

The BFG

By Roald Dahl

Grades 4-6

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Nat Reed is a retired teacher living in Southern Ontario, Canada. He has written a number of magazine articles and short stories, as well as the children's novel *Thunderbird Gold* (Journey Forth Books).

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Synopsis

The BFG is the story of a little orphan girl, Sophie, who late one night witnesses a giant outside her orphanage blowing something into the windows of houses on her street. Realizing he has been seen, the giant reaches into Sophie's bedroom and snatches her, carrying her far away to his cave where he plans to hold her captive forever. It turns out that this Big Friendly Giant has been blowing dreams into the bedrooms of children all over the world.

The nine other giants living in this faraway land, however, are not so benevolent. In fact they are positively horrid, venturing out in the dark of night to gobble up boys and girls all over the world. When Sophie discovers that these gruesome creatures have left the very next night to eat several boys and girls in England, she and the BFG decide to plead their case to the Queen of England herself. To convince the queen they mix up a dream for her royal highness, so she will be convinced that their story is indeed true.

Gaining an audience with the queen, Sophie and the BFG's story is quickly confirmed by the newspapers and the queen's military men. The BFG and Sophie then lead an expedition back to the country of the giants to capture the nine cannibals and put them away forever.

Author Biography

Roald Dahl is one of the world's most successful and popular writers of novels for young readers. He is the author of other classics such as **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**, **Danny the Champion of the World**, and **James and the Giant Peach**. **The BFG** is another story told by this master storyteller. Shortly before his death in 1990, the top five selling children's books in Great Britain were all authored by Dahl.

Roald Dahl was born in Llandaff, Wales, in 1916 to Norwegian immigrants. He was the only boy and the third child of five in the family. Despite the death of his father when he was only four, Roald claimed his childhood was happy and eventful. Although he excelled at sports he was not a good student and didn't enjoy his early school days. During World War II he flew for the Royal Air Force and was badly injured when he crashed his fighter plane during a dangerous mission.

Dahl married the actress **Patricia Neal** in 1953. They had five children together but were divorced thirty years later. Although quite a successful short story writer (with several featured on television), he wrote his first children's book in 1961 – **James and the Giant Peach**. This was followed by several best-sellers, including **The BFG** (1982). **The BFG** was also made into an animated film in 1989.

Roald died in November 1990 at the age of 74 of a rare blood disease. In Great Britain the anniversary of Dahl's birthday on September 13 has recently become widely celebrated as **Roald Dahl Day**.



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Before you read:

- Chapter 1: The Witching Hour
- Chapter 2: Who?
- Chapter 3: The Snatch

Why do you think things often seem more frightening in the middle of the night?

Think of at least one disadvantage and one advantage to living in an orphanage.



Vocabulary

resist	snatch	whisked
dormitory	crouched	hesitate
lavatory	definite	sprint
spurt	glimpse	absolutely

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

1. Sophie and the other orphans slept in a _____.
2. There was _____ no way I was going to give him my new bike.
3. She seemed to _____ when I asked if anything was wrong.
4. No one can _____ the spell of the great magician.
5. The bank president was most _____ when expressing his views.
6. John decided to go to the _____ in the middle of the night.
7. Somehow he got a _____ of energy just before crossing the finish line.
8. Sophie caught a _____ of the giant coming down the darkened street.



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9. She _____ by the open window and held her breath.
10. She was _____ away in the middle of the night.
11. When he saw the finish line approaching, he began to _____ toward it.
12. He was so desperately hungry he tried to _____ the apple from the other boy's hand.

Questions ???

1. What is the **setting** of the first chapter? (Remember the setting of a story consists of the time and place.)

2. How do we know from the story that when the scene opens, it is very late at night?

3. What is the **witching hour**?

4. What would happen to Sophie if she was caught out of bed after lights-out?

5. What was unusual about the way the town looked when Sophie leaned out the window?

6. What caused Sophie to freeze as she looked further down the street?
