

Titch the Itch

B.C.R. Fegan

Lenny Wen

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Titch the Itch is a humorous adventure in friendship with some unexpectedly twisted comedic elements.

A little itch with a big heart searches for friendship in B.C.R. Fegan's *Titch the Itch*, a comedy of unrequited love, determination, and good intentions gone wrong.

Titch is a cuddly itch, a friendly little guy who longs to hug and snuggle with old friends or new. Unfortunately, this always seems to result in furious scratching, muttering, and general unhappiness for the recipients of his affections, until one day Titch's resolution to spread his rash brand of devotion around the neighborhood causes an outrageous outbreak of epic proportions.

After spending months attempting to bond with a family who doesn't appreciate his efforts—or notice him at all, for that matter—Titch roams the streets, approaching first a cat, then a dog, a horse, and finally an entire park of unsuspecting people before reuniting with “Father,” who bears the brunt of Titch's ministrations.

Their relationship elicits a hilarious mix of cheering Titch on and commiserating with Father's increasingly uncomfortable circumstances, reminiscent of Dennis the Menace's failed attempts to impress poor Mr. Wilson.

Titch himself is a rare character:

He wasn't a mosquito-bite itch or a tickly itch. Titch was a no-reason-at-all itch. You know, the kind of itch that comes from nowhere. The kind of itch that just gets itchier the more you try to ignore it.

Funny and sweet, the book is light on the surface, with a wide-eyed, big-hearted Titch blithely unaware of the havoc he wreaks. As increasingly alarming events unfold, the narrative slowly takes on a suspenseful undertone, particularly when Titch decides that keeping sick people company in the local hospital would be a great outlet for his tender emotions.

Illustrations by Lenny Wen add a dramatic flair to the physical humor and hijinks caused by Titch's persistent hugging. Full-body twitches, back-bending scratches, and anguished faces attempting to relieve that pesky, just-out-of-reach chafing are depicted in bright, full-color spreads. Titch himself takes shape as a translucent, waif-like apparition with an expressive, bedraggled air. The combination of Titch's washed-out urchin appearance set against solid, bold colors and fluid action scenes perfectly complements the cleverly layered narrative.

A humorous adventure in friendship with some unexpectedly twisted comedic elements, *Titch the Itch* by B.C.R. Fegan will appeal to children of all ages with both slapstick and sophisticated components wrapped up in the tale of a lovable but creepy imp whose hugs make babies cry but who tears up himself when feeling rejected. This is a sound choice for home or school libraries looking to infuse fresh, unique humor into children's picture book collections.

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