***The Witches***

***Chapter 1***

***A Note about Witches***

* This book opens with a discussion about its own genre. Way to be super literary, Roald Dahl. So, fairy tales, as we know them, tend to be about witches with hats and broomsticks. But this story isn't like that, because, well, it's *real*. More particularly it's about "REAL WITCHES" (all capital letters).
* It turns out that real witches (we're going to keep that lowercase even though Roald Dahl doesn't, because we're pretty sure it would get a little annoying otherwise...) look and act pretty normal, which makes it hard to pick one out of a crowd.
* Other important information about real witches:
  1. They hate children and are always trying to figure out how to off them.
  2. They enjoy getting rid of children, at least once a week.
  3. They are sneaky and never get caught.
  4. They have all sorts of magic powers.
  5. There are way too many of them in every country. (Yes, even Luxembourg, smarty pants.)
  6. Witches are always women. No offense to women, it's just a fact.
  7. All witches seem like normal, run-of-the-mill ladies, which makes them super-dangerous, like a tiger that looks like a puppy.
* We are now provided with an illustration of two women. Which of the two is the witch? There's no way of knowing... (Cue the scary music.)
* Basically, anyone could be a witch: your neighbor, a passerby, your teacher... maybe even Shmoop? Nothing is impossible, says our narrator.
* While there's no way of knowing for sure who's a witch, there are a few signs to help us out. Our narrator, kindly, plans to let us in on the secrets. (You might want to take notes.)
* P.S. Our narrator doesn't have a name, so don't hold your breath.

***Synopsis:***

The Witches begins with a chapter directly addressing the reader and clearing up some points about the depictions of witches in the book. As the narrator says, "This is not a fairy-tale. This is about REAL WITCHES" (1). The narrator goes on to inform the reader that real witches seem just like ordinary people, but they spend all their time plotting to kill children. Instead of doing this in the ways that other people might, like stabbing them or hitting them over the head, witches use their magic powers.

The narrator says that there are not that many witches in the world anymore, only about 100 in most countries. The narrator also makes it clear that only woman can be witches. A picture of two women is shown to emphasize the point that you cannot tell a regular woman from a witch just by looking at them. The narrator even implies that the teacher reading the story to the class right at the moment could be a witch. However, a little help is given at the end of the chapter: "There are a number of little signals you can look out for, little quirky habits that all witches have in common, and if you know about these, if you remember them always, then you might just possibly manage to escape from being squelched before you are very much older" (5).