

Day 6:

The Wormy Spaghetti

The next day, to pay Mr Twit back for the frog trick, Mrs Twit sneaked out into the garden and dug up some worms. She chose big long ones and put them in a tin and carried the tin back to the house under her apron.

At one o'clock, she cooked spaghetti for lunch and she mixed the worms in with the spaghetti, but only on her husband's plate. The worms didn't show because everything was covered with tomato sauce and sprinkled with cheese.

'Hey, my spaghetti's moving!' cried Mr Twit, poking around in it with his fork.

'It's a new kind,' Mrs Twit said, taking a mouthful from her own plate which of course had no worms.



'It's called Squiggly Spaghetti. It's delicious. Eat it up while it's nice and hot.'

Mr Twit started eating, twisting the long

tomato-covered strings around his fork and shovelling them into his mouth. Soon there was tomato sauce all over his hairy chin.

'It's not as good as the ordinary kind,' he said, talking with his mouth full.

'It's too squishy.'

'I find it very tasty,' Mrs Twit said. She was watching him from the other

end of the table. It gave her great pleasure to watch him eating worms.

'I find it rather bitter,' Mr Twit said. 'It's got a distinctly bitter flavour. Buy the other kind next time.'

Mrs Twit waited until Mr Twit had eaten the whole plateful. Then she said, 'You want to know why your spaghetti was squishy?'



Mr Twit wiped the tomato sauce from his beard with a corner of the tablecloth. 'Why?' he said. 'And why it had a nasty bitter

taste?'

'Why?' he said.

'Because it was *worms!*' cried Mrs Twit, clapping her hands and stamping her feet on the floor and rocking with horrible laughter.



The Funny Walking-stick

To pay Mrs Twit back for the worms in his 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) on to the bottom of the stick.

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

The following night, Mr Twit stuck on another tiny bit of wood. Every night, he crept downstairs and added an extra tiny thickness of wood to the end of the walking-stick. He did it very neatly so that the extra bits looked like a part of the old stick.

Gradually, but oh so gradually, Mrs Twit's walking-stick was getting longer and longer.

Now when something is growing very slowly, it is almost impossible to notice it happening. You yourself, for example, are actually growing taller every day that goes by, but you wouldn't think it, would you? It's happening so slowly you can't even notice it from one week to the next.

It was the same with Mrs Twit's walking-stick. 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.

'That stick's too long for you,' Mr Twit said to her one day.



'Why so it is!' Mrs Twit said, looking at the stick. 'I've had a feeling there was something wrong but I couldn't for the life of me think what it was.'

'There's something wrong all right,' Mr Twit said, beginning to enjoy himself.

'What *can* have happened?' Mrs Twit said, staring at her old walking-stick. 'It must suddenly have grown longer.'

'Don't be a fool!' Mr Twit said. 'How can a walking-stick possibly grow longer? It's made of dead wood, isn't it? Dead wood can't grow.'

'Then what on earth has happened?' cried Mrs Twit.

'It's not the stick, it's *you*!' said Mr Twit, grinning horribly. 'It's *you* that's getting *shorter*! I've been noticing it for some time now.'

'That's not true!' cried Mrs Twit.

'You're shrinking, woman!' said Mr Twit.

'It's not possible!'

'Oh yes it jolly well is,' said Mr Twit. 'You're shrinking fast! You're shrinking *dangerously* fast! Why, you must have shrunk at least a foot in the last few days!'

'Never!' she cried.

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

Mrs Twit began to feel so trembly she had to sit down.

Mrs Twit Has the Shrinks

As soon as Mrs Twit sat down, Mr Twit pointed at her and shouted, 'There you are! You're sitting in your old chair and you've shrunk so much your feet aren't even touching the ground!'

Mrs Twit looked down at her feet and by golly the man was right. Her feet were not touching the ground.



Mr Twit, you see, had been just as clever with the chair as he'd been with the walking-stick. Every night when he had gone downstairs and stuck a little bit extra on to the stick, he had done the same to the four legs

of Mrs Twit's chair.

'Just look at you sitting there in your same old chair,' he cried, 'and you've shrunk so much your feet are dangling in the air!'

Mrs Twit went white with fear.



'You've got the *shrinks*!' cried Mr Twit, pointing his finger at her like a pistol. 'You've got them badly! You've got the

most terrible case of shrinks I've ever seen!' Mrs Twit became so frightened she began to dribble. But Mr Twit, still remembering the worms in his spaghetti, didn't feel sorry for her at all. 'I suppose you know what *happens* to you when you get the shrinks?' he said. 'What?' gasped Mrs Twit. 'What happens?' '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 except a pair of shoes and a bundle of old clothes.'

'I can't bear it!' cried Mrs Twit.

'It's a terrible disease,' said Mr Twit. 'The worst in the world.'

'How long have I got?' cried Mrs Twit. 'How long before I finish up as a bundle of old clothes and a pair of shoes?'

Mr Twit put on a very solemn face. 'At the rate you're going,' he said, shaking his head sadly, 'I'd say not more than ten or eleven days.'

'But isn't there *anything* we can do?' cried Mrs Twit.

'There's only one cure for the shrinks,' said Mr Twit.

'Tell me!' she cried. 'Oh, tell me quickly!'

'We'll have to hurry!' said Mr Twit.

'I'm ready. I'll hurry! I'll do anything you say!' cried Mrs Twit.

'You won't last long if you don't,' said Mr Twit, giving her another grizzly grin.

'What is it I must do?' cried Mrs Twit, clutching her cheeks.

'You've got to be *stretched*,' said Mr Twit.

Day 7

Re-read what you read yesterday.

Does Mr and Mrs Twit remind you of any other characters you have met?

How are these characters similar to characters you have met before?

Choose a character you have met before and tell me why they remind you of Mr and Mrs Twit. This can be a character in any book you have read. Can you think of multiple characters?

Day 8

Mrs Twit Gets a Stretching

Mr Twit led Mrs Twit outdoors where he had everything ready for the great stretching.

He had one hundred balloons and lots of string.

He had a gas cylinder for filling the balloons.

He had fixed an iron ring into the ground.

'Stand here,' he said, pointing to the iron ring. He then tied Mrs Twit's ankles to the iron ring.

When that was done, he began filling the balloons with gas. 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. Mr Twit tied the ends of the strings to the top half of Mrs Twit's body. Some he tied round her neck, some under her arms, some to her wrists and some even to her hair.

Soon there were fifty coloured balloons floating in the air above Mrs Twit's head.

'Can you feel them stretching you?' asked Mr Twit.

'I can! I can!' cried Mrs Twit. 'They're stretching me like mad.'

He put on another ten balloons. The upward pull became very strong.

Mrs Twit was quite helpless now. With her feet tied to the ground and her arms pulled upwards by the balloons, she was unable to move. She was a prisoner, and 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

'How lovely all those balloons look in the sky! And what a marvellous bit of luck for me! At last the old hag is lost and gone for ever.'



Mrs Twit Comes Ballooning Down

Mrs Twit may have been ugly and she may have been beastly, but she was not stupid.

High up there in the sky, she had a bright idea. 'If I can get rid of some of these balloons,' she said to herself, 'I will stop going up and start to come down.'

She began biting through the

strings that held the balloons to her wrists and arms and neck and hair.

Each time she bit through a string and let the balloon float away, the upward pull got less and her rate of climb slowed down.

When she had bitten through twenty strings, she stopped going up altogether. She stayed still in the air.

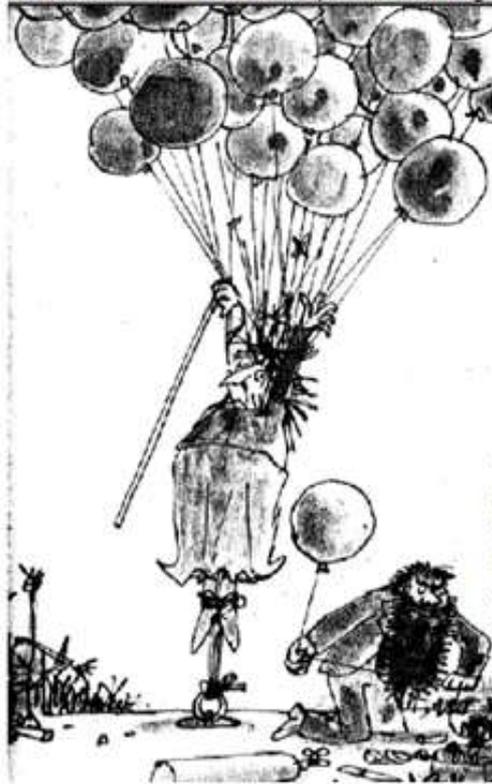
She bit through one more string.

Very, very slowly, she began to float downwards.

It was a calm day. There was no wind at all. And because of this, Mrs Twit had gone absolutely straight up. She now began to come absolutely straight down.

As she floated gently down, Mrs Twit's petticoat billowed out like a parachute, showing her long knickers. It was a grand sight on a glorious day, and thousands of birds came flying in from miles around to stare at this extraordinary old woman in the sky.

to leave when Mrs Twit opened her big mouth and said something silly.



'Are you sure my feet are tied properly to the ground?' she gasped. 'If those strings around my ankles break, it'll be goodbye for me!' And that's what gave Mr Twit his second nasty idea.

Mrs Twit Goes Ballooning Up

'There's enough pull here to take me to the moon!' Mrs Twit cried out.

'To take you to *the moon!*' exclaimed Mr Twit. 'What a ghastly thought! We wouldn't want anything like that to happen, oh dear me no!'

'We most certainly wouldn't!' cried Mrs Twit. 'Put some more string around my ankles quickly! I want to feel absolutely safe!'

'Very well, my angel,' said Mr Twit, and with a ghoulish grin on his lips he knelt down at her feet. He took a knife from his pocket and with one quick slash he cut through the strings holding Mrs Twit's ankles to the iron ring. She went up like a rocket.

'Help!' she screamed. 'Save me!'

But there was no saving her now. In a few seconds she was high up in the blue sky and climbing fast.

Mr Twit stood below looking up. '*What a pretty sight!*' he said to himself.



Mr Twit Gets a Horrid Shock

Mr Twit, who thought he had seen his ugly wife for the last time, was sitting in the garden celebrating with a mug of beer.

Silently, Mrs Twit came floating down. When she was about the height of the house above Mr Twit, she suddenly called out at the top of her voice, 'Here I come, you grizzly old grunion! You rotten old turnip! You filthy old frumpet!'



Mr Twit jumped as though he'd been stung by a giant wasp. He dropped his beer. He looked up. He gaped. He gasped. He gurgled. A few choking sounds came out of his mouth. 'Ughhhhhhhh!' he said. 'Argghhhhhhhh! Ouchhhhhhhh!'

'I'll get you for this!' shouted Mrs Twit. She was floating down right on top

of him. She was purple with rage and slashing the air with her long walking-stick which she had somehow managed to hang on to all the time. 'I'll swish you to a swizzle!' she shouted. 'I'll swash you to a swizzle! I'll gnash you to a gnuzzle! I'll gnosh you to a gnuzzle!' And before Mr Twit had time to run away, this bundle of balloons and petticoats and fiery fury landed right on top of him, lashing out with the stick and cracking him all over his body.



The House, the Tree and the Monkey Cage

But that's enough of that. We can't go on for ever watching these two disgusting people doing disgusting things to each other. We must get ahead with the story.

Here is a picture of Mr and Mrs Twit's house and garden. Some house! It looks like a prison. And not a window anywhere.

'Who wants windows?' Mr Twit had said when they were building it. 'Who wants every Tom, Dick and Harry peeping in to see what you're doing?' It didn't occur to Mr Twit that windows were meant mainly for looking out of, not for looking into.

And what do you think of that ghastly garden? Mrs Twit was the gardener. She was very good at growing thistles and stinging-nettles. 'I always grow plenty of spiky thistles and plenty of stinging-nettles,' she used to say. 'They keep out nasty nose little children.'

Near the house you can see Mr Twit's workshed.

To one side there is The Big Dead Tree. It never has any leaves on it because it's dead.

What is the story about so far? Summarise in one or two sentences. You could also draw pictures to help you explain.

So far, this book is mostly about...

The main ideas in this book are...

Day 9

Re-read the story so far and think about what we have learnt about Mr and Mrs Twit. If you met them and could ask them questions, what would you ask?