



## The Best of Roald Dahl

*Roald Dahl*

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## **The Best of Roald Dahl** Roald Dahl

This collection brings together Dahl's finest work, illustrating his genius for the horrific and grotesque which is unparalleled.

"Dahl has the mastery of plot and characters possessed by great writers of the past, along with a wildness and wryness of his own. One of his trademarks is writing beautifully about the ugly, even the horrible."--*Los Angeles Times*

"An ingenious imagination, a fascination with odd and ordinary detail, and a lust for its thorough exploitation are the...strengths of Dahl's storytelling."--*New York Times Book Review*

## **The Best of Roald Dahl Details**

Date : Published 1990 by Vintage Books (first published 1978)

ISBN : 9780679729914

Author : Roald Dahl

Format : Paperback 520 pages

Genre : Fiction, Classics, Short Stories, Humor

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# From Reader Review The Best of Roald Dahl for online ebook

## Meg says

after reading this book I believe Roald Dahl could have been besties with Edgar Allen Poe

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## Susan says

This was the most suprising read I have had in a long while. Because I know Roald Dahl as a childrens author and loved all of the fantastical stories the twits, matilda and so on, I was pleasantly suprised to re-discover him as an adult. These tales of adult pleasure and fantasy really knocked my socks off! The last story I recall vividly as the last story in the Tatintino flick "Four Rooms"

I highly reccomend this light hearted read as a grest series of bedtime stories.

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## Steve says

I wish I could give this 4.5 stars. I hadn't read short stories in a long while, and was reminded of the unique joy of these little single-serving packages of fiction — particularly the first batch of these short stories. I have to say I particularly enjoyed reading these macabre stories full of sex, sin and death while simultaneously reading his more famous books to my children.

These stories are really about the final twist — which is often shocking and brilliant. Having said that, the lead-up to these twists gets overly long in many cases, particularly in the later stories (the book is organized chronologically). Still, the first half of this book is full of little gems — some of the best and most twisted short stories you could ever hope to read.

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## Praveen says

This book is collection of 20 stories of Roald Dahl. Longest Story is 'Claud's Dog' and Shortest Story is 'Dip in the pool'.

Here are some brief points, I wish to say for now, but I am emphatically going to talk about this book and his writing in greater detail later !

- His stories are very offbeat and of different styles.***
- This writer gave me goosebumps many times.***
- These stories lingered on my mind for long.***
- His stories are full of twists and turns.***
- I could not put it down in between.***
- Unexpected ends are common.***
- Language is very captivating.***
- Its exotic and enticing.***

*-It touched me.*

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### **Cheryl Sinclair says**

Needless to say, very quirky. Surprisingly, there are some WW II stories amongst the group.

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### **Jody says**

Roald Dahl was the quintessential story teller of all time. His prose cuts to the essential element of his characters and story. Not to mention that his subject matter is always amazingly unique and interesting. It's sad to think that there will never be another new Dahl story.

This passage particularly struck me from his story Georgy Porgy and I share, "I spend many hours each day playing with sentences. I regard each sentence as a little wheel, and my ambition lately has been to gather several hundred of them together at once and to fit them all end to end, with the cogs interlocking, like gears, but with each wheel a different size, each turning at a different speed. Now and again I try to put a really big one right next to a very small one in such a way that the big one, turning slowly, will make the small one spin so fast that it hums. Very tricky, that."

I especially love the stories 'The Way up to Heaven' and 'Skin'.

If you haven't already, you must read this book!

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### **Hannah Garden says**

Hooray! Hooray for the whole old damn old world! I keep wreaking havoc and then having to suffer for it but OH MAN. There's stuff out there I can't even get close to with my magical fuck-up powers and ROALD DAHL IS OBV ONE OF THEM. Good on you, sir. You are making everything better all the time.

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### **Arcadia says**

eggcellent

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## Alex says

The first three quarters of this short story collection were awesome. Dahl is gleefully wicked and fun to read. The last third I couldn't quite make it through. The later stories seemed less subtle, more forced. I knew reading them that something awful was probably coming, but instead of making me want to know what it was, they just made me squirm. The first part is well worth the purchase though.

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## Agnes says

Why I decided to read this book

This book provides a variety of short stories that are categorised as the 'best of Roald Dahl', and Roald Dahl has written such amazing books such as 'Matilda' and 'The Twits'. Roald Dahl was a big part of my childhood, personally, and many other children so I was instantly drawn to this book. The 3 short stories I chose to read from this anthology is 'Lamb to the slaughter', 'The way up to heaven' and 'The Landlady'. I chose these stories because they had intriguing and mysterious titles that drew me to reading it. I personally am very fond of thrillers and horror stories, so all these three texts were very captivating in the sense that they provided a fascinating ending.

Which category on the Bingo Board this book completes:

THREE poems or short stories from ONE anthology

This category allows us to read a variety of texts written by one author to understand how they write; their style/structure, the purpose of their texts etc. Roald Dahl has written these short stories very cleverly as they are under-dramatised yet very powerful. These 3 short stories were very interesting as they had my attention throughout the whole story and almost gave you chills whenever you read the last page. So, when I was reading the last page of my third short story I expected to be stunned at the end, and no surprises, I was.

My favourite quote from this book (and why)

(Lamb to the slaughter): "Whoever done it, they're not going to be carrying a thing like that around with them longer than they need... Personally, I think it's right here on the premises... Probably right under our very noses. What do you think, Jack?"

This is my favourite quote(s) from this short story because Mrs Maloney (murderer of her husband, Patrick Maloney) acted very innocent as her husband's colleagues feasted on the very murder weapon they were enquiring about.

(The Landlady) : "I stuff all my little pets myself when they pass away. Will you have another cup of tea?"

This is my favourite quote from this short story because it informs the reader about how peculiar the landlady is, we can sense that the landlady is a dreadful person. This quote gives hints to the reader on how her next victim (Mr. Billy Weaver) is going to be 'taken care of'.

(The way up to heaven) : "It is really extraordinary how in certain people a simple apprehension about a thing like catching a train can grow into a serious obsession." This is my favourite quote because it sums up Mrs. Foster's personality which is something that I can definitely relate to. But, the difference is that Mrs. Foster's 'obsession' leads her to leaving her husband in a broken elevator while she was going to Paris for 6 weeks. Being on time for her plane certainly meant more to Mrs. Foster than her laid back husband.

Something new I learned from this book is:

Overall, combining all three short stories, I learnt that you should not trust people based on your 30 seconds of a first impression because for all you know they could be a master mind killer. So, get to know people before really trusting them. This book provides various reasons as to why you should not trust strangers. Our parents usually tell us "don't talk to strangers" if you read these short stories, you will really understand why. I have also learned that sometimes in life we need to take a step back and relax because being overly paranoid can become 'obsessive'.

A character or setting in this book that was interesting to me (and why):

(Lamb to the slaughter): My favourite character is Mrs Maloney. She came across as a very intriguing character. Her personality is very peculiar in the beginning as she seemed obsessed with being the perfect housewife. A bit overly friendly as she hides behind her cunning murder scheme of killing her husband. She shows no remorse to her actions being the "vulnerable" wife she was at the time, they didn't suspect a thing.

(The landlady): My favourite character from this short story is the landlady herself. I find her the most interesting because of her personality; the way she composes herself even though she knows exactly what she is doing.

(The way up to heaven) : My favourite character in this short story is Mrs. Foster. She is 'overly obsessed' with being on time to the point where her eye starts to twitch in paranoia. Mr. Eugene Foster (Mrs. Foster's husband) is the complete opposite of his wife, he would take his time and would not care if he or his wife are late. So, because Mr. Foster feels he needs to be ignorant to his wife's paranoia of being late, she gets to the point where she cannot take any more. She leaves him in the broken elevator in their home, and heads off to paris for 6 weeks.

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## **Michael says**

Adult stories by Roald Dahl... as opposed to his kids stories that I might enjoy more as an adult than I did then. This is a great collection. Ashley, a friend of mine used to read these aloud when we were camping in Colorado. I have an amusing memory of a group of adults sitting around a fire listening to one. She said she was tired and could not finish the one she was on. And there was revolt- "No you have to!!!" -like a bunch of kids. heh heh. A must have.

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## **Beth says**

Though many probably associate Dahl with his children's books (James and the Giant Peach, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory), these very adult, often dark, short stories are a true delight. It's no wonder that Hitchcock used "A Dip in the Pool" for a "Hitchcock Presents" episode. Each story comes with an O'Henry-esque punch to it at the end that left me chuckling and/or surprised. I find these stories fun to read aloud during roadtrips - a refreshing break from music.

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?????. . . says

I came across this book when I was browsing casually through the shelves of the college library. It didn't strike me as an interesting one at first. I didn't recognize the author by name, but when I turned to the back cover, he was introduced as the creator of Charlie and the chocolate factory. I was rather sceptical about Roald Dahl and was a prejudist about his works. I thought they were mostly children's stories and wouldn't have anything that could interest me. But after 30minutes long search I finally settled for this book and a one by Feynman. Ah. . ! But I was wrong to the core. This is one of the most beautifully written set of short stories I have ever read. They are mysterious, thrilling, and have twists and turns that defy everything the story has started with. When I opened the goodreads page of the book, I wasn't surprised to see a rating of above 4. The book deserves it. And this experience literally shattered my prejudism about authors and books. A great reading experience. Must read.

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**Stephanie A. Higa says**

It's true that nearly all writing reveals a great deal about the person behind the words, but it's especially true in Roald Dahl's case because all his stories have more or less the same tone: classy, stylish, and gruesome. This includes his children's stories, which are known for being playful and funny. Yes, they definitely are, but they're also kind of disturbing from an adult perspective. (*James and the Giant Peach*: orphan trapped by abusive aunts finds an escape in an oversized fruit occupied six anthropomorphic insects. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*: nice poor kid wins a tour to a famous chocolate factory that employs green/orange workers who seem to have that "collective unconscious" thing going on, and is run by a maniac who concocts and executes special punishments--totally justified but also likely in violation of Department of Health standards--for the stupid, abominable children accompanying said nice kid on the tour. *The Twits*: an evil, disgusting married couple who abuse each other and the animals in their backyard get their comeuppance from the animals. *The Witches*: apparently there exist some women with malformed feet who prey on young children and transform them into mice.)

The stories in this volume are for adults, though, so they're not exactly the same as his children's offerings. Instead of wacky humor, Dahl gives us sleek twists. Instead of good little Charlie Bucket, he gives us three-dimensional nightmares, like glutton Augustus Gloop, all grown up, and Willy Wonka, if he hadn't dedicated his life to chocolate. (Willy Wonka IS a psychopath, okay. Don't listen to the movies.) With the exception of "The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar" (which, along with "The Hitchhiker," was deemed appropriate for the children's collection *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar and Six More*) and "William and Mary," these stories are all realistic. That is: they're realistic in the sense that they could happen, but only with the help of unusually deranged and creative people. As in good science fiction, Dahl makes the highly improbable seem highly possible. His characters are out of this world, but their thoughts and actions adhere to a very human logic. That's what makes them fascinating and believable (although not what I'd call sympathetic).

Roald Dahl is a damn good writer. That clearly comes out in his character development, but even more so in his plots. He's a master storyteller. He doesn't rely on frills and backflips to get you to like him; he just *is*. His endings are surprising and unpredictable, but they also flow naturally from the actions leading up to them. His plots are excellent, with just the right amount of pacing and no excess showy nonsense. Dahl's stories read as if he's lived each of them himself, or at the very least thought them through a hundred times

over. It's almost disturbing. (You know, come to think of it, Roald Dahl probably was Uncle Oswald with the brains of Willy Wonka. Just look at photos of him.)

My only beef with this volume is the chunk of "Claud's Dog" stories near the end. These were so boring that I kept looking for the catch. Are they told backwards? Is there some huge reveal about Gordon at the end? Why is Claud's dog hardly even present for most of these stories? Alas, nothing.

Highlights:

"Lamb to the Slaughter"

"Genesis and Catastrophe"

"The Visitor"

"The Great Switcheroo"

"The Hitchhiker" (so damn good I remembered it almost in its entirety from childhood)

"The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar" (thought this was lame as a kid, but I was wrong)

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## Paul says

There is no darker, funnier writer than Roald Dahl. His children's stories were the original series of unfortunate events. (Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, James and the Giant Peach, etc.) In the 60's, Alfred Hitchcock had a television series, Alfred Hitchcock presents, in which he used many of the stories found in this anthology. Also, one of his stories was made into a vignette in the movie Four Rooms. (Tarantino's contribution)

Dahl is as creepy in his descriptions as any "horror" writer to date. There is an uneasy churning in the stomach of the reader upon finishing stories like Pig, The Rat Catcher, and the Bookseller. Like a brilliant comedian that holds you for ten minutes until a great punchline, Dahl's punch is straight to your gut.

My personal favorite stories are The Visitor and The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar. The journey is worth the shock.

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## Jayanth says

I will be updating this review after each story I read in this collection. I haven't read Roald Dahl's work except for Matilda which I loved. I will hide major spoilers but I cannot review the stories without talking on some important things that others might consider as spoilers. So you are warned, spoiler-allergic people!

### 1. Madame Rosetta [Rating: 2.5/5]

This story was *just okay*. It is about a couple of military pilots who finally get to take some time off in Cairo, Egypt and they plan to relax by drinking all night. But one thing leads to another and they go off on a small adventure that sorta ends with (view spoiler).

(view spoiler) There is also a very interesting conversation these characters have with a few local Egyptians which I think is a very good example of how humans in general instinctively stereotype others who have views/beliefs/preferences different from their own and cannot quite find the logic or reason that they believe others see which makes them hold their weird/outlandish views/beliefs/preferences in question.



## **2. Man From The South** [Rating: 5/5]

I loved this short story. It was a breeze to read. It's a 10 page thriller of sorts, just that all the tension is built up on a very stupid, silly premise. And I love that.

## **3. The Sound Machine** [Rating: 5/5]

Absolutely amazing! It's a little sci-fi-esque story. The ramifications of the discovery made in the story will be unfathomable if it happened in real life. This is a story for (view spoiler).

## **4. Taste** [Rating: 3.5/5]

Another short about how men make stupid bets. This is in a way similar to the 3rd story.

## **5. Dip In The Pool** [Rating: 5/5]

Hahaha!! This was funny, very well written. What a foolish man Mr. Botibol is. Hahahahaa!!

## **6. Skin** [Rating: 5/5]

What could possibly go wrong in getting a tattoo of your wife's face on your back, from neck to waist, by a young painter who is struggling to make a living? I didn't know tattooing existed even at the time of World War 1(or is it just fiction?). I loved the story and the ending.

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## **bookish says**

this was more of a "4 1/2 stars" kind of book, but Dahl is so darned entertaining that i have no problem rounding up. while the final few stories were a bit of a disappointment, they were only a let down because the great majority of these stories are compulsively readable and incredibly satisfying. dahl was a writer who clearly loved telling a good story, and when you read this collection there's no escaping the feeling that dahl had immense fun when wrote these stories. that delight is infectious. it has the power to move just about any one who enjoys reading fiction. this collection also serves as a fascinating study in the evolution of a writer. dahl's craft and perspective grows and shifts over the course of the collection such that the writer who penned the first story is in many ways not the one who penned the last. as i've said before, if you think you don't like short stories, try to reading some dahl. if he can't make a convert out of you, probably no one can. highly recommended.

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## **Guillermo Galvan says**

Every story was good, except one. That's not bad considering in most short story collections there are usually several examples one could wipe their arse with. Not the case here. Dahl shows that he can be a twisted bastard. Just look at the shit-eating grin on the cover. If he can put dick flavored candy in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (snozzberries are dicks), he must definitely have a high degree of smart-assery going inside his head. Enjoy!

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## **Lori says**

This may be the best collection of short stories I've ever read. It's undoubtably the most twisted. (And trust me. I read twisted.)

I've always been a huge fan of Dahl's kids' books. It's not a big leap, I suppose, to imagine Charlie all grown up and sick with chocolate power. And the climactic scene of Danny, the Champion of the World, is here nearly in its entirety. (I need to go back and see which came first. I'm guessing this one.)

As masterful as Dahl is with novels, he's perfected the short story as an art form. Even though you know the twist is coming ... and you're waiting ... it always catches you off guard and leaves you hanging, laughing, wincing as you turn the page and dive into the next. He's at once subtle and over the top. It's a remarkable balancing act.

The stories are arranged chronologically, and I did for a bit think that Dahl either hated women or at least thought they were more capable of deviousness than men. As it continues, though, his male characters get in on the fun.

My faves: The Visitor, The Great Switcheroo, Parson's Pleasure, Royal Jelly, Lamb to the Slaughter and William and Mary.

Finding a new author is like falling in love. Finding a new branch of an old one? Falling in love with an old friend. It's even better.

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## **Anirud Thyagarajan says**

A set of stories with fascinating, yet twisted endings. It's hard to think that the same person has written a lot of innocent fiction like the BFG, Matilda, and all the kids' stories!

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