

Mr. Twit's Revenge

By Roald Dahl

Adapted for reader's theater by Aaron Shepard, from Roald Dahl's book
The Twits, Knopf, New York, 1981

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PREVIEW: To get back at Mrs. Twit, Mr. Twit plays his nastiest trick ever.

GENRE: Humor
CULTURE: British
THEME: Revenge

READERS: 6
READER AGES: 9-15
LENGTH: 8 minutes

ROLES: Narrators 1-4, Mr. Twit, Mrs. Twit

NOTES: Roald Dahl, author of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and other kids' favorites, here gives us two of his most nasty characters. For best effect, place NARRATORS 1 and 2 at far left, and 3 and 4 at far right, as seen from the audience. Then place MR. TWIT closest to NARRATORS 1 and 2, and MRS. TWIT closest to NARRATORS 3 and 4.

NARRATOR 1: Mr. Twit was a horrid old man.

NARRATOR 4: Mrs. Twit was no *better*. One morning, when Mr. Twit wasn't looking, she took out her glass eye and dropped it into Mr. Twit's beer.

NARRATOR 1: Mr. Twit sat slowly drinking the beer. He was trying to think up a really nasty trick he could play on his wife.

MRS. TWIT: You're plotting something!

NARRATOR 4: . . . said Mrs. Twit, keeping her back turned so he wouldn't see she had taken out her glass eye.

MRS. TWIT: You'd better be careful, because I'm watching you like a wombat!

MR. TWIT: Oh, shut up, you old hag!

NARRATOR 1: . . . said Mr. Twit. As he tipped down the last of the beer, he saw the glass eye staring at him.

MR. TWIT: *(gasps and jumps)*

MRS. TWIT: I *told* you I was watching you! I've got eyes *everywhere*.
(snickers)

MR. TWIT: *(stares murderously at MRS. TWIT)*

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NARRATOR 2: To pay Mrs. Twit back for the glass eye in his beer, Mr. Twit slipped a frog between her bedsheets. Then he got in his own bed and waited for the fun to begin.

NARRATOR 3: Mrs. Twit climbed into bed and put out the light.

MRS. TWIT: *(screams)* There's something in my bed!

MR. TWIT: I'll bet it's that Giant Skillywiggler I saw on the floor. I tried to kill it, but it got away. It's got teeth like screwdrivers!

MRS. TWIT: Help! Save me! It's all over my feet!

MR. TWIT: It'll bite off your toes!

NARRATOR 3: Mrs. Twit fainted.

NARRATOR 2: Mr. Twit poured a jug of cold water over her head to revive her.

NARRATOR 3: When Mrs. Twit came to, the frog had just jumped on her face.

MRS. TWIT: (*screams*) Wait . . . wait a minute. That's a *frog!*

MR. TWIT: (*snickers*)

MRS. TWIT: (*stares murderously at MR. TWIT*)

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NARRATOR 4: The next day, to pay Mr. Twit back for the frog, Mrs. Twit put some worms in her husband's plate of spaghetti.

NARRATOR 1: The worms didn't show, because everything was covered with tomato sauce and sprinkled with cheese.

MR. TWIT: Hey! My spaghetti's moving!

MRS. TWIT: It's a new kind. It's called Squiggly Spaghetti. It's delicious!

NARRATOR 4: She took a mouthful from her own plate, which of course had no worms.

NARRATOR 1: Mr. Twit started eating.

MR. TWIT: It's not as good as the ordinary kind. It's too squishy.

NARRATOR 4: Mrs. Twit waited till Mr. Twit had eaten the whole plateful.

MRS. TWIT: Do you want to know why your spaghetti was squishy?

MR. TWIT: Why?

MRS. TWIT: Because it was *worms!* (*laughs horribly*)

MR. TWIT: (*gasps and clutches throat*)

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NARRATOR 2: To pay Mrs. Twit back for the worms in the spaghetti, Mr. Twit thought up a *really* clever nasty trick. One night, when the old woman was asleep, he crept out of bed and took her walking stick downstairs to his workshed. There he stuck a tiny round piece of wood, no thicker than a penny, onto the bottom of the stick.

NARRATOR 3: This made the stick longer, but the difference was so small, the next morning Mrs. Twit didn't notice it.

NARRATOR 1: Every night after that, Mr. Twit crept downstairs and added another tiny thickness of wood to the end of the walking stick. He did it very neatly, so that the extra bits looked like part of the old stick.

NARRATOR 4: Gradually, oh so gradually, Mrs. Twit's walking stick was getting longer and longer. But it was all so slow and gradual that she didn't notice how long it was getting, even when it was halfway up to her shoulder.

NARRATOR 2: One day, Mr. Twit said to her,

MR. TWIT: That stick's too long for you.

MRS. TWIT: Why, so it is! I've had a feeling there was something wrong, but I couldn't for the life of me think what it was.

MR. TWIT: There's something *wrong*, all right.

MRS. TWIT: What could have happened? It must have suddenly grown longer!

MR. TWIT: Don't be a fool! How can a walking stick grow longer? It's made of dead wood, isn't it? Dead wood can't grow!

MRS. TWIT: Then what on earth has happened?

MR. TWIT: (*grinning evilly*) It's not the *stick*, it's *you*. It's *you* that's getting *shorter*. I've been noticing it for some time!

MRS. TWIT: That's not true!

MR. TWIT: You're *shrinking*, woman!

MRS. TWIT: It's not possible!

MR. TWIT: Oh, yes it is! You're shrinking *fast*. You're shrinking *dangerously* fast. Why, you must have shrunk at least a foot in the last few days!

MRS. TWIT: Never!

MR. TWIT: Of *course* you have! Take a look at your stick, you old goat, and *see* how much you've shrunk. You've got the *shrinks*, that's what you've got! You've got the dreaded *shrinks*!

NARRATOR 3: Mrs. Twit began to feel so trembly, she had to sit down.

NARRATOR 2: But when she did, Mr. Twit pointed and shouted,

MR. TWIT: There you have it! You're sitting in your old chair, and you've shrunk so much, your feet aren't even touching the ground!

NARRATOR 4: Mrs. Twit looked down at her feet, and sure enough, the man was right!

NARRATOR 1: You see, every night, when Mr. Twit had stuck a little bit extra onto the stick, he had done the same to the legs of Mrs. Twit's chair.

MR. TWIT: Just look at you sitting in your same old chair, and you've shrunk so much, your feet are dangling in the air!

NARRATOR 4: Mrs. Twit went white with fear.

MR. TWIT: (*pointing at her*) You've got the *shrinks!* You've got them bad! You've got the most terrible case of shrinks I've ever seen!

NARRATOR 3: Mrs. Twit grew so frightened, she began to dribble.

NARRATOR 2: But Mr. Twit, still remembering the worms in his spaghetti, didn't feel sorry for her at all.

MR. TWIT: I suppose you know what *happens* to you when you get the shrinks.

MRS. TWIT: What? What happens?

MR. TWIT: Your head *shrinks* into your neck. And your neck *shrinks* into your body. And your body *shrinks* into your legs. And your legs *shrink* into your feet. And in the end, there's nothing left but a pair of shoes and a bundle of old clothes.

MRS. TWIT: I can't bear it!

MR. TWIT: It's a terrible disease. The worst in the world!

MRS. TWIT: How long have I got? How long before I end up as a bundle of old clothes and a pair of shoes?

MR. TWIT: (*solemnly*) At the rate you're going, I'd say not more than ten or eleven days.

MRS. TWIT: But isn't there *anything* we can do?

MR. TWIT: There's only one cure for the shrinks.

MRS. TWIT: Tell me! Oh, tell me quickly!

MR. TWIT: We'll have to hurry!

MRS. TWIT: I'm ready! I'll hurry! I'll do anything you say!

MR. TWIT: (*grinning*) You won't last long if you don't!

MRS. TWIT: What is it I must do?

MR. TWIT: You've got to be *s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-d*.

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NARRATOR 1: Mr. Twit led Mrs. Twit outdoors, where he had everything ready for the great stretching.

NARRATOR 4: There were one hundred balloons and lots of string.

NARRATOR 2: There was a gas cylinder for filling the balloons.

NARRATOR 3: There was an iron ring fixed into the ground.

NARRATOR 1: He pointed to it and said,

MR. TWIT: Stand here!

NARRATOR 1: He tied Mrs. Twit's ankles to the iron ring. When that was done, he began filling the balloons with gas.

NARRATOR 4: Each balloon was on a long string, and when it was filled with gas, it pulled on its string, trying to go up and up.

NARRATOR 2: Mr. Twit tied the ends of the strings to the top half of Mrs. Twit. Some he tied around her neck, some under her arms, some to her wrists, and some even to her hair.

NARRATOR 3: Soon there were fifty colored balloons floating in the air above Mrs. Twit's head.

MR. TWIT: Can you feel them stretching you?

MRS. TWIT: I can! I can! They're stretching me like mad!

NARRATOR 1: He put on another ten balloons.

NARRATOR 4: The upward pull became very strong. Mrs. Twit was quite helpless now. With her feet tied to the ground and her arms pulled upward by the balloons, she was unable to move. She was a prisoner.

NARRATOR 2: Mr. Twit had intended to go away and leave her like that for a couple of days and nights to teach her a lesson. In fact, he was just about to leave,

NARRATOR 3: when Mrs. Twit opened her big mouth and said something foolish.

MRS. TWIT: Are you sure my feet are tied properly to the ground? If those strings around my ankles break, it's good-bye for me!

NARRATOR 1: And that's what gave Mr. Twit

NARRATOR 4: his *second*

NARRATOR 2: *nasty*

NARRATOR 3: *idea.*