a massive surprise. I mean, imagine living beside that pair. Or, indeed, beside that house. It is **DARK** and **DINGY,** because they built it without any windows to stop anyone from looking in at them. The garden is full of thistles and stinging nettles, and is surrounded by a high hedge of twisted brambles with sharp thorns to keep everybody out.

The reason for this is quite simple: Mr and Mrs Twit do not like other people. They don't even like each other. In fact, the list of things the Twits do not like is extremely long. It includes other people, being looked at by other people, talking to other people, other people living next door to them, each other, washing.

So what **DO** Mr and Mrs Twit like? That list is a lot shorter. And at the top of the list is this: playing

HORRIBLE, MEAN tricks on each other. And that is exactly where our story starts.

It was a fine fresh morning in springtime. The sun had just risen, casting a golden glow over the Big Dead Tree that sat in a clearing on one side of the Twits' garden. Mrs Twit was out and about bright and early that day, moving among the thistles with a large cloth-covered bucket clutched in one warty hand. She was wearing a tatty dressing gown and a wicked smile. This was because she was about to play a particularly painful prank on her horrible husband – one that she had been planning for several days. She was in such a good mood that she was even humming a merry little tune to herself. Although to most of us it wouldn't have sounded very merry or even much like a tune. It sounded like the screeching of rusty hinges.

'Where are you, my little lovelies?' croaked Mrs Twit, her knobbly back creaking as she bent down to hunt for something among the nettles. When she straightened up, she was holding a jam jar that was absolutely full of angry buzzing wasps.

The previous day, Mrs Twit had punched small holes into the lids of several jars and poured a small amount of honey into the bottom. This is how you make **WASP TRAPS** – the wasps crawl inside to get at the honey but can't find their way back through the holes. Carefully Mrs Twit unscrewed the lid of this first jar and tipped the wasps into her bucket, quickly putting the cloth back over the top. Then she moved on to her next trap. After half an hour, Mrs Twit's bucket was absolutely full to the brim with wasps. There must have been hundreds of them in there. Her smile grew wider and more wicked still.

Mrs Twit opened the front door of the house softly and crept inside. As you can imagine, the inside of the Twits' house was just as nasty as the outside. Everywhere you looked there was mess and neglect. The chairs were musty, the stairs were dusty, the oven was greasy and the toilet . . . well, we'll get to the toilet in a minute. But it's not going to be pretty.

Mrs Twit crept through the living room, across the kitchen and into the bathroom. And an apology

is probably in order at this point. Because nobody wants to see inside Mr and Mrs Twit's bathroom, but it's part of the story, so we're just going to have to get through it somehow. As you can probably imagine, it's one of the worst rooms on the entire planet. For a start, as we already know, it doesn't have a window. Also, the bathroom has never been cleaned. Ever. Not once. **PLEASE ONLY LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING PICTURE IF YOU ATE OVER TWO HOURS AGO,** because it will probably make you feel sick, and these pages aren't as absorbent as they look.

READY?



THERE, TOLD YOU SO.
HORRIBLE, ISN'T IT?

But Mr and Mrs Twit didn't think it was horrible. They hate things that are bright and clean, so this dark, dank, dingy, dirty room was one of their favourites. Every morning as soon as he got up,



Mr Twit would charge down the stairs straight to this bathroom and spend an hour sitting on the toilet and reading his newspaper.

'Hurry up in there, you smelly slop bucket!' Mrs Twit would shout, hammering on the door with the stick she always carried. (She didn't actually need a stick to walk; she just used it to thwack things.)

'Leave me alone!' the muffled voice of Mr Twit would reply from the other side of the locked door. 'I am reading my newspaper!'

'I NEED TO GO!' Mrs Twit would screech.

'I don't care!' Mr Twit would reply, smirking. 'You'll just have to cross your legs.'

This happened every morning for several years, and FINALLY an idea for revenge had come to Mrs Twit. Today she was putting her plan into action. Tiptoeing into the bathroom, she lifted the toilet seat and quickly upended the bucket on top of the toilet bowl. The wasps, who were growing tired of being cooped up, took this opportunity to make a bid for freedom and streamed down into the bowl.

Before they could realize their mistake, Mrs Twit had slammed the lid down on top of them with a bark of harsh laughter.

'This'll teach you to hog the toilet, you **MANGY DISHCLOTH**!!'

From upstairs a series of foul coughs and snorts told her that her husband had woken up. She heard the springs of the **SAGGY** old bed creaking as he levered himself to his feet, and then the clump of his footsteps heading towards the staircase.

Mrs Twit lowered herself into a greasy armchair in the living room and prepared to enjoy the fun.