

Roald Dahl



BIOGRAPHY

Birth – Born on September 13th 1916 in Llandaff, Wales to Norwegian Parents, Harald and Sofie

Childhood – Had four sisters, and two half-siblings. Dahl's sister and father died when he was just three years old. Earliest education was Llandaff Cathedral School. Then shifted to St. Peters, a British boarding school. Later transferred to Repton public school. Never really enjoyed school.

War & Adventure – Instead of attending university Dahl went on an expedition to Newfoundland. Worked in a shell company before joining the Royal Air Force as a fighter pilot. Crash landed on one of his first missions sustaining serious injuries. Later transferred to Washington as an assistant air attaché.

Writing Begins – While in Washington Dahl met with author C S Forrester who encouraged him to start writing. Dahl's writing career began from here with his first real publication, 'The Gremlins.' Began writing for an adult audience for the next 15 years.

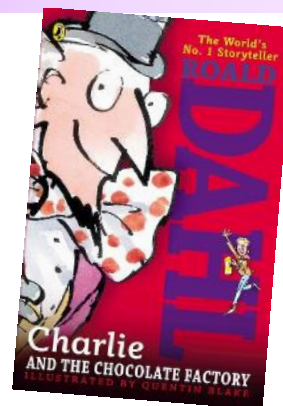
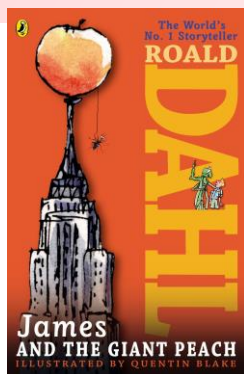
Husband & Father – Dahl was married twice. His first wife was actress Patricia Neal whom Dahl had five children with, Olivia, Theo, Tessa, Ophelia and Lucy. Sadly Olivia died at seven years old. Dahl and the family moved to Great Missenden in Buckinghamshire, England to 'Gypsy House'. Dahl was built a writing hut at his home where Dahl wrote his bestselling books. After three decades Dahl and Neal eventually divorced and soon after Dahl remarried Felicity 'Licky' Ann Crosland.

The Books – While at Gypsy House, Dahl established himself as a children's writer firstly producing 'James and the Giant Peach' and then went on to produce some of his award winning titles including, 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,' 'Fantastic Mr Fox,' 'The BFG,' 'The Witches' and 'Matilda.'

Death – In 1990 Dahl was diagnosed with a rare blood disorder and on November 23rd that year, Dahl died at the age of 74 in Oxford, England. He is remembered as one of the world's top selling authors

CHILDRENS BOOKS

- The Gremlins (1943)
- James and the Giant Peach (1961)
- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (1964)
- The Magic Finger (1966)
- Fantastic Mr Fox (1970)
- Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator (1972)
- Danny, the Champion of the World (1975)
- The Enormous Crocodile (1978)
- The Twits (1980)
- George's Marvellous Medicine (1981)
- The BFG (1982)
- Dirty Beasts (1983)
- The Witches (1983)
- Boy (1984)
- Revolting Rhymes (1984)
- The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me (1985)
- Going Solo (1986)
- The Complete Adventures of Charlie and Mr. Willy Wonka (1987)
- Matilda (1988)
- Esio Trot (1989)
- The Minpins (1991)



INFLUENCES

Roald Dahl's childhood experiences have played a significant role as the inspiration for his wonderful stories, as did his vivid imagination. Although Dahl had a seemingly pleasant adulthood, his childhood experiences were quite unfortunate with the passing of his sister and father and his unhappy years at boarding school. The book 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' came from Dahl's memories as a child when he attended Llandaff Cathedral School where his only enjoyable memories were the frequent trips to the sweets shop. They inspiration also came from his time at Repton School as it was close to Cadbury's chocolate factory, where Dahl and his friends got to regularly test the new variety of chocolate bars. Dahl's childhood love of sweets is exhibited in many of his books including 'The Witches' and 'The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me.' The book 'Matilda' and the idea of 'Miss Trunchball' came from the overpowering matrons and headmasters Dahl endured during his time at school. It was also created after Dahl's fascination with the eighteenth-century classic composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart who had begun composing music at the age of five. Dahl believed that often adults underestimated children and so Dahl created the brilliant 'Matilda,' who taught herself to read at the age of three.

Dahl's wartime exploits are exposed in his books too, particularly in the 'BFG' and 'The Gremlins' where the Royal Air Force plays a role in the books. Dahl's Norwegian heritage is also portrayed in a few of his stories, more noticeably in 'The Witches' in which the boy's Grandmother is Norwegian.

Apart from his childhood memories, Dahl also got the inspiration to write his children's books from the bedtime stories he would make up for his children of a night time. Dahl once stated that, "Had I not had children, I would not have written books for children, nor would I have been capable of doing so."

STYLES/THEMES

Dahl's writing style involves a great deal of humour to engage his readers. His Humour and sarcasm appeal to his intended audience as children love reading funny stories with nonsense words and absurd behaviour. He normally writes from a child's perspective, one that children can familiarise themselves with. Dahl's silly character names help the reader identify with the characters personality and traits and his overuses of descriptive adjectives also give the reader a great deal of information about the character and the situation. He often uses exaggeration to make the characters seem more evil or heroic. He believes that all good books need to have a mixture of nasty people you loathe and some nice people. That way the reader can thoroughly enjoy the 'baddies' get their comeuppance. Most of Dahl's bestselling books entail this combination. Dahl writes from a modern-day fairy tale world, particularly focusing on the magical world, one that excites young children and draws them in to explore. He likes to twist and invent words and play around with the sentence structure in an attempt to get words to sound exactly as they are written in an attempt to immerse the reader in the story. He uses poetry, similes, metaphors, alliteration and puns that entices the reader and adds to his writing. Personification is often used in Dahl's stories also, to transform characters, mainly animals, into human-like forms or vice-versa, with a mind of their own and where they can speak like real humans. Dahl also quite often portrays the image of children in books, 'better' than adults, giving children space for imagination into a world like this.

QUENTIN BLAKE

Blake started working with Dahl in 1976 and the first book he illustrated was 'The Enormous Crocodile' published in 1978. Dahl and Blake soon became firm friends, working together until Dahl's death in 1990. Quentin ended up illustrating all of Dahl's books except for 'The Minpins.' His favourite Roald Dahl book is 'The BFG.' Dahl quoted Blake to be 'The finest illustrator of children's books in the world today!'



MORE INFO: <http://www.roalddahl.com/>