

James and the Giant Peach Study Guide

James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

James and the Giant Peach Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1- 4.....	4
Chapters 5 - 8.....	5
Chapters 9 - 12.....	6
Chapters 13 - 16.....	7
Chapters 17 - 20.....	8
Chapters 21 - 24.....	9
Chapters 24 - 27.....	10
Chapters 28 - 31.....	11
Chapters 32 - 35.....	12
Chapters 36 - 39.....	13
Characters.....	14
Objects/Places.....	16
Style.....	18
Quotes.....	19



Plot Summary

James and the Giant Peach is the story of a young boy who escapes an abusive home in a magical peach. Along the way, he makes new friends, and discovers the joys of freedom and friendship, which had previously been alien ideas to him.

At the opening of the novel, James is living with his two terrible aunts after an accident at the zoo claimed the lives of both his parents. Upon moving in with his aunts, James' life of abuse begins immediately. His aunts treat him terribly, forcing him to work all day long, denying him any friends or schooling, and calling him names. James is terribly surprised then, when he finds a mysterious old man hiding in the bushes. The man gives James a bag full of magic beans and warns him to be very careful with them as they are extremely powerful. While he is running back to his house, James trips and spills the beans in his Aunts' garden. The beans immediately burrow their way into the ground and produce a massive peach at the top of the peach tree. When no one is around, James sneaks up to the peach and finds a magical tunnel there. He climbs inside and is greeted by a host of giant insects, including a Grasshopper, a Ladybug, a Spider, and a Centipede. Through the course of their journey, these insects become James' closest friends.

After chewing through the vine that connects the peach to the tree, the travelers are off, rolling down the massive hill toward the sea. Once the travelers reach the sea, their troubles begin. First, the peach is attacked by a flock of hungry sharks. James uses his quick thinking to concoct a plan using the Earthworm as bait to lure seagulls close to the peach so he can lasso them for their flying power. When James has successfully ensnared 501 seagulls, the peach is lifted out of the water to the safety of the skies. The travelers' good luck does not last long, however, when Centipede is accidentally knocked off the side of the peach and James must jump overboard to find him again. Later, Centipede insults the frightening Cloud Men, who retaliate by pelting the travelers with homemade hailstones.

After their encounter with the Cloud Men, the travelers safely reach New York City where they land and are welcomed with a massive parade. Upon arriving in New York City, each of the travelers leads a life of wealth and success. Centipede becomes the Vice-President of a boot and shoe manufacturing company, Silkworm and Spider start a company weaving ropes for tightrope walkers, Grasshopper becomes a member of the New York Symphony, Glow-worm becomes the light inside the torch of the Statue of Liberty, and Ladybug marries the head of the fire department and lives happily ever after. But perhaps James has the brightest future of all: he moves into Central Park, having converted the giant peach pit into a makeshift home, and spent the rest of his days telling stories about his adventures to all the hundreds of visitors who flocked to his door each day. The boy who once had no friends at all now has all the friends and playmates in the world.



Chapters 1- 4

Chapters 1- 4 Summary and Analysis

When this section opens, the narrator recollects James' upbringing as a happy occasion until James was four years old. At this time, James' parents went to London and had a terrible accident: they were eaten by an angry rhinoceros that had escaped from the zoo. From that day on, James went to live with his two terrible aunts, Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker. The only belongings James was allowed to bring with her were his toothbrush and his pajamas.

From the beginning, James' aunts treated him very poorly, never calling him by his real name, but choosing instead to call him things like "you disgusting little beast" and "you filthy nuisance". They also beat James and worked him mercilessly. James was confined to the garden even though, from the top of the hill where his aunt's house stood, he could see miles of woods and ocean.

The rest of the story is told in present tense, three years after James first moved in with his aunts. One afternoon, while James is chopping wood for his aunts in the garden when he began to think about all the things other little boys his age might be doing. He turned to his aunts and begged them to take him, just for one day, to the seaside. In response, his aunts screamed that they would beat him if he didn't get back to work. James ran from the garden, dove into some bushes, covered his eyes, and began to cry.

While James is in the bushes, he is approached by a very old, very small man with a white paper bag filled with glowing green beans. The man claims that the beans are magical. He takes pity on James and gives him the beans, but warns him to be very careful with them as they are made of crocodile tongues boiled with the skull of a dead witch and the eyeball of a lizard. He tells James that once the beans are released, whatever they touch will receive the full magical power, so to be very careful with them.



Chapters 5 - 8

Chapters 5 - 8 Summary and Analysis

Anxious to try the old man's recipe for magic, James sprints back to the house, hoping to hide in the kitchen before his aunts notice he's back. In his haste, however, James trips over the root of the old peach tree in the back garden, and spills the beans everywhere in the dirt. James scrabbles to collect them, and is horrified when he sees that each of the thousands of little beans are burrowing their way into the soil, just slipping out from between his fingers. James is thoroughly depressed as he remembers the old man's words, "Whoever they first meet, be it bug, insect, animal, or tree, that will be the one who gets the full power of their magic!" James wonders what would happen if an earthworm or a centipede were to receive the magic. Would they know what to do with it? Before he gets his answer, James is spotted by his two aunts who threaten to lower him into the well for the night as punishment for running off.

Before the aunts can punish James, however, Aunt Sponge begins shouting that the peach tree, which is always bare and miserable, has a peach on the top branch. The aunts are elated and their mouths begin watering just thinking about that peach. They send James to the tree, warning him that he'll be terrible beaten if he eats the peach himself, to fetch it for them. But before James plucks the peach from its branch, there's another shriek from below. His aunts have realized that the peach is still growing! The peach swells from the size of a balloon to the size of a melon to the size of a small car.

The branch supporting it begins to bend, and finally, when the peach is as big as a house, it comes to rest, gently on the ground. Now, the aunts can barely contain themselves as they think of the money they'll make charging admission to see the giant peach. People come by the hundreds, clambering over each other to catch a glimpse of the magical peach. James, however, is locked in his bedroom, out of the way and without any food. He is only allowed out once the crowds have left for the day, and only to clean up the trash people have left behind.



Chapters 9 - 12

Chapters 9 - 12 Summary and Analysis

James stands, alone, in the garden in the middle of the night, positively trembling. He stares at the peach, which looks more mysterious than ever in the moonlight. Although he knows he should feel frightened alone in the dark, the hairs on the back of James' neck stand up for a different reason: he feels like something strange is about to happen, but he doesn't know what. All James knows is that the entire night seems alive with magic. James reaches up to stroke the peach - it feels soft, like the fur of a mouse. Suddenly, he sees a giant hole, near the ground, leading into peach.

Upon further inspection, James realizes that it is not a hole in the peach, but a tunnel. Feeling brave, James climbs in, despite the sticky wet flesh of the peach inside. He climbs higher and higher toward the center of the peach, stopping occasionally to take a large bite of the sweet fruit. When James reaches the pit of the peach, he finds a door there, and he swings it open.

When James enters the peach pit, he is greeted by a collection of voices, saying they've been waiting for him. When his eyes adjust to the light, James is horrified to realize that the voices aren't coming from people, but giant insects: an Old-Green-Grasshopper, a Spider, a giant Ladybug, a Centipede, an Earthworm, and a Silkworm. The insects all stare at James and comment on how hungry they're feeling. James can barely move, he is so terrified. Suddenly, the Ladybug breaks out into laughter, realizing James thinks they are going to eat him. They wouldn't hurt James, she says. In fact, they have been waiting for him all day. James, it seems, is their guest of honor.

Feeling safe, James begins helping the centipede remove his boots, which is quite a process for the insect to do on his own. While James helps Centipede with his boots, Centipede and Earthworm begin to quarrel over their roles in the garden. Centipede is proud of being a pest, Earthworm likes to consider herself a help, and Old-Green-Grasshopper considers himself to be a musician. Although he was initially afraid of the insects, James is overcome with happiness now as he remembers how good it feels to be in a room full of laughter.



Chapters 13 - 16

Chapters 13 - 16 Summary and Analysis

Miss Spider hurries to weave the beds after dinner. She is very concerned that everyone find their beds comfortable, and James is transfixed as she weaves each one individually, in the shape of each insect's body. Meanwhile, James continues to help Centipede with his many pairs of boots. Soon after, almost all the insects are asleep with the exception of the Centipede who shouts, repeatedly, to turn out the lights. James looks nervously around the room before questioning if he is meant to turn out the lights. As it turns out, the Glow-Worm has fallen asleep with her light on. James learns that Glow-worms are not worms at all, but simply lady fireflies without wings. When the Glow-worm finally wakes up, she sleepily greets James, turns out her light, and falls back to sleep.

When James wakes up the next morning, the entire peach is shaking, and he fears they are experiencing an earthquake. The Ladybug, however, informs him that they are preparing to leave the hill outside the Aunts' home for good. Centipede has climbed out of the peach and begun gnawing at where it meets the branch, severing it. Suddenly, the entire peach began to roll, slowly at first, but soon picking up steam. Meanwhile, the Aunts are out in the garden discussing how much money they would make that day, when they begin to scream. The peach is hurtling toward them down the hill. There is screaming, then a crunch, and then silence, as the peach rolls on down the hill toward the sea.

When the peach breaks out of the garden, it begins to pick up tremendous speed, and inside the peach, James and insects roll and flip and slam into each other. The peach continues to roll through town, flattening parked cars, sending frightened farm animals into a stampede, and crashing through buildings, even smashing a chocolate factory, much to the delight of the village children. Finally, the peach reached the end of the steep cliffs and fell down, down, down, with a massive splash into the sea and floated serenely away.



Chapters 17 - 20

Chapters 17 - 20 Summary and Analysis

When the peach first began rolling down the hill, James and the insects were overcome with giddiness and laughter, but now that the peach is picking up speed, the scene inside the pit is complete chaos as the insects tumble over each other, tangle in each others' legs, slamming into the ceiling, the beds, and all forty-two pairs of Centipede's boots. When the peach bumps over the two aunts, however, the insects stop their moaning long enough to cheer in victory before going back to shrieking and crying out in pain. When it finished, and the peach finally comes to rest, everyone disentangles themselves and tries to figure out where they are. Ladybug insists that they are bobbing up and down, but everyone else insists that she's still feeling funny from the tumble.

The insects decide to climb out of the peach to investigate their new surroundings. When they do, they find that they are floating along the sea. The insects are horrified, and absolutely terrified that they will now all die as none of them can swim. They begin shrieking again, lamenting the lives they never got to live, until James calmly states that there is no need for anyone to panic. The peach is, in fact, not sinking, but floating. Earthworm, however, is still convinced that they will die, perhaps not from drowning, but certainly from starvation as they are on the sea, with no where to find food. Again, the insects begin to panic and wail, and again, James calms them down by stating that they are surrounded by enough food to last them for weeks: the peach, of course! Everyone cheers and hugs James, who they now view as their savior. The insects all take big bites from the peach, and each revels in how lovely the peach tastes. Most of the insects have never tasted anything so juicy or sweet in their entire lives.

In the middle of their celebration, however, Centipede notices a "funny thin black thing" in the water, apparently swimming toward the peach. Soon, there are hundreds of them. Hundreds of sharks, they realize, swimming quickly toward their ship. Suddenly, one of the sharks opened its mouth and made a lunge toward the peach. The rest of the sharks followed suit and soon, it is like a feeding frenzy as the sharks bash themselves against the peach. The insects break into complete pandemonium and panic as they are positive they are about to be eaten - especially the Earthworm who has no bones, and resembles a fine salami. And then, James comes up with an idea that might save them all, but he needs string. Luckily for him, Silkworm and Spider can spin long threads of thick string quickly. James is elated. His plan might work. He tells the insects that he is going to lift the peach from the sea, away from the danger of the sharks. It will be difficult work, but he'll have the strength of a thousand seagulls to pull the peach into their air, like a giant balloon. The insects don't believe the plan will work. Why would seagulls agree to help insects like them? James explains that they will lure the seagulls down to the peach and hook loops of string around their necks, one-by-one, until he has enough to pull the peach to safety. But where will they find bait that interests the birds?



Chapters 21 - 24

Chapters 21 - 24 Summary and Analysis

When Earthworm hears the plan to engage the seagulls with the peach, he is horrified and sure that he is going to be pecked to death by the birds. James promises him that he won't let the seagulls touch him. The insects know that time is running out, the sea is churning with sharks that continue to hurl themselves at the peach. All the insects, except Earthworm, head down into the pit while Silkworm and Spider frantically spin. Earthworm hangs, one half above ground, looking juicy as a sausage to the seagulls, with the other half dangling into the peach. James hides just below the surface with a threaded loop in his hands. The first seagull approaches, he flies in so close, James can see the blackness in its eyes. Right before the seagull's beak pierces through Earthworm's flesh, James shouts for everyone to pull! Earthworm disappears into the hole, and James lunges out, wrapping the loop around the seagull's neck. The group continues this same process, over and over, until they have 500 seagulls looped to the peach. Finally, with the 501st seagull, they feel the peach beginning to rise out of the water. They know they need only one more seagull. And then, with the 502nd seagull, everyone rejoices as the peach floats, ever so slowly, out of the sea.

When they are safely in the air, Spider offers to climb over the side of the peach to see how much damage has been caused by the sharks and their feeding frenzy. At first, everyone is reluctant to let her jump overboard, but she quickly spins a silk ladder for herself and climbs over, despite the protests for her safety. When she finally climbs back up, everyone fears the worst, and are therefore shocked with Spider reports that there is almost no damage to the peach from the sharks. As it turns out, the sharks' heads are shaped in such a way that they couldn't quite get their teeth into the peach without their snouts getting in the way, even if they laid on their backs while biting. The peach erupts with cheers when they realize they are all safe. As they are cheering, they see a large ship floating below them in the sea and attempt to wave. On the ship, the captain stares in dismay at the giant peach flying through the air. When he tries to describe the large insects that he sees aboard the peach, the rest of his crew think he has been hitting the whiskey.

Back on the peach, the insects continue their celebration with a bit of music, played by Old-Green-Grasshopper. He plays his body as if it were a violin, and James has never heard such beautiful music. Old-Green-Grasshopper takes some time to explain the difference between his species of grasshopper with other species of grasshoppers and crickets, and they different ways that they all make music. Old-Green-Grasshopper is a short-horn grasshopper and thus is the only species of grasshopper that uses his legs like a violin bow instead of rubbing his wings together to make music. He also explains, much to James' surprise, that grasshoppers have their ears on each side of their abdomen, not the sides of their heads.



Chapters 24 - 27

Chapters 24 - 27 Summary and Analysis

In celebration of their escape, Grasshopper breaks into song, using his legs to play his body as though it were a violin. The music is positively beautiful and everyone stands up and cheers his performance. James learns that Grasshopper can play his music this way because he is a short horned grasshopper. He also learns that Grasshopper's ears are small slits in his tummy, not protruding from the side of his head like a human. The rest of the insects begin telling James all about themselves - like Earthworm who swallows soil, in one end out the other, for the benefit of farmers, and Ladybug who also helps farmers by gobbling up smaller, pesky insects. Ladybug has nine spots on her shell, which display the branch of family each bug belongs to.

When Spider begins telling her story, she begins to weep and explains that Spiders have such a bad reputation in the human world and that her poor father was just washed down the plughole of the bathtub the other day. To try to cheer Spider up, Centipede begins singing a crude song about Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker, when he dances a bit too close to the edge and tumbles off the peach. James calls for Silkworm to start spinning a rope and he jumps overboard to catch Centipede. Grasshopper begins to softly play the funeral march on his leg-violin, when suddenly, there are three sharp tugs to the rope. The insects pull with all their might and are delighted to find that both James and Centipede are okay.

The night grows dark and somewhat menacing on the peach. The travelers soon realize that the clouds have come to life. They are not stationary puddles of air, as is what is taught in school, but are tall, thin, wisp-like creatures. The acknowledgment of the Cloud Men unnerves most of the travelers who simply want to glide past, not encountering the Cloud Men. The Cloud Men are all standing in a group pulling threads of clouds and then shaping them into tiny white marbles. One of the insects realizes that the Cloud Men are making the hailstones, stone by stone. When Centipede hears this, he is outraged and begins shouting that the Cloud Men are imbeciles for making hailstones in the summertime. The Cloud Men are startled by the sudden, unexpected rant and spin around, hurling hailstones at the travelers. The travelers panic and try to get away from the onslaught of hail, but they are hit numerous times. They throw open the hatch of the peach and hurry down into the safety of the peach tunnel.



Chapters 28 - 31

Chapters 28 - 31 Summary and Analysis

When the travelers finally have the courage to emerge from the inside of the peach once again, they are horrified to see the Cloud Men are still there, this time panting the colors on a giant rainbow. The travelers all sit on the edge of the peach, admiring the rainbow's beauty, when they suddenly realize that they are headed straight for the rainbow and will certainly crash into it! With a tremendous thud, the peach smashes through the rainbow, breaking it into hundreds of little pieces. The enraged Cloud Men chase after the travelers on the peach and threaten to eat them. One of the Cloud Men manages to attach himself to the seagull ropes, and the insects are all paralyzed with fear. James orders Centipede into action and he begins chewing through the string attaching the peach to the seagull (and now the Cloud Man). In a few seconds, the rope snaps and the Cloud Man is sent up into the sky with the freed seagull. After seeing this, the rest of the Cloud Men leave the peach alone.

Somehow, in the midst of all the commotion, Centipede had a bucket of paint spilled on his body and now it is hardening, making it impossible for him to move his arms and legs. Seeing Centipede in this state reminds Spider of another traumatic story when she remembers Aunt Spiker and Aunt Sponge repainting their kitchen. Spider's aunt got stuck in the wet paint and it began to dry around her, making it impossible to move. Spider helped to keep her aunt alive for six months, bringing her food and water. But then, on the 26th of April, Aunt Sponge glanced up at the ceiling, saw the spider there, and smashed it with her mop.

In the middle of Spider's story, the travelers hear a voice in the distance shouting for someone to turn on the faucets! A few seconds later, the peach is hit with a deluge of water - not just raindrops, but a solid mass of water from the sky. The travelers shriek and shout and scabble for something to grab a hold of. The insects all scream that they are drowning, but the clever seagulls find a way of flying out of the dangerous downpour and into safety. In the process, all the paint that had begun to harden on Centipede's skin is washed clean. The insects are all exhausted, terrified, and ready to land again. In the distance, James sees that the horizon is becoming light, and knows that he and his new friends will soon be home.



Chapters 32 - 35

Chapters 32 - 35 Summary and Analysis

As daylight approaches, Centipede is sure that he sees land on the horizon. As the peach approaches, everyone sees that there is a vast city below them with tremendously tall buildings. They are sure they must have floated across the Atlantic Ocean and are now above a massive city somewhere in America. The prospect of being that far away from home is mind-boggling, almost impossible for anyone to believe. With excitement, the group begins to cut loose a few seagulls and float closer to earth. Soon, the travelers realize they are landing in New York City, in the very center of Manhattan. The people below are terrified that someone has sent over a massive bomb with the hopes of blowing up their whole city, so air raid sirens begin wailing and people run amok, trying to find a safe place to hide before the giant peach lands.

Back on the peach, the travelers are primping and preening, completely oblivious to the mayhem below. Suddenly, the peach begins to plummet toward the earth - the travelers have cut too many seagulls free and have now lost control of the peach! The travelers panic and begin saying their final goodbyes. Even James has no words of comfort. Below, the people on the streets of New York City scream and scramble, but know they do not have enough time to run to safety before they will be smashed into smithereens by what surely is a giant falling bomb.



Chapters 36 - 39

Chapters 36 - 39 Summary and Analysis

The travelers scream and pray and clutch onto each other as the peach plummets toward the earth. They are surprised, then, when they hear a giant squelch and realize that the peach has landed squarely on the top needle of the Empire State Building. They have survived their fall from the sky. Everyone who had been hiding in their houses and the underground shelters slowly begin to make their way back out into the streets and are amazed at what they see: a giant peach pierced by the pinnacle of the Empire State Building! When word spreads that there are living things on the peach, people speculate that they are aliens from outer space. The police and firemen who are called to scene faint with fear of what they might encounter aboard the flying saucer. It is only when James' head pops up from the peach that people begin to calm down. James calmly calls down to the people below and begs that no one be frightened. He says that the insects are some of the kindest creatures in the world, and to prove it, he sings a song about how much he loves each and every one of his new friends.

Five minutes later, the travelers climb down from the peach and are greeted with a flurry of handshakes and hugs. The mayor even calls for a parade to be held in honor of the new visitors. Men with cranes hoist the giant peach from the Empire State Building and transform it into a parade float. As the parade processes along, a little girl comes out from the crowd and begs James for just a bite of his glorious peach. James readily shares with the girl and soon children swarm around the peach from all angles begging for a bite of the fruity feast.

After the parade, every one of the travelers becomes rich and successful living in New York City. Centipede becomes the Vice-President of a boot and shoe manufacturing company, Silkworm and Spider start a company weaving ropes for tightrope walkers, Grasshopper becomes a member of the New York Symphony, Glow-worm becomes the light inside the torch of the Statue of Liberty, and Ladybug marries the head of the fire department and lives happily ever after. But perhaps James has the brightest future of all: he moves into Central Park, having converted the giant peach pit into a makeshift home, and spent the rest of his days telling stories about his adventures to all the hundreds of visitors who flocked to his door each day. The boy who once had no friends at all now has all the friends and playmates in the world.



Characters

James

Description

The Spider

The Spider is one of the insects James meets inside the Giant Peach. The Spider is very depressed for most of the novel as every memory brought up on the peach reminds her of one of her family members that was killed by an uncaring human. First, Spider remembers that a few days ago, her dear father was washed down the plughole of the bathtub when Aunt Spiker saw a disgusting spider in her bath. Later in the novel, Spider retells a heart wrenching story about her aunt who was crossing the ceiling of Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker's home after the ceiling had been repainted. Her feet got stuck in the rapidly drying paint, so she was stuck there for over six months. Spider and the rest of her family helped to keep their dear aunt alive by bringing her food and water, so they were terribly heart broken when Aunt Sponge looked up at the ceiling one day and saw another terrible spider there. She picked up her mop and smashed Spider's aunt to death then and there. Spider's message to James, and therefore to the reader, is that spiders are actually very useful as they eat many small nuisance insects, and that spiders are likely more afraid of humans than humans are of spiders. She also says that it is bad luck to kill a spider, and that she hopes human children will grow up realizing that.

Aunt Sponge

Aunt Sponge is one of James' nasty aunts that he is sent to live with after his parents are killed by the angry rhinoceros in London. Aunt Sponge is very short and fat, with small eyes, a sunken mouth, and a flabby face that look, to James, as though it has been boiled. She treats James very poorly, always shouting at him and beating him. She is eventually killed with James' giant peach rolls over her in its haste toward the sea.

Aunt Spiker

Aunt Spiker is one of James' nasty aunts that he is sent to live with after his parents are killed by the angry rhinoceros in London. She is very tall and thin, with a screeching voice, thin wet lips, and steel-rimmed glasses that she clips to the end of her bony nose. When Aunt Spiker speaks, little white flecks of spit fly from her mouth. She treats James very poorly, always shouting at him and beating him. She is eventually killed with James' giant peach rolls over her in its haste toward the sea.



The Man with the Magic Beans

The Man with the Magic Beans emerges from the bushes where James has run to hide from his aunts, and finds the young boy crying. He is a very small, very old man with a huge bald head and big black whiskers. He takes pity on James and gives him a white paper bag full of the magic beans, which later fertilize the giant peach James escapes from his aunt's house with.

The Grasshopper

The Grasshopper is one of the insects James meets inside of the Giant Peach. When James first sees the Grasshopper, he is terrified because the grasshopper is as large as a dog. As the novel progresses, James learns much about the Old-Green-Grasshopper, including the facts that his body is like a living violin, and that his ears are small slits in his belly.

Aunt Sponge

Aunt Sponge is one of James' terrible aunts. She is short and fat with small piggy eyes, a sunken mouth, and a white flabby face that looks as though it's been boiled. She treats James terribly while he is living with her, and is eventually killed when the giant peach rolls over her.

Aunt Spiker

Aunt Spiker is one of James' terrible aunts. She is tall, lean, and bony. She wears steel-rimmed glasses fixed onto her nose with a clip, has a screeching voice, and long wet narrow lips that saliva flecks from when she is excited. She treats James terribly while he is living with her and is eventually killed with the giant peach rolls over her.

The Old Man with the Magic Beans

The Old Man is the man who hides in James' bushes and presents him with the magic beans. He is described as wearing a crazy dark-green suit, having a huge bald head and a face covered with bristly black whiskers. He walks with a walking stick and has musty breath.



Objects/Places

Then Angry Rhinoceros

The Angry Rhinoceros escapes from the London zoo in the opening chapter of the novel and eats up James' parents while they are out sightseeing. Even though the troubles for James' parents end relatively soon, it was, after all, a very hungry rhinoceros, the death of his parents leads to a world of trouble for James who is then sent to live with his two nasty aunts.

The Magic Beans

The magic beans are made of crocodile tongues boiled with the skull of a dead witch and the eyeball of a lizard for twenty days. To that mixture is added the finger of a young monkey, the gizzard of a pig, the beak of a parrot, the juice of a porcupine, and three spoonfuls of sugar. The end result is tiny, luminous beans, no larger than grains of rice, that hold magic powers. James is given the magic beans by an old man in his garden, who warns James to be careful with them, but in his haste to run home, James trips and spills the beans which burrow their way into the ground.

The Giant Peach

The giant peach begins as just a regular peach until it is hit by the magic green beans that James accidentally drops on the peach tree roots. The peach then grows and grows, from the size of a balloon to the size of a melon, to the size of a car, and finally to the size of a house. The peach's skin is very beautiful, a rich buttery yellow with patches of pink and red.

The Sharks

The Sharks are the first animals that threaten the insects' safety on the giant peach. They appear first as thin black shadows in the sea, circling the peach, threatening to eat the fruit and its passengers.

The Seagulls

The seagulls are what James harnesses to hoist the peach out of the ocean.



The Cloud Men

The Cloud Men are tall, white, wisp-like creatures that live in the clouds and appear to be made of cotton wool and cotton candy. The Cloud Men have the unpleasant job of rolling threads of cloud into hailstones, even in the summer time. When they see the travelers gliding through the air in their Giant Peach, the Cloud Men attack the peach with hailstones, injuring some of the insects.

New York City

New York City is where James and the travelers land after floating across the Atlantic Ocean from England. This is also where James and the insects live for the rest of their lives.

Central Park

Central Park is where James moves the peach pit after the peach has been eaten. James transforms the peach pit into a makeshift house and memorial, which is where he lives for the rest of his life telling stories and making new friends.

The Atlantic Ocean

This is the ocean James and the rest of the travelers float over as they travel from England to New York City.

The South of England

The South of England is where James lived when he was staying with his Aunts Sponge and Spiker. Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker live in a "queer, ramshackle" house near the sea. The house is on a hill so high, James can see the sea from anywhere in the garden, but he has never been allowed to visit it. James can see for miles across the marvelous landscape of woods and fields, and on a clear day, can even see the house where he grew up.



Style

Point of View

Description

Setting

Description

Language and Meaning

Description

Structure

Description



Quotes

"Inside, James could see a mass of tiny green things that looked like little stones or crystals, each one about the size of a grain of rice. They were extraordinarily beautiful, and there was a strange brightness about them, a sort of luminous quality that made them glow and sparkle in a most wonderful way" (Page 11).

"Because if they do escape, then they will be working their magic upon somebody else instead of upon you! And that isn't what you want at all, is it, my dear? Whoever they first meet, be it bug, insect, animal, or tree, that will be the one who gets the full power of their magic!" (Page 13).

"'Something is about to happen,' he told himself. 'Something peculiar is about to happen at any moment.' He hadn't the faintest idea what it might be, but he could feel it in his bones that something was going to happen soon. He could feel it in the air around him ... in the sudden stillness that had fallen upon the garden" (Page 18).

"James decided that he rather like the Centipede. He was obviously a rascal, but what a change it was to hear somebody laughing once in a while. He had never heard Aunt Sponge or Aunt Spiker laughing aloud in all the time he had been with them" (Page 38).

"A strong current and a high wind had carried the peach so quickly away from the shore that already the land was out of sight. All around them lay the vast black ocean, deep and hungry" (Page 58).

"But the peach ... ah, yes ... the peach was a soft, stealthy traveller, making no noise at all as it floated along. And several times during that long silent night ride high up over the middle of the ocean in the moonlight, James and his friends saw things that no one had ever seen before" (Page 99).

"People who had not yet reached the underground shelters looked up and saw it coming, and they stopped running and stood there in a sort of stupor at what they thought was the biggest bomb in all the world falling out of the sky onto their heads" (Page 127).

"And James Henry Trotter, who once, if you remember, had been the saddest and loneliest boy that you could find, now had all the friends and playmates in the world" (Page 144).