

Flushed and bothered



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I learnt a thing or two about what to look out for in a house when I went house-hunting with my family a few months ago.

Bright rooms, good accessibility, sufficient amenities, nice view, regular breeze.

These are all unimportant.

I now know that the first place you should look at when you are shopping around for a new place is The Toilet.

That's right. Upon stepping into the new house, zoom in on the said location. Use it. Flush a few times. Watch. Watch very closely.

Don't scoff, for we didn't check hard enough. The toilets in our new home failed spectacularly when we moved in – and I don't think I have ever felt more wretched in my own house before.

We realised something was wrong on the first day, and of course, I had to have the dubious honour of being the one to find out.

When I was finished with my business, I stood up, wiped, and flushed.

Then the nightmare began.

Like one of the characters in an alien/volcano/asteroid disaster flick, my eyes widened and my jaw dropped.

I could not believe what was coming towards me.

Water was accumulating in the toilet bowl at an alarming rate and threatening to overflow like some bad Japanese horror movie.

I slammed the toilet cover shut and held my breath, literally.

Three minutes later, I gingerly peeked under the cover. And gagged.

So I slapped on a biohazard label, called the plumber and told my family to stay clear.

But for some reason, the problem simply could not be solved. Although the plumber came and cleared the mess the following day, it resurfaced immediately the next time we used it.

We called the contractor. We even went

to the house downstairs to see if the root of the problem was there.

Nothing worked.

The problem would not be so bad had the washroom in the master bedroom not malfunctioned as well. This time, it wasn't the flush, but the light.

And just like the toilet outside, it refused to be fixed. We attached new bulbs, we checked the switchboard but an almighty force decreed: There Will Not Be Light.

So, for a fortnight, anyone who needed to use the toilet at home at night had to shoo everyone out of the master bedroom, lock the door, and use the light from the room to move around.

The thing about a spoilt toilet is that it keeps bugging you. No one likes to know that there is a whole lot of crap floating somewhere around the house.

What's more, you simply can't function without a toilet. If your TV is spoilt you can go to bed early. If your stove doesn't work, you can eat outside.

But if your toilet is not working, what do you do? Discreetly go downstairs and look for some thick foliage?

So for two weeks, I was utterly, bitterly miserable.

I even wondered if our house was haunted (then this really would have been a bad Japanese horror movie).

Thankfully, our contractor was as concerned as we were. He refused to give up, came back to our house numerous times, determined to defeat this

evil.

Finally, he came to the root of the problem. A lot of dental floss and a toilet freshener was lodged deep in the main toilet, while the electricity was somehow not patched to the point in the master bedroom.

I don't think I ever cheered so loudly over a toilet before.

Nevertheless, it was with great apprehension that I went back to using it. The first time I did, I approached with fear.

When I was finally ready, I took a deep breath and flushed.

I watched. I exhaled. I broke into a silly smile.

Life is good again.

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