

## 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 work shed. 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.*