

HORRID HENRY AND THE TV REMOTE

Horrid Henry pushed through the front door. Perfect Peter squeezed past him and ran inside.

“Hey!” screamed Horrid Henry, dashing after him. “Get back here, worm.”

“Noooo!” squealed Perfect Peter, running as fast as his little legs would carry him.

Henry grabbed Peter’s shirt, then hurtled past him into the sitting room. Yippee! He was going to get the comfy black chair first. Almost there, almost there, almost . . . and then Horrid Henry skidded on a sock and slipped. Peter pounded past and dived onto the comfy black chair. Panting and gasping, he snatched the remote control. Click!

“All together now! Who’s a silly Billy?” trilled the world’s most annoying goat.

“Billy!” sang out Perfect Peter.

NOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

It had happened again. Just as Henry was looking forward to resting his weary bones on the comfy black chair after another long, hard, terrible day at school and watching *Rapper Zapper* and *Knight Fight*, Peter had somehow managed to nab the chair first. It was so unfair.

The rule in Henry’s house was that whoever was sitting in the comfy black chair decided what to watch on TV. And there was Peter, smiling and singing along with Silly Billy, the revolting singing goat who thought he was a clown.

Henry’s parents were so mean and horrible, they only had one teeny tiny telly in the whole, entire house. It was so minuscule Henry practically had to watch it using a magnifying glass. And so old you practically had to kick it to turn it on. Everyone else he knew had loads of TVs. Rude Ralph had five ginormous ones all to himself. At least, that’s what Ralph said.

All too often there were at least two great programmes on at the same time. How was Henry supposed to choose between *Mutant Max* and *Terminator Gladiator*? If only he could watch two TVs simultaneously, wouldn’t life be wonderful?

Even worse, Mum, Dad, and Peter had their own smelly programmes *they* wanted to watch. And not great programmes like *Hog House* and *Gross Out*. Oh no. Mum and Dad liked watching . . . news. Documentaries. Opera. Perfect Peter liked nature programmes. And revolting baby programmes like *Daffy and her Dancing Daisies*. Uggghh! How did he end up in this family? When would his real parents, the King and Queen, come and fetch him and

take him to the palace where he could watch whatever he wanted all day?

When he grew up and became King Henry the Horrible, he'd have three TVs in every room, including the bathrooms.

But until that happy day, he was stuck at home slugging it out with Peter. He *could* spend the afternoon watching *Silly Billy*, *Cooking Cuties*, and *Sammy the Snail*. Or . . .

Horrid Henry pounced and snatched the remote. CLICK!

“. . . and the black knight lowers his visor . . .”

“Give it to me,” shrieked Peter.

“No,” said Henry.

“But I've got the chair,” wailed Peter.

“So?” said Henry, waving the clicker at him. “If you want the remote you'll have to come and get it.”

Peter hesitated. Henry dangled the remote just out of reach.

Perfect Peter slipped off the comfy black chair and grabbed for the remote. Horrid Henry ducked, swerved and jumped onto the empty chair.

“. . . And the knights are advancing towards one another, lances poised . . .”

“MUUUUMMMM!” squealed Peter. “Henry snatched the remote!”

“Did not!”

“Did too.”

“Did not, wibble pants.”

“Don't call me wibble pants,” cried Peter.

“Okay, pongy poo poo,” said Henry.

“Don't call me pongy poo poo,” shrieked Peter.

“Okay, wibble bibble,” said Horrid Henry.

“MUUUUMMMM!” wailed Peter. “Henry's calling me names!”

“Henry! Stop being horrid,” shouted Mum.

“I'm just trying to watch TV in peace!” screamed Henry. “Peter's annoying me.”

“Henry's annoying *me*,” whined Peter. “He pushed me off the chair.”

“Liar,” said Henry. “You fell off.”

“MUUUUMMMMMM!” screamed Peter.

Mum ran in, and grabbed the remote.

Click! The screen went black.

“I’ve had it with you boys fighting over the TV,” shouted Mum. “No TV for the rest of the day.”

What?

Huh?

“But . . . but . . .” said Perfect Peter.

“But . . . but . . .” said Horrid Henry.

“No buts,” said Mum.

“It’s not fair!” wailed Henry and Peter.

Horrid Henry paced up and down his room, whacking his teddy, Mr Kill, on the bedpost every time he walked past.

WHACK!

WHACK!

WHACK!

He had to find a way to make sure he watched the programmes *he* wanted to watch. He just had to. He’d have to get up at the crack of dawn. There was no other way.

Unless . . .

Unless . . .

And then Horrid Henry had a brilliant, spectacular idea. What an idiot he’d been. All those months he’d missed his fantastic shows . . . Well, never ever again.

Sneak.

Sneak.

Sneak.

It was the middle of the night. Horrid Henry crept down the stairs as quietly as he could and tiptoed into the sitting room, shutting the door behind him. There was the TV, grumbling in the corner. “Why is no one watching me?” moaned the telly. “C’mon, Henry.”

But for once Henry didn’t listen. He had something much more important to do.

He crept to the comfy black chair and fumbled in the dark. Now, where was the remote? Aha! There it was. As usual, it had fallen between the seat cushion and the armrest. Henry grabbed it. Quick as a flash, he switched the TV over to the channel for *Rapper Zapper*, *Talent Tigers* and *Hog House*. Then he tiptoed to the toy cupboard and

hid the remote control deep inside a bucket of multi-coloured bricks that no one had played with for years.

Tee hee, thought Horrid Henry.

Why should he have to get up to grab the comfy black chair hours before his programmes started when he could have a lovely lie-in, saunter downstairs whenever he felt like it, and be master of the TV? Whoever was sitting in the chair could be in charge of the telly all they wanted. But without the TV remote, no one would be watching anything.

Perfect Peter stretched out on the comfy black chair. Hurrah. Serve Henry right for being so mean to him. Peter had got downstairs first. Now he could watch what *he* wanted all morning.

Peter reached for the remote control. It wasn't on the armrest. It wasn't on the headrest. Had it slipped between the armrest and the cushion? No. He felt round the back. No. He looked under the chair. Nothing. He looked behind the chair. Where was it?

Horrid Henry strolled into the sitting room. Peter clutched tightly onto the armrests in case Henry tried to push him off.

"I got the comfy black chair first," said Peter.

"Okay," said Horrid Henry, sitting down on the sofa. "So let's watch something."

Peter looked at Henry suspiciously.

"Where's the remote?" said Peter.

"I dunno," said Horrid Henry. "Where did you put it?"

"I didn't put it anywhere," said Peter.

"You had it last," said Henry.

"No I didn't," said Peter.

"Did," said Henry.

"Didn't," said Peter.

Perfect Peter sat on the comfy black chair. Horrid Henry sat on the sofa.

"Have you seen it anywhere?" said Peter.

"No," said Henry. "You'll just have to look for it, won't you?"

Peter eyed Henry warily.

"I'm waiting," said Horrid Henry.

Perfect Peter didn't know what to do. If he got up from the chair to look for the remote Henry would jump into it and there was no way Henry would decide to watch *Cooking Cuties*, even though today they were showing how to make your own muesli.

On the other hand, there wasn't much point sitting in the chair if he didn't have the remote.

Henry sat.

Peter sat.

"You know, Peter, you can turn on the TV without the remote," said Henry casually.

Peter brightened. "You can?"

"Sure," said Henry. "You just press that big black button on the left."

Peter stared suspiciously at the button. Henry must think he was an idiot. He could see Henry's plan from miles away. The moment Peter left the comfy black chair Henry would jump on it.

"You press it," said Peter.

"Okay," said Henry agreeably. He sauntered to the telly and pressed the "on" button.

BOOM! CRASH! WALLOP!

"Des-troy! Des-troy!" bellowed Mutant Max.

"Go Mutants!" shouted Horrid Henry, bouncing up and down.

Perfect Peter sat frozen in the chair.

"But I want to watch *Sing-along with Susie!*" wailed Peter. "She's teaching a song about raindrops and roses."

"So find the remote," said Horrid Henry.

"I can't," said Peter.

"Tough," said Horrid Henry. "Pulverize! Destroy! Destroy!"

Tee hee.

What a fantastic day, sighed Horrid Henry happily. He'd watched every single one of *his* best programmes and Peter hadn't watched a single one of *his*. And now *Hog House* was on. Could life get any better?

Dad staggered into the sitting room. "Ahh, a little relaxation in front of the telly," sighed Dad. "Henry, turn off that horrible programme. I want to watch the news."

"Shhh!" said Horrid Henry. How dare Dad interrupt him?

"Henry . . ." said Dad.

"I can't," said Horrid Henry. "No remote."

"What do you mean, no remote?" said Dad.

"It's gone," said Henry.

“What do you mean, gone?” said Mum.

“Henry lost it,” said Peter.

“Didn’t,” snapped Henry.

“Did,” said Peter.

“DIDN’T!” bellowed Henry. “Now be quiet, I’m trying to watch.”

Mum marched over to the telly and switched it off.

“The TV stays off until the remote is found,” said Mum.

“But I didn’t lose it!” wailed Peter.

“Neither did I.” said Horrid Henry. This wasn’t a lie, as he *hadn’t* lost it.

Rats. Maybe it was time for the TV remote to make a miraculous return . . .

Sneak.

Sneak.

Sneak.

Mum and Dad were in the kitchen. Perfect Peter was practising his cello.

Horrid Henry crept to the toy cupboard and opened it.

The bucket of bricks had gone.

Huh?

Henry searched frantically in the cupboard, hurling out jigsaw puzzles, board games, and half-empty paint bottles. The bricks were definitely gone.

Yikes. Horrid Henry felt a chill down his spine. He was dead. He was doomed.

Unless Mum had moved the bricks somewhere. Of course. Phew. He wasn’t dead yet.

Mum walked into the sitting room.

“Mum,” said Henry casually, “I wanted to build a castle with those old bricks but when I went to get them from the cupboard they’d gone.”

Mum stared at him. “You haven’t played with those bricks in years, Henry. I had a good clear out of all the baby toys today and gave them to the charity shop.”

Charity shop? Charity shop? That meant the remote was gone for good. He would be in trouble. Big big trouble. He was doomed . . . NOT!

Without the clicker, the TV would be useless. Mum and Dad would *have* to buy a new one. Yes! A bigger, better fantastic one with twenty-five surround-sound speakers and a mega-whopper 10-foot super-sized screen!

“You know, Mum, we wouldn’t have any arguments if we all had our *own* TVs,” said Henry. Yes! In fact, if he had two in his bedroom, and a third one spare in case one of them ever broke, he’d never argue about the telly again.

Mum sighed. “Just find the remote,” she said. “It must be here somewhere.”

“But our TV is so old,” said Henry.

“It’s fine,” said Dad.

“It’s horrible,” said Henry.

“We’ll see,” said Mum.

New TV here I come, thought Horrid Henry happily.

Mum sat down on the sofa and opened her book.

Dad sat down on the sofa and opened his book.

Peter sat down on the sofa and opened his book.

“You know,” said Mum, “it’s lovely and peaceful without the telly.”

“Yes,” said Dad.

“No squabbling,” said Mum.

“No screaming,” said Dad.

“Loads of time to read good books,” said Mum.

They smiled at each other.

“I think we should be a telly-free home from now on,” said Dad.

“Me too,” said Mum.

“That’s a great idea,” said Perfect Peter. “More time to do homework.”

“What??” screamed Horrid Henry. He thought his heart would stop. No TV? No TV? “NOOOOOOOOOOOO! NOOOOOOOOOOOO! NOOOOOOOOOOOO!”

BANG! ZAP! KER-POW!

“Go mutants!” yelled Horrid Henry, bouncing up and down in the comfy black chair.

Mum and Dad had resisted buying a new telly for two long hard terrible weeks. Finally they’d given in. Of course they hadn’t bought

a big mega-whopper super-duper telly. Oh no. They'd bought the teeniest, tiniest, titchiest telly they could.

Still. It was a *bit* bigger than the old one. And the remote *could* always go missing again . . .