

The Best of Roald Dahl Study Guide

The Best of Roald Dahl by Roald Dahl

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Madame Rosette

Madame Rosette Summary

The Best of Roald Dahl is a collection of twenty-six short stories. In "Madame Rosette," Stag and Stuffy are fighter pilots during World War II. They are resting in a hotel in Cairo after fighting in Libya, taking turns in the bathtub. There isn't much to do to keep busy in the desert and when they get to Cairo they decide to find some women. They go shopping and a woman at the sunglasses shop catches Stuffy's eye. They stop for a drink, and Stag tells him to call Madame Rosette, a brothel owner. He tells Stag to call her up, pretending to be an important colonel, and ask her to fix him up with the sunglasses sales girl. Madame Rosette agrees, and says she will call him at his hotel. Stag tells Stuffy that Madame Rosette will now dispatch one of her pimps to offer the girl money to sleep with Stuffy. Once she accepts, she is under Rosette's control and Rosette will blackmail her by threatening to tell the girl's employer that she is a whore. Stuffy is uneasy about the situation.

Stag and Stuffy return to the hotel. Stuffy gets Stag to call Madame Rosette and tell her the deal is off. They go out to the bars and meet another pilot named William. They meet some Egyptians and watch women dance in one of the bars. They discuss the Egyptian's preference for fuller women. Stuffy tells Stag he wants to go to Madame Rosette's and free all the women she has blackmailed into being hookers. They go to her home and tell her they are officers. She lets them in her office, and after a brief struggle they lock her in her office and go to get the girls. They tell the women they are military police, and they need to girls to come with them on a routine matter. The men walk them out and take them to a bar. The girls realize they are free, and Stag collects their phone numbers for the squadron so the girls can offer their services on their own terms. The girls are grateful and the men each take some of them home, saving their favorite girls to drop off last.

Madame Rosette Analysis

The servicemen, Stag, Stuffy and William, are not above hiring a prostitute. However, they do feel that the girls deserve to be brought into the enterprise only if it is their choice. Furthermore, the girls should not be cheated out of their money by a woman like Madame Rosette. Stuffy is especially bothered by the way Madame Rosette does business and the way she traps young girls who do not wish to become prostitutes. Instead of turning a blind eye to what's going on, Stag, Stuffy and William decide to take action and rescue the girls so they can do business on their own terms. As a reward, each man goes home with his favorite girl. Although some of the girls at the brothel may have started out as shop girls who were sucked into the business, they appear to be more willing participants and are genuinely grateful for their rescue. The girls are surprised that the men would take the initiative to free them and their journey from the brothel takes on a lighthearted feel.



Man from the South and The Sound Machine

Man from the South and The Sound Machine Summary

An Englishman is vacationing in a hotel in Jamaica. He meets a South American man near the pool, and they watch a couple of American sailors flirting with English girls. One of the sailors and one of the girls comes over. The South American man goes to light a cigar and the sailor offers his lighter. The South American man makes the sailor a bet that if the lighter ignites ten times in a row he will give the sailor his car. If the lighter fails to light even once, the sailor will give the South American his little finger. The South American secures the American sailor's hand down with a piece of string and nails. The Englishman starts to suspect the South American has done this before. The South American gets a chopping knife and stands over the sailor while he begins to light the lighter. He gets it lit eight times before a woman bursts in the room. She apologizes to the sailor and tells them the South American has made this bet over 50 times in their hometown, until the townspeople threatened to have him committed. She tells him the Cadillac is hers, and the man has nothing since she won it all several years ago. She puts her hand on the table, and the Englishman sees that she only has one finger and a thumb left.

The Sound Machine

Klausner walks out of his house and to a shed. He pulls out a box and begins to adjust the mechanics inside. A doctor, named Scott, stops by and asks Klausner what he is making. Klausner tells him it is a sound machine that allows humans to hear sounds that are normally inaudible. The doctor leaves and Klausner takes his machine outside and tries it out. He hears a shriek, and then another, and realizes it is coming from a flowerbed where his neighbor, Mrs. Saunders, is picking flowers. He asks her to cut another flower; when she does, he hears the shriek again. He tells her about the shrieks, and asks her how she knows the flowers don't feel pain. Mrs. Saunders thinks he is crazy and leaves. Klausner picks a few more flowers and finds that his theory is correct. The next day, Klausner gets an ax and chops at a tree. Dr. Scott arrives, and Klausner tells him to put on the headphones. Klausner picks up the ax and gets ready to hit the tree, but before he brings himself to do it, a branch breaks and smashes the machine. He asks the doctor if he heard anything before the machine broke, but the doctor denies hearing anything. Klausner makes the doctor paint the ax cut in the tree with iodine, and tells him to come back the next day and check on the cuts. Dr. Scott takes Klausner back to his home.



Man from the South and The Sound Machine Analysis

The bet that the South American man makes with the American sailor at first seems preposterous. Most people would not risk their finger, but possibly winning a car seems like a good chance to take. The American knows that his lighter always lights, and lighting it ten times inside a room with no wind seems like an achievable task. However, when a woman comes in and tells them that the man doesn't own the car, the wager is over. The Englishman serves as the observer for this unbelievable bet, and it is he that notices the woman has only two fingers left. This signifies that she won everything the man has by betting fingers for his things, and she had lost several times. It is not clear why the man wants the fingers, or exactly what he does with them. Since he was kicked out of his hometown, it is clear that the man is mentally ill. This is further evidenced by the fact that he was trying to bet a car he didn't even own, indicating this is some kind of compulsion.

In *The Sound Machine*, Klausner's mental stability is also questionable. He believes that he has created a machine that can hear sounds out of the range of human hearing, but the machine is broken before anyone else can verify these sounds are real. Klausner may be telling the truth, but he certainly seems crazy to the Dr. Scott when he makes the doctor put medicine on cuts in a tree. However, there are several pieces of evidence that indicate Klausner may have mental issues. He is familiar with Dr. Scott, although we are not told of the exact nature of their relationship and it is conceivable that the doctor is Klausner's psychiatrist. Klausner's neighbor, Mrs. Saunders, already thinks he is odd, but the incident with the sound machine convinces her he is crazy. Also, since no one can verify that the sounds are real, Klausner may have been imagining them and the machine was no more than miscellaneous machine parts. The story is deliberately ambiguous and Klausner's sanity or insanity is left for the reader to judge.



Taste and Dip in the Pool

Taste and Dip in the Pool Summary

The narrator and his wife dine at their friend, Mike Schofield's house. Mike's wife and his daughter, Louise, are present, as well as a wine expert and gourmet called Richard Pratt. During these dinners, Mike always tries to impress Richard with his fine food and wine. He usually bets Richard can't name one of the rare wines Mike has found. The narrator expects the game to be played again that night. Mike brags about the expensive and rare wines throughout the night. However, Richard does not pay attention to Mike or the wine, instead concentrating on Louise, Mike's 18-year-old daughter. Mike tells Richard he has a special wine for the main course. He goes to get it from where he left it breathe on top of a filing cabinet in his study, the place Richard helped him pick out last time. Mike brings the wine in and agrees to bet anything Richard wants, but Richard picks his daughter's hand in marriage against both of Richard's homes. Mike scoffs, but eventually agrees because he thinks Richard Pratt won't guess the wine. Richard narrows down the wine, figuring out the vineyard and the year. Mike doesn't move, and his daughter tells him to hurry up and show the wine label, since she wants her two houses. Richard tells Mike to go ahead and do it. However, Mike's maid walks in, carrying Richard's glasses and says he left them in the study, on top of the filing cabinet, when he went in their alone before dinner. Mike's wife tries to calm him down.

Dip in the Pool

A cruise ship begins to rock, sliding the plates and food while the passengers are dining. One passenger, William Botibol, is eating with the ship's purser. The passengers bet on how quickly they will finish the day's run, based on the captain's estimate. Botibol asks the purser if the captain had made his estimate before the sea began to get rough. The purser says he believes the captain may not have counted on the rough sea. Botibol knows he could win about 6,000 pounds if he wins the auction. Botibol bids for the low field of numbers, winning it for 200 pounds. However, the sea begins to calm down, and Botibol panics because he knows he can't afford to lose the auction. Botibol thinks that if can slow down the ship just a bit, he will be able to win the bet. He plans to jump overboard in sight of another passenger to ensure that he is seen and picked up. He talks to the woman and she seems pleasant and polite, if a bit odd. He shouts help and jumps in. The woman watches Botibol float away. Another woman, comes out and tells the woman to come in. The woman tells the caretaker that she saw a man jump in the water with his clothes on, but the woman doesn't believe her and scolds her for coming out alone.



Taste and Dip in the Pool Analysis

The narrator of "Taste" is just an observer, just as in "Man from the South." He is at a dinner party with a friend, Mike Schofield, but does not participate fully in the events that follow. Much as in "Man from the South," "Taste" revolves around an incredible bet that seems a sure thing. Mike agrees to bet his daughter's hand in marriage to Richard Pratt, confident that the wine gourmet will not know where he has gotten the wine. It does seem an impossible feat to guess the exactly year and vineyard of a wine by tasting it, but Richard seems to pull it off. The maid, although unnoticed through the story, interrupts at this point and reveals to everyone that Richard had already learned the name of the wine and planned to make this bet. She does this through innocently offering Richard his glasses, although it seems clear that she has known all along what Richard was planning. Mike is extremely angry at Richard for cheating like this, and what he does to Richard Pratt is left to the imagination.

In Dip in the Pool, William Botibol also thinks that he can cheat during an auction to see how far the cruise ship travels in one day. Like Richard Pratt, Botibol thinks he has the upper hand because if he falls overboard, the ship will lose time as it stops to save him. He plans it out meticulously, even talking to the woman briefly to ensure that she knows he is there. However, he tells her he is going to exercise and the woman, who seems to have a diminished mental capacity, believes that he is planning on exercising in the water. She tells her caretaker about the man, but the caretaker seems used to the illogical things the woman can come up with and doesn't believe her. Botibol is punished for his treachery and the ship leaves him behind. Now he has not only lost money, but also his life.



Skin and Edward the Conqueror

Skin and Edward the Conqueror Summary

In 1946, an old man named Drioli is a beggar in Paris. He sees a painting and recognizes the style; it was done by an old friend named Chaim Soutine, that he calls his Kalmuck since Soutine is Russian. Drioli and his wife had known Soutine before World War I. One evening back then, Soutine was painting a picture of Drioli's wife. Soutine frequently makes romantic overtures about Drioli's wife Josie. However, Drioli plays these off as jokes. Drioli, a tattoo artist, has made a lot of money from sailors that are in town. Drioli buys many bottles of wine and they get drunk. Drioli asks Soutine to paint a picture of Josie on his back and then tattoo over it. Drioli shows him how to use the tattoo gun and Soutine finds that it is no different from painting. He begins to paint Josie brushing her hair, then tattoos over his painting. The painting is magnificent, and Soutine signs it. Drioli eventually leaves to fight in World War I, and when he returns, Soutine has moved on. Josie and Drioli move on as well, but after a few years of good business, World War II comes and Josie is killed.

Now Drioli is a beggar in Paris. He decides to go into the gallery displaying Soutine's picture. The gallery owner tries to kick him out, but Drioli shows those assembled the picture on his back and they are amazed. The owner offers to buy it from him, but realizes the picture can't be removed until Drioli is dead. A stranger comes up and asks Drioli if he likes fine food and wine and beautiful women. He tells Drioli that if he comes with him, he will have Drioli live in luxury, his only job to walk around his hotel showing off the tattoo. The dealer tries to persuade Drioli to listen to him, since they can hire a doctor to remove the skin from his back and replace it. The stranger says that such an operation will kill him. The stranger tempts Drioli with the delicious things they would have for dinner that night, and Drioli agrees to come with him. However, a few weeks later, a new painting by Soutine on a curious canvas, appears for sale in South America.

Edward the Conqueror

Louisa calls her husband, Edward, in for lunch. He is cutting down bramble bushes in the yard, using a bonfire to burn the branches. As they prepare to go in, a cat appears near the bonfire. Louisa tries to tell the cat to go home, but the cat follows them in. Edward doesn't like it, but Louisa picks up the cat and feels it has bumps on its face. She leaves the cat on the couch and goes to the piano, where she plays classical music. She notices the cat gets especially excited when she plays a piece composed by Franz Liszt. She calls Edward and tells him she believes the cat is a reincarnation of Liszt. She tries to convince Edward by playing some pieces so he can watch the cat's reaction, but Edward remains unconvinced. Louisa reads up on reincarnation and Liszt's life, and realizes the bumps on the cat's face match up with Liszt's warts. Still trying to convince Edward, she plays some Chopin, which Liszt hates, and the cat reacts badly as well. She goes to get the cat something to eat, but when she returns the cat is gone.



Edward says he hasn't seen the cat, but the bonfire is going well. Louisa sees a scratch on Edward's hand and yells at him.

Skin and Edward the Conqueror Analysis

Drioli is a simple, innocent man, who values his wife and his friendships highly. He is not put out by his friend Soutine making a move on his wife, and does not seem to take these threats seriously. We see no evidence of an actual relationship between his wife, Josie, and Soutine, but it is not verified such an affair is not occurring. However, Drioli's simplicity gets him in trouble when he bursts into a gallery showing the paintings of his former friend. Drioli is overcome with his feelings for his friend and cannot stop himself from entering the gallery. When the man offers to take care of him for the rest of his life and bribes Drioli with food, Drioli agrees, not considering the man may harm him to get the painting off his back. Although the narrator does not come out and say it, it can be inferred from the ending that the man had lied about his hotel, and in fact killed Drioli and taken the painting from his back.

In *Edward the Conqueror*, Edward is presented as a pragmatic man who values fact over fantasy. However, his wife Louisa is the opposite, believing that the cat that has mysteriously turned up on their doorstep is the reincarnation of a famous, long dead composer. The cat certainly acts how a animal that was formerly Liszt would act, enjoying the music that he himself composed, and abhorring the music Liszt abhorred. Louisa is overcome by her discovery. However, Edward cannot face what he views as his wife's madness, and seems to take the most pragmatic way out of it, by killing the cat. Although it is not verified he threw the cat in the bonfire, the scratch on his hands leads Louisa to believe it is so. It is hard to decide whether she is more upset that he may have killed Liszt or that he may have killed a defenseless animal.



Lamb to the Slaughter and Galloping Foxley

Lamb to the Slaughter and Galloping Foxley Summary

Mary Maloney is the pregnant wife of Patrick Maloney, a cop. Every night, she and her husband have a routine as they settle in and have dinner. Mary gets everything her husband needs, from his slippers to his drink. However, one night, he tells her he is leaving her for another woman. Mary gets a leg of lamb out of the fridge and hits him over the head, killing him. She realizes she must cover up the murder for the sake of her child. She puts the lamb in the oven and goes to the store to get more items for dinner and give herself an alibi. When she returns home, she finds Patrick's body and calls police. The police console her and search the house for the murder weapon. One of the men tell her the oven's still on, and she asks the men to do her a favor and eat the lamb so it doesn't go to waste. As they eat, they talk about how easy it should be to find the murder weapon. Eavesdropping from another room, Mary starts to giggle.

Galloping Foxley

Perkins is a commuter who delights in his routine staying the same every day as he travels to work. He is disturbed one morning to see a man standing on the train platform as if he owned the place, swinging his cane. He is especially annoyed when the man follows him into his compartment. The man does it again another day, and Perkins feels unnerved, as if he knows the man. He eventually realizes the man is Foxley, known as Galloping Foxley, who used to terrorize Perkins fifty years ago when they were in school together. Foxley would order Perkins around, give him jobs to do, and frequently beat Perkins with his cane if the jobs weren't done to Foxley's satisfaction. Perkins plans to confront Foxley about the beatings to embarrass him. He taps Foxley on the leg and introduces himself. The man he thought was Foxley introduces himself as Jocelyn Fortescue, who went to a different school.

Lamb to the Slaughter and Galloping Foxley Analysis

In *Lamb to the Slaughter*, Mary Maloney gets revenge on her husband, Patrick, for cheating on her. Unlike the protagonists in several of Dahl's other short stories, Mary escapes unpunished for her actions. This suggests Dahl may sympathize with her plight as a pregnant housewife who has done nothing to cause her husband to treat her that way. Although a housewife, Mary proves herself to be resourceful and a great actor. She is able to cover up her husband's murder, and even convince his fellow cops to devour the murder weapon. Mary has finally been able to tap into an independent, brave part of herself, showing she is very protective of her unborn child and will enjoy life with her husband out of the picture.



In Galloping Foxley, Perkins also hopes to get revenge on a tormentor, Foxley, a boy who used to torture him when they were at school together. Perkins is already annoyed that Foxley has disturbed his commuting routine, but when he realizes who Foxley is, he sees a chance to really get back at his old adversary. However, when Perkins talks to the man he thinks is Foxley, the man gives another name. This leaves two alternatives: the man truly isn't Foxley, or the man is Foxley and recognized Perkins, giving a false name. It seems the first option is more likely. Since the man has annoyed Perkins by disrupting his schedule, it is logical Perkins would think it is Foxley if the man resembles him. It has also been years since the two have seen each other, meaning it would be hard to recognize Foxley.



The Way Up to Heaven and Parson's Pleasure

The Way Up to Heaven and Parson's Pleasure Summary

Mrs. Foster is not a very nervous woman, but gets very stressed out when she thinks she is going to be late for a trip or event. Her husband, Mr. Foster, always takes longer than needed and seems to enjoy torturing his wife. On one occasion, she is supposed to visit her daughter in France and meet her first grandchild. She is anxious to meet the plan, but Mr. Foster takes a very long time getting ready to take her to the airport. He is planning to stay at a club he belongs to while his wife is away. Mrs. Foster finally gets to the airport, but fog has grounded the plane. She goes home to await a flight the next day. She tells her husband he doesn't need to come to the airport again, but he says she can drop him at the club on her way. The next morning, Mr. Foster again takes a long time, even getting in the car then going back in the house to get a present for their daughter. While he is gone, Mrs. Foster finds the present in the car and is going back in the house to tell him. She stops at the door and listens to something, then runs back to the car saying she can't wait or she'll be late. She visits her daughter for six weeks and writes letters home every week. When she gets home, she checks out the house and realizes the elevator has been stuck since she left. She calls the repairman.

Parson's Pleasure

Mr. Boggis is an antique furniture dealer who spends his Sundays driving around the country looking for antiques. In many of the rural areas of the country, people don't realize that their furniture is actually quite valuable, and Mr. Boggis is able to buy the pieces very cheaply. He is an expert and getting people to listen to him and bargaining, and pretends to be a reverend to get people to trust him more readily. One Sunday, he visits a home with three men, who are very suspicious of Boggis. The men tell him they don't have any furniture he would want, but Mr. Boggis finds the rarest of treasures, a Chippendale commode. Mr. Boggis tells the men he wants it to cut off the legs for a cabinet he owns, and the men agree to sell it. As Mr. Boggis goes to get his car, the men discuss the deal and are afraid Boggis won't take the piece if it won't fit in his car. They chop up the cabinet, figuring Boggis can use the rest for firewood.

The Way Up to Heaven and Parson's Pleasure Analysis

The Way Up to Heaven is a tale similar to Lamb to the Slaughter since both feature women getting revenge. Mr. Foster is deliberately cruel to his wife, always delaying her when he knows she gets frantic if she is late for an appointment. Mrs. Foster puts up



with this for years, but eventually gets fed up with him. This trip is clearly the most important of her life, and she will not miss it for anything. Her husband finally pushes her too far when he goes back into the house to get a small present. When Mrs. Foster goes to get him, she stops at the door and listens, hearing her husband trapped in the elevator. She sees her chance to stop her husband's games forever and seizes it, even writing letters while she is on her trip to strengthen her alibi. When she arrives home, she calmly calls the elevator repairman, revealing that is where her husband has been stuck for the six weeks of her trip and is surely now lying dead. Through her ingenuity, Mrs. Foster gets revenge on her husband for his torments.

In the Parson's Pleasure, Mr. Boggis pretends to be a reverend in order to try and trick people to sell him their antique furniture very cheaply. However, the tables are turned when the 'simple' folk he tries to fool accidentally get the better of him. The men think they are being helpful by chopping up the Chippendale commode, since he has told them he only wants the feet of the piece. Mr. Boggis therefore tricks himself out of his windfall, since his deceit to the men is the direct cause of the piece being destroyed. Mr. Boggis' reaction to the destruction is left to the imagination at the end of the story, although it is safe to say he will be devastated and may learn the error of his ways once he sees where his lies have gotten him.



The Landlady and William and Mary

The Landlady and William and Mary Summary

Billy Weaver has moved to London looking for a place to stay. He is sent to a good hotel, but comes across a bed and breakfast on the way. The landlady invites him in and tells him about the hotel and the people that have stayed there. Weaver agrees to stay because the price is very cheap, and learns he will be the only one staying there. The landlady keeps calling him by the wrong name and referring to other young men who stayed there. Weaver seems to recognize two of the young men's names when he sees them in the register. He says he seems to remember them mentioned somewhere, almost as if they were famous for the same thing. The landlady brushes it off, but Weaver recalls one of the men had been out for a walk and then something happened all of a sudden. The landlady says it couldn't have been the same person, and anyway the two men haven't left, they're still on the fourth floor. Weaver notices the old woman has stuffed her animals after they died, and she says she stuffs all her pets after they die.

William and Mary

William Pearl dies and leaves a note for his wife, Mary. Mary hopes it is something heartfelt or emotional, but it is not. It describes how, since William is dying of cancer, he has decided to give himself to science. Landy, another scientist, has a plan to remove William's brain and keep it functioning after his body dies. William had much thought about this, since he wouldn't be able to communicate back or see, only think. He ends by telling her to live healthy and that she can disconnect the telephone, since he won't be using it. She thinks that William ever approved of anything she did. Mary calls Landy and goes to see her husband, now just a brain in a pan with one eye connected. Mary begins to feel affectionate towards William, since he now can't talk. She asks when she can have him back, at the scientists think she is joking. Mary puts a cigarette in her mouth, and the eye flashes, but she just blows smoke into it. She tells William that from now on, he's going to do exactly what she tells him.

The Landlady and William and Mary Analysis

In *The Landlady*, Billy Weaver is looking for an economical place to stay when he comes to the bed and breakfast and gets more than he bargained for. At first, the lady seems only to be a little crazy, but the longer Weaver talks to her the more he realizes something may be seriously wrong. The other two men who have registered are apparently both men who disappeared some time ago, but the landlady tries to convince him those aren't the same men staying there. Weaver also sees the animals the landlady has stuffed using taxidermy, and this infers that she may have done the same thing to the men who are staying with her. Since Weaver is the only one now staying

with her, it seems clear that if he stays, he may soon end up a stuffed, dead companion of the landlady's.

William and Mary is another tale of a woman getting revenge on the man who has done her wrong. Throughout her life, William has always been very cold and controlling towards Mary, not letting her smoke or do things for her own enjoyment. Even at the end of his life, he doesn't consult with Mary about his choice to have his brain saved and kept alive. William is clearly controlling and does not value Mary's wants or needs. Mary is at first horrified by her husband's choice. However, after seeing her husband's state, she realizes she can get back at him for the torment he has caused her over the years. He is now submissive and cannot order her around, and she will enjoy flaunting all the things he didn't allow her to do when he was alive.



Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat and Royal Jelly

Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat and Royal Jelly Summary

Mrs. and Dr. Bixby are living a common story, one where the woman is cheating on her good man with a "dirty dog." Mrs. Bixby is cheating on her husband with a man called the Colonel, pretending to visit her aunt each month. This goes on for eight years, until after a visit with the Colonel, he has a box delivered to her while she is waiting for the train. Inside is a black mink coat, and a note saying the Colonel must break off their affair. However, she knows her aunt could not have afforded a coat like that, and is at a loss at how to explain it. She goes to a pawnshop when she gets home to New York City. She asks the pawnbroker to lend her \$50 dollars until Monday, and he can hold the coat as collateral. She agrees but won't write her name on the ticket, meaning anyone who has the stub can claim the coat. She returns home, where she finds she is dissatisfied with her husband. She shows the ticket to her husband and tells him she found it; he gets excited since there is no name and they can claim it. Dr. Bixby picks up the item and calls Mrs. Bixby to come to his office and see it. She arrives and he gives her a mink neckpiece, not the coat she had traded in. She pretends to love it. As she is leaving his office, she sees her husband's secretary, Miss Pulteney, wearing the mink coat.

(Royal Jelly) Albert Taylor and Mabel Taylor are worried because their baby daughter won't eat and has lost two pounds since birth. The doctors can't do anything for them, and they are especially worried because they tried for nine years to have a baby. Albert has always been fascinated with bees, and is a beekeeper with lots of hives on the property. He reads an article about royal jelly, which is fed to bee larvae and helps them increase their weight greatly. Albert calls Mabel and tells her he will feed the baby that night, and the baby eats more. Albert tells Mabel he will help feed the baby more now, and as time goes on, the baby puts on weight. Albert tells his wife about the royal jelly, and how it costs \$500 a pound for normal people. He tells her he has been feeding it to the baby, but she is worried that it may affect the baby badly. Albert tells her that royal jelly is what the queen bees get, and it what makes them powerful. It can also heal some sicknesses and makes the person or animal taking it develop early. The baby is now ravenous, and her parents have to feed her extra. Mabel realizes her husband is beginning to look like a bee, and her daughter has yellow-brown hairs on her stomach. Albert tells her he began taking the jelly himself after realizing it could help him with his impotency. She realizes her husband's neck is covered with similar hairs, and her daughter resembles a larvae.



Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat and Royal Jelly Analysis

Mrs. Bixby gets what she deserves when she tries to trick her husband into claiming the coat her lover, the Colonel, has given her. Mrs. Bixby feels very secure in the arrangements she has made with the Colonel, and does not feel guilt or regret at cheating on her husband. However, Dr. Bixby apparently feels the same way about his wife, since he seemingly has been cheating on her with his secretary, Miss Pulteney. Mrs. Bixby comes up with a clever plan to get her coat, but when her husband insists on taking the ticket, she is now trapped. She can't tell him she knew that the mink coat was the item there, because she would have to reveal to her husband that she was the one who left the coat there in the first place. She realizes her husband does not feel as loving about her as he might try to show. She now knows that her husband is having an affair with his secretary, and she is left to decide whether she will reveal both their infidelities.

In Royal Jelly, Mabel's husband Albert has also gone behind her back in regards to royal jelly. She is first introduced to it when Albert tells her he has been giving it to their baby, but Mabel is worried about the side effects. The baby isn't the only one who has been affected, however. Albert reveals he has used the royal jelly to cure his impotency and enable them to have a baby. This indicates the baby has been affected since birth, because she has probably inherited some of the changes from her father and this may be why she does not want to eat unless the royal jelly is in the bottle. Mabel is disturbed when she realizes what her husband is doing, and how his choices have affected her baby. She looks at her husband and baby with renewed eyes and sees how he resembles a bee and her daughter resembles a larvae. Now, she must decide if there is anything she can do about it.



Georgy Porgy and Genesis and Catastrophe

Georgy Porgy and Genesis and Catastrophe Summary

The narrator, a reverend, is a learned man, but has never had a relationship with a woman. His mother used to teach him when he was younger. She believed a child should experience everything, telling her son about religion, finances and sex. She takes her son to see a rabbit giving birth, but the rabbit eats the baby. When he turns to his mom, all he sees is her open mouth and panics, thinking she will eat him. He runs onto a highway, where his mother is hit by a car. Most of the women in his parish are spinsters. He likes to watch women, but panics when they touch him. He doesn't understand why the spinsters force themselves on him, and experiments with rats to find out. The male and female rats are separated by a live wire. One male rat finally comes and touches the wire, dropping dead. All the female rats, named after women in the church, then try one by one, but all die. The reverend seems to believe this shows all women are tenacious. He uses a brusque manner to repel the women. A woman named Miss Roach serves him fruit punch, and the reverend finds himself attracted to her. They go for a walk and she tries to kiss him, but he feels as though he's inside her mouth. She tells the other women the reverend is the one who got too forward. The reverend finds himself in a place with men in white coats.

Genesis and Catastrophe

A woman, Klara Hitler, has just given birth to a son. The woman and her husband are new in town, and she tells the doctor all her other children died, and this one is her fourth in the last four years. Her husband, Alois, and her have come to town for a fresh start. The woman tells the doctor about the two sons and one daughter she has already lost, and how she cannot bear to lose another. This son will be called Adolf, she tells the doctor. Alois comes into the room and looks at the baby, declaring it weaker than all the other children. However Klara says she has prayed to God that this child will live and asks God to be merciful to him.

Georgy Porgy and Genesis and Catastrophe Analysis

In Georgy Porgy, George has a very disturbing relationship with woman. He is very attracted to them, but cannot bear to be touched by them. His affliction stems from his mother's death, after she showed him a mother rabbit giving birth and eating her young. George is afraid his mother is going to eat him, and inadvertently causes her death. This fear is magnified when George is an adult, and the women from his church try to kiss him. He believes he has fallen in one of the women's mouth; however, it is made clear he is actually in a mental hospital after going crazy. The name of the story is a reference to the nursery rhyme, which goes, "Georgie Porgie, Puddin N' Pie, Kissed the



girls and made them cry." In *Genesis and Catastrophe*, Klara Hitler is hopeful that the child she has just given birth to will live, but is fearful because her three other children have died. The twist is that her son is Adolf Hitler, who eventually becomes the German dictator responsible for killing millions of Jews and others during World War II. The world would have been better if that child had died instead of the others; but that is the child that lives.



Pig and The Visitor

Pig and The Visitor Summary

Lexington's parents bring him home from the hospital and then go out to dinner. They come back and realize they don't have a key. They break in through the window, but cops pass by and shoot them dead, thinking they are robbers. The baby's Aunt Glosspan comes to claim him and takes Lexington to live with her. Aunt Glosspan is a vegetarian, and tells Lexington how other people eat dead animals. Lexington takes over cooking for them, creating wonderful vegetarian creations. He begins writing a cookbook. Aunt Glosspan dies, and Lexington is left alone. She leaves him a letter with directions to get his inheritance and work on his cookbook. His aunt's lawyer cheats him out of most of his inheritance, but he doesn't realize, being naive about money. He goes to a restaurant and tries pork, which he finds to taste wonderful. The waiter tells him it is made of pig, but could have been a bit of human, which they have also gotten from the butcher. Lexington goes to a packing house in the Bronx for a tour. Several other people are there. Finally they take Lexington in, and he is hooked on the line with the pigs and his throat is cut.

The Visitor

The narrator receives a case of books from his Uncle Oswald, who lived in France and is estranged from the rest of the family. Oswald has sent his nephew his private diaries after his death, but warns him against publishing them because the ladies mentioned in them would be angry. The family finds the diaries intriguing, reading about Oswald's adventures and the constant stream of women Oswald has had. Oswald could never stay with one woman, and his nose would flare, a great attraction to the ladies. He also collects spiders and walking sticks. The narrator finds one entry that might be saved for publication, the Sinai Desert Episode. Oswald has been in Cairo during that month, where he took up with a woman named Isabella, the mistress of a royal. He took her to the top of a pyramid to rendezvous, but the royal's thugs heard about it and came after him. He and Isabella flee down one side of the pyramid and escape in his car. Oswald goes to the Sinai Desert and checks into a hotel. He goes driving around.

Oswald stops for gas on the way home, and the attendant, who has a vicious disease, comes out to help him. The man checks under the hood, and comes back with a broken fan belt. Oswald believes he has cut it, but the man denies it. The man says he will call for a new one, but it won't be delivered until tomorrow. Oswald suspects the man has done this before. The man invites him to his home, but Oswald says he will sleep in the car. A man driving a Rolls-Royce stops by and asks Oswald if he needs help. The stranger, Aziz, asks him back to his house, where he lives with his wife and daughter. Oswald falls for the daughter, Diana, although the wife is also beautiful. Oswald is surprised neither makes arrangements for a tryst when they turn in for the night. A woman comes into his room at night and they make love, although he can't tell who it is.



The next morning, Aziz drives him back to his car and tells Oswald he actually has a second daughter who stays upstairs because she has leprosy. Oswald begins to panic.

Pig and The Visitor Analysis

Pig is a metaphorical tale, one that warns parents about not preparing their children for the dangers of the world. Lexington is sheltered by his aunt, who raises him as a vegetarian without giving him an accurate idea of what meat is and why others eat it. His aunt tells him that meat tastes disgusting and no respectable person eats it. Subsequently, when Lexington comes across meat and finds it delicious, he is ill-prepared to deal with the dangers of the packing-house. Lexington lives in a very naive world. His parents also show a naivety when they go out right after their son is born, showing they do not love him as much as they love their lifestyle. The cops also do not stop to consider why a young woman in evening-wear would be hanging out the window, they just assume the couple is robbing the place and shoot first. This shows that without learning and knowledge, people may be dooming themselves to heartache and possibly and early death.

In The Visitor, Oswald considers himself a ladies' man and expert adventurer. However, his treks often bring him in contact with people who have various diseases. When the man at the gas station tells him his fan belt is broken, Oswald is horrified at the thought of staying anywhere near the diseased man. When the clean, rich man, Aziz, stops and offers Oswald a place to stay, he is thrilled. However, he repays his host with treachery by flirting with both his wife and daughter and hoping to sleep with one of them. When night comes, he believes one of the women have come to him and makes love to her. However, in the light of day, he is horrified to learn the woman could have been Aziz's other daughter, who has contracted leprosy. Oswald has been punished for his insatiable need to sleep with women; if he had controlled himself and sent the woman away, he would have been healthy. His fear of disease has finally caught up with him.



Claud's Dog: The Ratcatcher, Rummins, Mr. Hoddy, Mr. Feasey and Champion of the World

Claud's Dog: The Ratcatcher, Rummins, Mr. Hoddy, Mr. Feasey and Champion of the World Summary

The Ratcatcher

A ratcatcher comes to a gas station operated by Claud Cabbage. They talk about the best way to catch rats, and the ratcatcher says the best way is to hang paper bags of plaster of paris from the sewer ceilings above the water. The rats chew on the bag and dies when the powder expands. For Claud's needs, however, the rat catcher has poison for the hayrick across the road from their house. The first few days, he'll leave oats, until the rats are accustomed and then will leave the poison. However, the rats won't eat the poison, and Claud tells them they are smart rats. The ratman shows them how quickly a ferret will kill a rat. The ratman next ties a rat to the windshield wiper and bets Claud he can kill the ray without using his hands or feet. The rat man puts his face up to the rat and bites it, killing it. The ratman tells them rat's blood is used to make food, but Claud is disgusted and doesn't want to hear anymore. The ratman leaves. (Rummins) Claud and his dog Jackie go out for a walk. They stop at Mr. Rummins' farm. They talk about the rats, and that the ratcatcher couldn't get rid of them all.

Rummins comes over to get rid of the hayrick, which had been made in June. His son, Bert, is cutting the bindings apart when his knife grinds on something. They built it with a man called Old Jimmy, who left while Claud and the narrator were away and only Rummins was there. Bert cuts a section of the hay away and sees what he has cut. Rummins, who seems to know what it was, climbs down the rick and goes through the gate as Bert starts to scream. (Mr. Hoddy) Claud goes out with Clarice, the daughter of Mr. Hoddy. She warns him her father will probably question him about his job, but Claud says his dog, Jackie, will be winning races and bringing in money. When they go inside, Mr. Hoddy asks Claud about business, but Claud doesn't want to talk about it because he and his friend Gordon plan to make money with greyhounds. He tells Mr. Hoddy they are going to start a maggot factory, and Hoddy finds this appalling. Claud says fishermen will use maggots for fishing.

Mr. Feasey

Claud Cabbage and Gordon look at Jackie and another greyhound that look exactly alike. Gordon has been trying to guess which is which everyday as a test, but mostly gets it wrong. They are worried because a man named Mr. Feasey, who runs the track, is an expert at spotting ringers; however, there have never been two dogs who look more alike. The ringer dog is slow, and has been entered in several races as The Black



Panther. They plan to take Jackie to the race today, since Jackie is very fast. Claud explains why using a ringer is the best method, since trying to have Jackie stop sooner in a race would break the dog's spirit. When they get to the track, Mr. Feasey doesn't want to enter the dog because it always loses, but Claud convinces him with a bet. Feasey examines the dog, and believes it's the same one. While Claud takes the dog to the track, Gordon bets lots of money on the dog. Jackie wins, but the bookies won't honor the bet. Gordon calls them thieves, but they just laugh at him.

Champion of the World

Claud Cabbage and Gordon are working at the gas station, preparing raisins between customers. They are planning to take them that night with them on a poaching trip. This is the first time Claud is showing Gordon how to do it, pushing horsehair through raisins. When the pheasants eat them, they can't move and they can just pick them up, Claud tells Gordon. They could also use the raisins as bait on fishing line, or by placing raisins in a paper cup, because the birds won't move with the cup over their head. Gordon says they could also use sleeping pills to put inside the raisins, drugging the pheasants. Claud likes this idea and wants to get more pills so they can steal the pheasants before Mr. Hazel's shooting party. They take the drugged raisins and spread them around, then wait until nightfall to get the pheasants. They get 120 birds, which they take back in a taxi. They take the pheasants to Bessie Organ's house, who smuggles most of them over in her baby's carriage. However, the pheasants wake up from the drug and fly out of the carriage, landing all over the filling station and exposing their identities to Mr. Hazel.

Claud's Dog: The Ratcatcher, Rummins, Mr. Hoddy, Mr. Feasey and Champion of the World Analysis

Claud's Dog is a collection of five short stories that revolve around the same man, Claud Cabbage. Claud and his friend Gordon run a filling station, and they have several adventures. First, they invite a ratcatcher to clean up the rats from a hayrick across the street. While interested in the ratcatcher's stories at first, they find themselves disgusted when the ratman uses his teeth to kill a rat. Next, they held Mr. Rummins clear up the hayrick, but are disturbed to learn a dead body has been put inside it by Mr. Rummins. In Mr. Hoddy, Claud gets back at his future father-in-law. Fed up with Mr. Hoddy asking him what he's going to do with his life, Claud invents a maggot farm and tries to convince Mr. Hoddy that it is a viable idea. The next two stories deal with their attempts to scam and get rich, but neither work. Their attempts to switch dogs at the greyhound track are met with contempt when their plan is so obvious and the bookies refuse to honor the bets. In Champion of the World, the men attempt to poach pheasants by drugging raisins. Unfortunately, their plan is ruined when they lower the dosages too much and the pheasants escape because the dosage was too low in each raisin. Claud and Gordon have again failed to circumvent the law.



The Great Switcheroo, The Boy who talked with Animals, and The Hitchhiker

The Great Switcheroo, The Boy who talked with Animals, and The Hitchhiker Summary

Vic Hammond and his wife, Mary, are at a party at their next-door neighbors home, Jerry and Samantha Rainbow. Vic is looking at the women at the party, especially Samantha, who he would like to have sex with. Vic tells Jerry about a story he heard where two men managed to have each other's wives without the wives knowing by switching beds late at night, after their wives were asleep. The men had to look alike, just like Jerry and Vic do, and have the exact same sexual routine. After the party, Jerry comes to Vic and tells him they should try to switch so they can have sex with each other's wives. They plan for the next few weeks, drawing up specifics to help them complete the switch without their parents figuring it out. That Saturday, they go out to dinner with their wives. They do the switch that night, and everything goes well. The next morning, Mary talks to Vic alone and tells him up until now, she hated sex, but after last night it was so wonderful, she's sure everything will be great between them from now on.

The Boy who talked with Animals

At a hotel in the West Indies, a group of fishermen catch a turtle. The hotel guests gather around the turtle, which is turned upside down on the beach. The turtle has been sold to the hotel, and the guests are excited because they will get to eat the turtle. A young boy named David runs up to the turtle, telling the men to stop hurting it. The guests are afraid that he will get bitten, but David hugs the turtle and tells the people to let him go. David's father buys the turtle from the hotel, and the men let it go. However, the next day, David is missing, and some fishermen report they saw a boy riding a turtle. Several months later, a group of people on a yacht see the boy and his turtle on an island, but the boy and turtle flee and won't let the people save him.

The Hitchhiker

The narrator is driving his new BMW when he stops to pick up a hitchhiker. They talk about the new car, and the hitchhiker eggs the narrator to drive faster and faster. However, a cop soon pulls them over. Taking their information, the cop tells the narrator he has a good chance of going to jail and losing his license. Once they are back on the road, the hitchhiker reveals he lied to the cop about his information. He tells the narrator he is a professional pickpocket, or fingersmith, and demonstrates this by taking several items off the narrator, like his shoelace and watch. He tells him he has also stolen the notebooks that the cop wrote down their information in, so they are in the clear. The narrator is ecstatic.



The Great Switcheroo, The Boy who talked with Animals, and The Hitchhiker Analysis

The Great Switcheroo is another example of a 'twist' story, where the person doing the scheming gets what he deserves in the end. In this case, it's Vic Hammond, who feeds a fake story to his friend in order to get his friend to agree to secretly swap wives. However, Vic gets what's coming to him when he realizes his wife, Mary, enjoyed Jerry's style of love making and has never enjoyed sex with Vic. Vic can't say anything, because this would expose his plan and that he has slept with Samantha, Jerry's wife. It's an example of the common caution, 'Be careful what you wish for.'

In The Boy who talked with Animals, David is a compassionate, caring boy who loves animals and can't bear to see the giant turtle hurt. His compassion goes too far when he leaves his family to live with the turtle. His love for animals is apparently greater than that for his family, and he is content to spend the rest of his life living in the wild with the turtle as his companion. In The Hitchhiker, the hitchhiker repays the narrator for picking him up by ensuring he doesn't go to jail after being pulled over for speeding. The narrator is amazed at the hitchhiker's talents and grateful for his assistance, even it is the hitchhiker's fault he was speeding in the first place.



The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar and The Bookseller

The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar and The Bookseller Summary

Henry Sugar is a wealthy playboy who loves to gamble and increase his fortune, but is not afraid to cheat to do it. One day, at a friend's home, he finds a notebook describing the life of Imhrat Khan, who could see without his eyes. Khan is with a traveling show, and he comes to the hospital and asks Dr. John Cartwright and other doctors to bandage his eyes so he can't see. Cartwright and another doctor use dough, bandages, and scarfs, but Khan can still see as he leaves the hospital, even riding a bike. Dr. Cartwright goes to see Khan's show and is amazed how he throws knives, juggles, and threads a needle, all while blindfolded. He talks with Khan after the show, and Khan tells him how he learned his power from a yogi and can see through things as long as part of his body can see the object. The key is meditation, which leads to absolute concentration. Yogis caution people from doing this for profit, but Khan ignores this. Cartwright thinks he is a medical miracle, and goes the next day to see the show but it is closed. He learns Khan has died. Henry is not deterred by Khan's death, and decides to use his techniques to learn how to read the reverse side of cards. After over three years, he succeeds and goes to a casino to try out his power.

Henry Sugar wins at both blackjack and roulette, but when he wakes up the next morning he finds he is not fulfilled by his ability to take the casinos for all the money they have. He takes the money he has won and throws it out the window, but the crowd that forms soon attracts a cop's attentions. The cop yells at Henry, telling him he should use his money for good, like funding an orphanage. Henry likes this idea and goes to John Winston, his accountant, who moves to Switzerland to help Henry funnel the money. Henry travels to casinos around the world, sending the money back to John, who sets up orphanages in several countries. One night, he takes a lot of money from the same casinos owned by the mob in Las Vegas. When he goes to check out of the hotel, the busboy tells him there are mob men waiting for him to come down. The busboy, for a price, agrees to be tied up and Henry puts on the busboy outfit, leaving the hotel unnoticed. Henry then employs the services of Max Engleman, a Hollywood make-up artist. Max travels with Henry until Henry's death at an elderly age, having set up twenty orphanages throughout the world in the countries he visited.

The Bookseller

Mr. William Buggage is the owner of a bookshop in London. He and his assistant, Miss Muriel Tottle, have come up with a grand scheme to bilk money from widows. They hide this money in bank accounts throughout London, splitting it up so no one realizes how much money they have taken in. Mr. Buggage thinks they should take a break and the two plan a vacation to Marrakesh, where they relax and have sex. While there, Mr.



Buggage says they should work on some letters so they are ready to send when they get back to London. Their scheme is now revealed. Miss Tottle searches the obituaries for notable men who have died, and the two send a letter asking for payment on books the man had bought. The book titles are pornographic, leading the widow to pay up quick before word gets out. The two have never been suspected, and even see two of their former 'clients' on holiday. When they return to London, they are surprised by a young man who comes in the shop and asks for Mr. Buggage. On verifying who he is, the young man leaves and comes in with his mother, who has received one of their bills and asks if they truly have the right person. Mr. Buggage and Miss Tottle insist they do, but fall silent when she asks if they print books in Braille. Two policemen come in and arrest Mr. Buggage and Miss Tottle.

The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar and The Bookseller Analysis

The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar is an uplifting tale of a man who realizes the pitfalls of being greedy and only caring about oneself, and who turns his talents towards helping others. At the beginning of the story, Henry Sugar is a lazy, contemptible man, who only cares about how much money he has and how he can get more. It is these mixed up priorities that lead him to the discovery of Dr. Carwright's account of Imhrat Khan's yoga talents. He first plans to use the power of meditation and absolute concentration for nefarious means, planning to take the casinos for all the money they have. However, after his first attempt, he realizes his quest to learn how to see without his eyes has changed his priorities. Now, Henry finds himself with a new desire: to help others. This leads him to begin visiting casinos all over the world to raise money for new, well-run orphanages. Henry has seen the light, and unlike Khan, who used the yoga powers only for his own gain, Henry lives to an old age and manages to have a fulfilling and giving life.

In The Bookseller, another tale of deserved punishment, Mr. William Buggage and Miss Muriel Tottle are despicable people who make thousands by cheating old women out of money after their husbands' deaths. Mr. Buggage is completely confident they have found all possible pitfalls in their plan, and that there is no way any of the women could figure out the letters they sent are fakes. Miss Tottle is equally repugnant and only has eyes for her employer, Mr. Buggage. Both do not feel any guilt for what they are doing, especially for swindling widows in their time of grief. However, the two get their just desserts when they send a letter to the widow of a blind man. The woman calls the police and cleverly traps the two when they insist the letter is legitimate by telling them her husband was blind and could not have possibly benefited from the books.



Characters

Henry Sugar appears in The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar

Henry Sugar is a character in "The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar." He is a wealthy playboy who does no work and is only interested in gambling. He prefers to cheat when he gambles to ensure he wins and can add to his fortune. While at a friend's house, he discovers a notebook that reveals the secret to seeing without using your eyes through the yogi power of absolute concentration. Henry reads the book and begins meditation, hoping to use his power to cheat in casinos. He trains for several years until he is able to read through a playing card in just four seconds. However, once he obtains this power he finds that money does not have the same value. He plans to travel around the world, taking money from casinos and using it to set up orphanages with his friend and accountant, John Winston. His plan works for several years until the mob catches up with him. After a narrow escape, Henry meets a make-up artist, Max Engleman, who is able to disguise him and help him continue his quest. Henry eventually dies as an elderly man after setting up 20 orphanages in all of the countries he visited, his life's work complete.

Imhrat Khan appears in The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar

Imhrat Khan is a character in "The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar." He is an Indian who leaves home at a young age, following a magician. He soon learns all the tricks are just illusions, but practices with the magician until he hears about yogis, who can truly do magic with meditation. Khan leaves to find a yogi, following a disciple to learn where a yogi lives. He observes the yogi floating above the ground and asks him to be his master. The yogi refuses and kicks Khan out, but after several days relents and tells Khan the name of a yogi he can train with. Khan does this and obtains yogi powers using absolute concentration. He meditates on a certain object, such as his brother's face, while staring at the black of a candle, not letting his mind wander to anything else. He does this until he manages to see objects without using his eyes, and proves his talent by walking over coals. Khan joins a traveling performance and becomes the headliner. When they arrive in Bombay, he goes to the hospital and has Dr. John Cartwright and a colleague bandage his eyes before a performance. After the show, he tells Dr. Cartwright how he obtained yogi powers, but Khan later dies in his sleep.



John F. Cartwright appears in The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar

John F. Cartwright is a character in "The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar." He is a doctor in Bombay, India, who covers up Imhrat Kahn as a publicity stunt before Khan's person. He then goes to see Khan's show, after which Khan tells him how he came by the ability to see without his eyes.

John Winston appears in The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar

John Winston is a character in "The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar." He is Henry's accountant and helps Henry set up orphanages with the money he wins at casinos.

Max Engleman appears in The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar

Max Engleman is a character in "The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar." He is a make-up artist who travels with Henry Sugar to disguise him from casino owners who may want to hurt Henry after Henry uses his powers at their casino.

Stag appears in Madame Rosette

Stag is a character in "Madame Rosette." He is a fighter pilot during World War II. He and Stuffy are vacationing in Cairo when he introduces Stuffy to Madame Rosette's brothel. Stag later helps Stuffy raid the brothel and free the girls working there.

Stuffy appears in Madame Rosette

Stuffy is a character in "Madame Rosette." He is a fighter pilot during World War II. He and Stag are vacationing in Cairo when Stag introduces him to Madame Rosette's brothel. Stuffy calls the brothel so Madame Rosette can hook him up with a girl he saw working at a sunglasses stand. However, he later changes his mind and has Stuffy call it off. He decides to raid the brothel with Stuffy and William and they free all the girls working there.

William appears in Madame Rosette

William is a character in "Madame Rosette." He is a fighter pilot during World War II. Stag and Stuffy meet him in a bar and get him to come with them as they free the prostitutes under Madame Rosette's control.



Madame Rosette appears in Madame Rosette

Madame Rosette is the title character in "Madame Rosette." She runs a brothel in Cairo, blackmailing girls into working for her as whores. Stag, Stuff, and William invade the brothel and lock Madame Rosette in her office, freeing all the girls working for her.

The Englishman appears in Man from the South

The Englishman is a character in "Man from the South." He is the narrator of the story and is not mentioned by name. He witnesses the bet between the South American and the American sailor.

The South American appears in Man from the South

The South American is a character in "Man from the South." He is not mentioned by name. He bets the American sailor that his lighter will not light ten times in a row. He demands the sailor's finger if he loses, but if the sailor wins, he will give him his car. He is revealed to be mentally ill and has made this bet with several people.

The American sailor appears in Man from the South

The American sailor is a character in "Man from the South." He is not mentioned by name. The South American bets him that his lighter will not light ten times in a row. The sailor must give up his finger if he loses, but will win the South American's car. The bet is never completed, since a woman reveals the South American is mentally ill and has nothing to pay off the bet.

Klausner appears in The Sound Machine

Klausner is a character in "The Sound Machine." He is a possibly mentally unstable man who invents a machine that amplifies sound. He hears the sounds of flowers and trees screaming when they are picked or cut, and is deeply disturbed by this newfound knowledge.

Scott appears in The Sound Machine

Scott is a doctor and a character in "The Sound Machine." He is acquainted with Klausner, and may even be his doctor since Klausner sometimes seems unstable. Klausner shows him his sound machine.



Mrs. Saunders appears in The Sound Machine

Mrs. Saunders is a character in "The Sound Machine." She is wary of Klausner, but definitely thinks he's crazy after he tries to convince her that plants can scream.

Richard Pratt appears in Taste

Richard Pratt is a character in "Taste." He is a wine gourmet. During a dinner at Mike Schofield's home, Mike bets his daughter's hand in marriage against Richard Pratt's two homes; Pratt must guess the year and vineyard a certain wine is from. Pratt draws the process out but guesses correctly. He is revealed as a cheater when the Schofield's maid gives him back his glasses that he had left in the room where the wine was stored.

Louise appears in Taste

Louise is a character in "Taste." She is the daughter of Mike Schofield. Her father bets her hand in marriage against Richard Pratt's two homes; Pratt must guess the year and vineyard a certain wine is from.

William Botibol appears in Dip in the Pool

William Botibol is a character in "Dip in the Pool." He tries to fix the nightly auction, where passengers guess how many miles they will travel that day, while on a cruise ship. He falls overboard to slow the ship down, but no one rescues him.

Drioli appears in Skin

Drioli is a character in "Skin." He was friends with Chaim Soutine, a famous painter, and has a work of Soutine tattooed on his back. He shows the painting to several men in a gallery, and one of the men convinces Drioli to come back to his hotel and show his back to tourists. However, he kills Drioli and sells the painting.

Chaim Soutine appears in Skin

Chaim Soutine or the Kalmuck is a character in "Skin." He is a famous painter who tattoos a portrait of Drioli's wife on his friend Drioli's back.

Josie appears in Skin

Josie is a character in "Skin." She is the wife of Drioli. The painter Chaim Soutine tattoos a picture of her on Drioli's back.



The stranger appears in Skin

The stranger is a character in "Skin." He tempts Drioli with food and the possibility of a life of luxury to get Drioli to come with him. However, he kills Drioli to get the painting off his back and sell it.

Louisa appears in Edward the Conqueror

Louisa is a character in "Edward the Conqueror." She finds a cat who she believes is the composer, Franz Liszt reincarnated.

Edward appears in Edward the Conqueror

Edward is a character in "Edward the Conqueror." He gets sick of his wife's belief that a cat is the composed, Franz Liszt, reincarnated. He possibly throws the cat in a bonfire to get rid of it.

Franz Liszt appears in Edward the Conqueror

Franz Liszt is a composer and a character in "Edward the Conqueror." His spirit is ostensibly reincarnated into a cat.

Mary Maloney appears in Lamb to the Slaughter

Mary Maloney is a character in "Lamb to the Slaughter." Pregnant with their first child, she bludgeons her husband, Patrick, to death with a leg of lamb after he tells her he has been cheating on her. She then cooks the lamb and feeds to the policeman investigating her husband's death.

Patrick Maloney appears in Lamb to the Slaughter

Patrick Maloney is a character in "Lamb to the Slaughter." He tells his wife, Mary, that he has been cheating on her, and she bludgeons her husband to death with a leg of lamb.

William Perkins appears in Galloping Foxley

William Perkins is the narrator of "Galloping Foxley." He enjoys a regular commute to work until a man disturbs his routine. Perkins believes the man is a boy named Foxley, who had tormented him while in school, but he learns he is incorrect when he confronts the man.



Bruce Foxley appears in Galloping Foxley

Bruce Foxley is a character in "Galloping Foxley." He used to torment William Perkins when they were both boys at school.

Jocelyn Fortescue appears in Galloping Foxley

Jocelyn Fortescue is a character in "Galloping Foxley." He begins commuting to work the same time as William Perkins, but is not the boy, Foxley, that used to torment William Perkins.

Mrs. Foster appears in The Way Up to Heaven

Mrs. Foster is a character in "The Way Up to Heaven." She is neurotic about being on time for things, although her husband likes to torment her by forcing her to be late. When her husband gets stuck in the elevator at their home, Mrs. Foster leaves him there while she goes on her six-week trip.

Mr. Foster appears in The Way Up to Heaven

Mr. Foster is a character in "The Way Up to Heaven." He likes to torment her wife by forcing her to be late even though she is neurotic about being on time. He gets stuck in an elevator, and Mrs. Foster leaves him alone.

Mr. Boggis appears in Parson's Pleasure

Mr. Boggis is a character in "Parson's Pleasure." He pretends to be a reverend to get people to sell him their antique furniture more cheaply. However, he gets his comeuppance when some men he swindles chop up the cabinet he bought from them so it fits in their car.

Billy Weaver appears in The Landlady

Billy Weaver is a character in "The Landlady." He looks for a boarding house and stays in a small place, run by an elderly woman.

The landlady appears in The Landlady

The landlady is a character in "The Landlady." She goes unnamed, but runs a bed and breakfast where Billy Weaver comes to stay. She apparently kills and stuffs the people who come to stay with her.



William Pearl appears in William and Mary

William Pearl is a character in "William and Mary." He is a strict husband to Mary. He dies and leaves his body to the science department of Oxford. Dr. Landy detaches William's brain from his body.

Mary Pearl appears in William and Mary

Mary Pearl is a character in "William and Mary." She has been browbeaten by her husband, William, for years. However, when his brain and one eye is removed and kept alive after his death, she enjoys the thought of her husband having to watch her enjoying all the things he has forbidden her to do.

Landy appears in William and Mary

Landy is a character in "William and Mary." He removes William's brain and one eye after William's death and keeps them alive.

Mrs. Bixby appears in Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat

Mrs. Bixby is a character in "Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat." She is cheating on her husband with the Colonel, who gives her a mink coat after their last tryst. She gives the coat to a pawn shop, pretending she found the ticket on the seat. However, her husband gets the better of her by giving the coat to his secretary, Miss Pulteney, and only giving his wife a cheap mink neckwrap.

Mr. Bixby appears in Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat

Mr. Bixby is a character in "Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat." He takes a ticket his wife supposedly found on the train and finds the mink coat she received from the Colonel. He gives the coat to his secretary, Miss Pulteney, who he is apparently having an affair with.

The Colonel appears in Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat

The Colonel is a character in "Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat." He is Mrs. Bixby's lover.



Miss Pulteney appears in Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat

Miss Pulteney is a character in "Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat." She is apparently having an affair with Dr. Bixby.

Albert Taylor appears in Royal Jelly

Albert Taylor is a character in "Royal Jelly." The husband of Mabel, he takes royal jelly, a powerful substance made by bees, to cure his impotency and his daughter's hunger. Soon, Albert begins to resemble a bee.

Mabel Taylor appears in Royal Jelly

Mabel Taylor is a character in "Royal Jelly." She is shocked to her learn her husband, Albert, has used royal jelly on himself and their daughter to further their development.

The Reverend appears in Georgy Porgy

The Reverend is a character in "Georgy Porgy." He is afraid of women, stemming from his mother's death and a horrible experience watching a rabbit eat its own young. The reverend finds himself attracted to a Miss Roach, but she tries to kiss him and he goes crazy, ending up in a mental hospital.

Miss Roach appears in Georgy Porgy

Miss Roach is a character in "Georgy Porgy." She tries to come on the the reverend, but when she goes to kiss him, he panics.

Klara Hitler appears in Genesis and Catastrophe

Klara Hitler is a character in "Genesis and Catastrophe." Klara gives birth to Adolf Hitler, her fourth child, and is afraid she will lose him because her other three children have died. She is based on the real-life mother of Adolf Hitler, the German dictator who perpetrated the Holocaust and World War II.

Alois Hitler appears in Genesis and Catastrophe

Alois Hitler is a character in "Genesis and Catastrophe." He is the father of Adolf Hitler, based on his real-life father. Adolf Hitler is the German dictator who perpetrated the Holocaust and World War II.



Adolf Hitler appears in Genesis and Catastrophe

Adolf Hitler is a character in "Genesis and Catastrophe." He is the real-life German dictator who perpetrated the Holocaust and World War II.

Lexington appears in Pig

Lexington is a character in "Pig." He is raised by his Aunt Glosspan to be a vegetarian. He is killed during a tour of a slaughterhouse as a pig would be.

Aunt Glosspan appears in Pig

Aunt Glosspan is a character in "Pig." She raises Lexington to be a vegetarian and a cook.

The narrator appears in The Visitor

The narrator is a character in "The Visitor." He is the nephew of Uncle Oswald and receives Oswald's diaries after his death.

Uncle Oswald appears in The Visitor

Uncle Oswald is a character in "The Visitor." He is an adventurer and an ardent lover of the ladies. During a trip to Sinai, he stays with a man called Aziz. A woman comes into him and the night and they make love, but it turns out to be Aziz's daughter who has leprosy.

Aziz appears in The Visitor

Aziz is a character in "The Visitor." He invites Oswald to stay in his house for the night after Oswald's car breaks down. He has two daughters, one who has leprosy.

Claud Cabbage appears in Claud's Dog

Claud Cabbage is a character in "Claud's Dog," a series of stories that revolve around him. He dates Clarice, and he and his friend Gordon have a plan to make money by switching greyhounds in a swindle.



The Ratcatcher appears in Claud's Dog

The Ratcatcher is a character in "Claud's Dog." He kills rats for a living, showing and telling Claud how he does it.

Jackie appears in Claud's Dog

Jackie is a character in "Claud's Dog." He is Claud's greyhound and races under the name, "The Black Panther."

Mr. Rummins appears in Claud's Dog

Mr. Rummins is a character in "Claud's Dog." He made a hayrick with his son Bert and Claud, and somehow the body of Old Jimmy ended up inside.

Old Jimmy appears in Claud's Dog

Old Jimmy is a character in "Claud's Dog." He disappeared after Mr. Rummins made the hayrick near Claud's house. His body is later found in the hayrick.

Bert appears in Claud's Dog

Bert is a character in "Claud's Dog." He is Mr. Rummins' son and finds Old Jimmy's body in the hayrick.

Clarice appears in Claud's Dog

Clarice is a character in "Claud's Dog." She is the daughter of Mr. Hoddy and dates Claud Cabbage.

Mr. Hoddy appears in Claud's Dog

Mr. Hoddy is a character in "Claud's Dog." He is the father of Clarice and doesn't think much of Claud Cabbage.

Mr. Feasey appears in Claud's Dog

Mr. Feasey is a character in "Claud's Dog." He is the owner of the racing track and is good at spotting ringers.



Mr. Victor Hazel appears in Claud's Dog

Mr. Victor Hazel is a character in "Claud's Dog." He has an annual pheasant shooting party, which Claud Cabbage and Gordon try to wreck.

Bessie Organ appears in Claud's Dog

Bessie Organ is a character in "Claud's Dog." She helps Claud Cabbage smuggle pheasants he has poached.

Vic Hammond appears in The Great Switcheroo

Vic Hammond is a character in "The Great Switcheroo." His wife is Mary. He engineers a plan to switch with Jerry Rainbow, his neighbor, so they can have sex with each other's wives. Vic has sex with Samantha, but when he gets back to Mary, he learns she prefers sex with Jerry to sex with him.

Mary Hammond appears in The Great Switcheroo

Mary Hammond is a character in "The Great Switcheroo." She is the wife of Vic, who switches with his neighbor Jerry so Jerry can have sex with Mary. However, Mary prefers Jerry's style of lovemaking.

Jerry Rainbow appears in The Great Switcheroo

Jerry Rainbow is a character in "The Great Switcheroo." He is married to Samantha, but switches with Vic so he can have sex with Vic's wife, Mary.

Samantha Rainbow appears in The Great Switcheroo

Samantha Rainbow is a character in "The Great Switcheroo." She is Jerry's wife. Vic switches with Jerry so he can have sex with Samantha.

David appears in The Boy who talked with Animals

David is a character in the "The Boy who talked with Animals." He saves the giant turtle from being killed by the fishermen who caught it. He later escapes with the turtle, living with it on a desert island.



The Narrator appears in The Hitchhiker

The narrator is a character in "The Hitchhiker." He goes unnamed, but is driving his new BMW when he picks up the Hitchhiker. He gets pulled over by a cop, but the hitchhiker manages to steal the cop's notebooks, putting both men in the clear.

The Hitchhiker appears in The Hitchhiker

The hitchhiker is a character in "The Hitchhiker." He calls himself a fingersmith, and showcases his talent for the narrator. He also steals the notebook from a cop who pulls the narrator over.

The Cop appears in The Hitchhiker

The cop is a character in "The Hitchhiker." He gives the narrator a ticket for speeding and berates him.

Mr. William Buggage appears in The Bookseller

Mr. William Buggage is a character in "The Bookseller." He and his assistant, Miss Tottle, have been swindling the widows of prominent men for years by sending letters requesting payment for books with questionable, erotic titles. They use the money to finance vacations to exotic locales, but are foiled when they accidentally request payment from the widow of a blind man.

Miss Muriel Tottle appears in The Bookseller

Miss Muriel Tottle is a character in "The Bookseller." She and her boss, Mr. William Buggage, have been swindling the widows of prominent men for years by sending letters requesting payment for books with questionable, erotic titles. They use the money to finance vacations to exotic locales, but are foiled when they accidentally request payment from the widow of a blind man.



Objects/Places

England appears in Several stories

England is the setting for many of the stories in The Best of Roald Dahl.

Cairo appears in Madame Rosette

Cairo is a city in Egypt. Stag and Stuffey vacation there after fighting in Libya during World World II in "Madame Rosette."

Jamaica appears in Man from the South

Jamaica is where the bet in the story, "Man from the South," takes place. The Englishman meets the South American and the American men who make a bet over a lighter.

The Sound Machine appears in The Sound Machine

The sound machine, in the story titled the same, is a machine that amplifies sounds, allowing humans to hear sounds normally inaudible, such as the screaming of flowers when they are picked.

The Cruise Ship appears in Dip in the Pool

The cruise ship is the scene of the action in the story, "Dip in the Pool."

Leg of Lamb appears in Lamb to the Slaughter

The leg of lamb is the murder weapon in the story, "Lamb to the Slaughter." May Maloney uses it to kill her husband, Patrick, and later feeds it to the cops while they are searching the house for the murder weapon.

The Chippendale Commode appears in Parson's Pleasure

The Chippendale Commode is a famous, rare piece of furniture featured in "Parson's Pleasure." Mr. Boggis tries to trick some hillbillies into selling it to him cheaply, but the hillbillies end up chopping it up to help him transport it.



Bed and Breakfast appears in The Landlady

A bed and breakfast is a type of hotel featured in the story, "The Landlady."

Oxford College appears in William and Mary

Oxford is a college in England, where William and Landy teach in the story, "William and Mary."

The Colonel's Coat appears in Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat

The Colonel's coat is a mink coat that Mrs. Bixby's lover, the Colonel, gives her as a parting gift when he breaks off their affair in "Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's coat."

Royal Jelly appears in Royal Jelly

Royal Jelly is made by bees and given to their larvae to help them develop. Albert Taylor takes it himself and gives it to his daughter in "Royal Jelly."

The Sinai Desert Episode appears in The Visitor

The Sinai Desert Episode is an entry in Uncle Oswald's diary in the story, "The Visitor."

Hayrick appears in Claud's Dog

The hayrick is a pile of hay featured in "Claud's Dog." Old Jimmy's body is found in it by Bert Rummins.

Giant Turtle appears in The Boy who talked with Animals

The giant turtle is in the story, "The Boy who talked with Animals." David rescues the giant turtle from the men at the hotel who want to kill it.

Yogi appears in The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar

A yogi is a religious man who, through meditation, can obtain absolute concentration, which can help him perform strange feats such as lifting his body from the ground and seeing objects with his eyes closed.



Themes

Empowerment of Women

Throughout several of the short stories, women who are tormented by the men in their lives gain the upper hand without punishment. In *Lamb to the Slaughter*, Mary Maloney kills her husband who was going to leave her, and cleverly gets rid of the murder weapon by giving it to the cops to eat. Mary, the wife in *William and Mary*, also gets revenge when her husband is rendered still alive but powerless to stop her from enjoying all the things he had forbidden while he was in his body. In *The Way up to Heaven*, Mrs. Foster gets revenge on her husband who always makes her late when she leaves him trapped in the elevator. Women are also the voice of reason in several stories.

In *Man from the South*, the woman gets all her items from the South American, even though it costs her several fingers, and stops the American sailor from making the bet with him. In *Skin*, Drioli's wife, Josie, is calm and rational, brushes off the sentimentalities of Drioli and the painter Soutine. Even though many of these stories were written in the mid-twentieth century, a time when women were mostly considered subservient housewives, Dahl clearly views women as equals and gives them powerful roles in his stories. He allows women to be heroic and take charge of their own destiny, even rising above the men that repress them. From some of his stories, it seems the Dahl, raised in England, has a very forward view of feminism.

Justice

Many of the the stories in "The Best of Roald Dahl," revolve around a bad or deceitful person getting what they deserved. In at least five of the stories, that applies to a married couple. Mary Maloney in "Lamb to the Slaughter" and Mrs. Foster in "The Way to Heaven" both orchestrate their husband's deaths as a way to get back at the men for the torment they caused their wives. William, Mary's husband in "William and Mary," is kept alive as only a brain and an eye, but Mary gets her revenge because her husband now has to watch her enjoy all the things he had previously forbidden.

In "The Great Switcheroo" and "Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat," cheating spouses get their due when they find out their significant other may also enjoy sex with someone else better than with them. Those who try to cheat others of something also suffer, as evidenced in "Claud's Dog," "Taste," and "Dip in the Pool." In these stories, a character places some type of bet they are sure to win, but an unforeseen circumstance causes them to lose. Sometimes, the characters bring their punishment on themselves, such as in "The Booksellers" when they try to swindle money off the widow of a blind man for books he supposedly ordered. Whether it be money or a woman, Dahl's stories clearly have a theme of the swindler being punished when, even though he has won or figured out a way to win, something goes wrong. His stories give readers the moral that stealing

and cheating will not get people what they want in the end, and those who do those things will get exactly what they deserve.

Perversity

Several of the stories in "The Best of Roald Dahl" have a perverse or disturbing element to them. For example, in "Pig," a boy is slaughtered like a pig and will be used for meat; in "The Landlady," a new guest at the hotel is sure to end up dead and stuffed; in "Royal Jelly," a man obsessed with bees begins to turn himself and his daughter into one using royal jelly; and in "Georgy Porgy," a child has a complex against women for the rest of his life after seeing a rabbit eat her newborn young. Many of these elements are disturbing but thought-provoking, especially in the first story which serves as a warning against shielding children from society without preparing them for the bad things that are out there. The Landlady shows us that we should listen to our instincts when something seems off, even if it is a nice old lady. Dahl uses these elements to catch the reader's attention and illustrate a point. It is clear that Dahl's mind works in strange ways, and he lets this come through in his stories. It can be hard to believe the man who writes delightful children's books also writes stories like these. However, this goes to show how powerful his imagination is and how creative he can be.



Style

Point of View

The stories in the collection, "The Best of Roald Dahl," are usually told from a first person or third person point of view. Several of the stories have an unnamed narrator describing events from the first person point of view, such as "Taste," "The Hitchhiker," "Claud's Dog," and "Galloping Foxley." This technique gives the effect of a person telling us about events that have really happened to them, and giving the stories a ring of truth. It also allows the readers to get a better idea of what the narrator has experienced by allowing them to step into the story and see through his or her eyes. This technique is frequently used when there are just a few characters that all interact with the narrator, and the narrator can act as an impartial observer. Many of the other stories are told using the third-person point of view, especially the stories where one character gets revenge on another, or gets their own comeuppance. Some examples of this can be found in "Lamb to the Slaughter," "Dip in the Pool," or "Madame Rosette." However, these rules are not steadfast. By examining these stories, it is evident Dahl is a skilled writer and is able to use point of view appropriately for the context of each story and the theme of that story.

Setting

With only some exceptions, most of the stories in "The Best of Roald Dahl" take place in England, the country where Dahl lived most of his life from a young age. Time periods are usually not mentioned, but most stories can be assumed to take place in the present as far as the time they were written. It is the country he is most familiar with, and by setting his novels there, he gives a glimpse into the intricacies of English life throughout the twentieth century. Many of the stories take place in London, or in the English countryside surrounding the city. However, this setting is familiar enough to American readers that it is not significant, except the need to imagine the cars described are driving on the other side of the road. Some stories do take place in more exotic locales, such as "The Visitor," where most of the action happens in the Sinai desert, or Madame Rosette, which also takes place in Egypt. These settings are realistically described and reflect Dahl's knowledge of the world gained from his service in the military. Many of the stories also involve couples, and much of the action takes place in their homes. Throughout the collection, Dahl proves himself to be very capable of grounding his characters in a realistic time and place.

Language and Meaning

"The Best of Roald Dahl" is a collection of short stories, and the tone and language of each story varies depending on the subject matter. He uses simple, easy to understand English, with some words and objects that are common to other lands when the setting



is outside his usual setting of England. However, Dahl has an overall humorous tone throughout the stories as he sets up situations and characters that most people would never dream of. In several stories, the tone is dominantly humorous and perverse, especially in those stories like "Lamb to the Slaughter," "Dip in the Pool," and "The Great Switcheroo." In these selections, the twist at the end of the story may be morbid but also funny, such as when the police eat the murder weapon in the first story, or when Vic Hammond finds out his wife Mary's true feelings about sex with him in the last. Dahl also uses a more perverse tone for stories like "Pig," "Georgy Porgy," and "Skin," which involve events that would be deeply disturbing to most, such as a man getting killed like a pig in a slaughterhouse, a boy seeing a rabbit eat its own young, or a man killed for the priceless tattoo he has on his back. Dahl is not afraid to show people things they haven't seen, or haven't wanted to see, but using fast-paced and intriguing story-telling to move the story along and keep the reader involved.

Structure

"The Best of Roald Dahl" is a collection of short stories published by the author Roald Dahl throughout his career. The twenty-six stories contained in this "best of" collection are arranged chronologically from 1945 to 1986, four years before the author's death. Each of the stories is introduced with the title as well as the year each story had been published. Most of the stories range from ten to twenty pages, with the exception of The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar, which is about fifty pages. Also, one other story, Claud's Dog, is actually a mini-collection of five smaller stories all written involving the same characters. The stories in this collection were written over a short period of time, and are self-contained. Overall, the stories in this collection as a whole represent the best stories written by Roald Dahl over his illustrious career spanning several decades. Although frequently thought of as a children's writer, Dahl has written a lot of stories for adults such as these, which were mainly published in magazines ranging from The New Yorker to Playboy. By arranging these stories in chronological order, it allows the reader to observe how Dahl grows as a writer throughout his life, as well as identify common themes or techniques he uses.



Quotes

"So you can see that because there were no great pleasures while living in the desert, the small pleasures became great pleasures and the pleasures of children became the pleasures of grown men." Madame Rosette, pg. 4.

"Stuffy noticed that Stag was being polite. There was always trouble for somebody when he was like that." Madame Rosette, pg. 20.

" 'He hasn't anything left to bet with,' the woman said. 'He hasn't a thing in the world. Not a thing. As I matter of fact I myself won it all from him a long while ago. It took time, a lot of time, and it was hard work, but I won it all in the end.' She looked up at the boy and she smiled, a slow sad smile, and she came over and put out a hand to take the key from the table. I can see it now, that hand of hers; it had only one finger on it, and a thumb." Man from the South, pg. 39.

"Klausner sighed and clasped his hands tightly together. 'I believe,' he said, speaking more slowly now, 'that there is a whole world of sound about us all the time that we cannot hear. It is possible that up there in those high-pitched inaudible regions there is a new exciting music being made, with subtle harmonies and fierce grinding discords, a music so powerful that it would drive us mad if only our ears were tuned to hear the sound of it. There may be anything ...'" The Sound Machine, pg. 42.

" 'I don't want a little chat,' Pratt said. 'All I want is to see that label on that bottle.' He knew he was a winner now; he had the bearing, the quiet arrogance of a winner, and I could see that he was prepared to become thoroughly nasty if there was any trouble. 'What are you waiting for?' he said to Mike. 'Go on and turn it round.' " Taste, pg. 64.

"It wasn't more than a few weeks later that a picture by Soutine, of a woman's head, painted in an unusual manner, nicely framed and heavily varnished, turned up for sale in Buenos Aires. That — and the fact that there is no hotel in Cannes called Bristol — causes one to wonder a little, and pray for the old man's health, and to hope fervently that wherever he may be at this moment, there is a plump attractive girl to manicure the nails of his fingers, and a maid to bring him his breakfast in the mornings." Skin, pg. 90.

"The ears, which up to then had been pricked up straight, were gradually drawn back, the eyelids drooped, the head went over to one side, and at that moment Louisa could have sworn that the animal was actually appreciating the work." Edward the Conqueror, pg. 95.

"'That's a hell of a big club the guy must've used to hit poor Patrick,' one of them was saying. 'The guy said his skull was smashed all to pieces just like from a sledgehammer.' ... 'Personally, I think it's right here on the premises.' 'Probably right under our very noses. What do you think, Jack?' And in the other room, Mary Maloney began to giggle." Lamb to the Slaughter, pg. 116.



"He could become grave and charming for the aged, obsequious for the rich, sober for the godly, masterful for the weak, mischievous for the widow, arch and saucy for the spinster. He was well aware of his gift, using it shamelessly on every possible occasion; and often, at the end of a unusually good performance, it was as much as he could do to prevent himself from turning aside and taking a bow or two as the thundering applause of the audience went rolling through the theatre." Parson's Pleasure, pg. 143.

"I stuff all my little pets myself when they pass away." The Landlady, pg. 172.

"She was looking straight into it at the time, and right in the center of it she saw a tiny but brilliant flash of light, and the pupil contracted into a minute black pinpoint of absolute fury. At first she didn't move. She stood bending over the basin, holding the cigarette up to her mouth, watching the eye. Then, very slowly, deliberately, she put the cigarette between her lips and took a long suck." William and Mary, pg. 196.

"The baby was lying naked on the table, fat and white and comatose, like some gigantic grub that was approaching the end of its larval life and would soon emerge into the world complete with mandibles and wings." Royal Jelly, pg. 236.

"Her husband embraced her tenderly and told her that any woman who could produce such a beautiful child as Lexington deserved to go absolutely any place she wanted. But was she strong enough yet, he enquired, to start running around the city late at night? No, she said, she wasn't. But what the hell." Pig, pg. 266.

"It was Jackie all right. Don't move, I told myself. Don't move a muscle or an eyelid or a toe or a fingertip. Stand quite still and don't move. Watch him going. Come on Jackson, boy! No, don't shout. It's unlucky to shout. And don't move. Be all over in twenty seconds. Round the sharp bend now and coming up the hill and he must be fifteen or twenty lengths clear. Easy twenty lengths. Don't count the lengths, it's unlucky. And don't move. Don't move your head. Watch him out of your eye-corners. Watch that Jackson go! He's really laying down to it now up that hill. He's won it now! He can't lose it now..." Claud's Dog, pg. 374.

" 'What happened,' I said, 'was that these two randy sods cooked up a plan which made it possible for each of them to ravish the other's wife without the wives ever knowing it. If you can believe such a thing.' The Great Switcheroo, pg. 405.

"The tug-of-war pullers remained motionless, still holding the rope with the gigantic turtle on the end of it. Everyone stood silent and surprised, staring at the boy. They were all a bit off balance now. They had the slightly hangdog air of people who have been caught doing something that was not entirely honorable." The Boy who talked with Animals, pg. 430.

"All this Henry noticed. It was the first time in his life he looked with distaste upon this wealthy gambling-casino person. Up until now, he had always regarded them as companions, as members of the same group and class as himself. Tonight they seemed vulgar. Could it be, he wondered, that the yoga powers he had acquired over the last



three years had altered him just a little bit?" The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar, pg. 484.

"The woman stood very straight and still, and she was looking Mr. Buggage directly in the eyes. 'These curious books you list on your invoice,' she said. 'Do they print them in Braille?' " The Bookseller, pg. 520.



Topics for Discussion

In several of his short stories, Roald Dahl uses a first person narrator. Which stories is this technique used in and how is this effective? Does it make the reader feel more involved in the events that take place? Why or why not?

Dahl uses a lot of perverse imagery and elements in some of his stories. Does this intrigue or disgust the reader? Why or why not? How does he use these elements to illustrate morals or lessons?

Many characters throughout the collection get revenge on someone who has wronged them. Using examples, explain how this is achieved and how Dahl uses this to show right from wrong.

In several stories, Dahl pits women against men. How does Dahl view the women and men in his stories? What characteristics are predominant in each gender?

Dahl uses his stories to illustrate ethics and distinguish right from wrong. How do the characters in the stories try to circumvent the law or common morality? What punishments do they face for doing this? Is it ever right to do something wrong? Why or why not?

Several themes are consistent through several stories. Which characters in different stories have similar experiences or perform similar actions? Does this effect each character differently? Why or why not? What does this say about Dahl as a writer?

Dahl bases most of his stories in his home country of England. How does the setting enhance or detract from the stories? How does the setting and time period affect the character's personalities and actions?

Dahl frequently uses a twist ending in his stories. How is this used and does this type of ending surprise the reader? Why or why not? Is the twist ending still effective after it is so frequently used, or does the reader come to expect it? Why or why not? How does Dahl make each twist ending stand apart?