

## ROALD DAHL • CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

## ROALD DAHL (1916-1990)

Roald Dahl is one of the most popular author of **ingenious**, irreverent children's books. Following his graduation from Repton, a **renowned** British public school, in 1932, Dahl **avoided** a university education and joined an expedition to Newfoundland. He worked from 1937 to 1939 in Tanzania, but he enlisted in the Royal Air Force (RAF) when World War II broke out.

Dahl's first book, *The Gremlins* (1943), was written for Walt Disney, but was largely unsuccessful. His service in the RAF influenced his first story collection, *Over to You: Ten Stories of Flyers and Flying* (1946), a series of military tales that was warmly received by critics but did not sell well. He achieved best-seller status with *Someone like You* (1953), a collection of macabre stories for adults, which was followed by *Kiss, Kiss* (1959), which focused on **stormy** romantic relationships.

Dahl then turned primarily to writing the children's books that would give him **lasting** fame. Unlike most other books aimed at a young audience, Dahl's works had a darkly comic nature, frequently including **gruesome** violence and death. His villains were often malevolent adults who **imperiled** precocious and noble child protagonists.

*James and the Giant Peach* (1961), written for his own children, was a popular success, as was *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964), which was made into the film *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971). His other works for young readers include *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (1970), *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator* (1972), *The Enormous Crocodile* (1978), *The BFG* (1982), and *The Witches* (1983). Many of his books were adapted into films and had great success, even though Dahl came under some criticism during his career, in particular because his stories often involve children **wreaking revenge on** evil adults. In any case, this has not stopped the ongoing popularity of his books.



R. Dahl

## ABOUT THE BOOK

## Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Mr Willy Wonka, the eccentric owner of the greatest chocolate factory in the world, has decided to open the doors of his factory to five lucky children and their parents. In order to choose who will enter the factory, Mr Wonka **devises** a plan to hide five golden tickets inside the **wrappers** of his famous chocolate bars. The search for the five golden tickets is fast and furious. Augustus Gloop, a plump child whose only hobby is eating, unwraps the first ticket, for which his town organises a parade. Veruca Salt, an insufferable **brat**, receives the next ticket from her father, who had employed his entire factory of peanut **shellers** to unwrap chocolate bars until they found a ticket. Violet Beauregarde discovers the third ticket while taking a break from setting a world record in gum chewing. The fourth ticket goes to Mike Teavee, who, as his name implies, cares only about television.

Charlie Bucket, the unsuspecting hero of the book, **defies all odds** in claiming the fifth and final ticket. A poor but virtuous boy, Charlie lives in a **tiny** house with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bucket, and all four of his grandparents.

Once in the factory, whereas Charlie is grateful toward and respectful of Mr Wonka and his factory, the other four children succumb to their own character **flaws**. Accordingly, they are ejected from the factory in mysterious and painful fashions. Augustus Gloop falls into the hot chocolate river—while attempting to drink it—and is sucked up by one of the many pipes. Veruca Salt is determined to be a “bad nut” by **nut-judging** squirrels who throw her out with the trash. Violet Beauregarde impetuously **grabs** an experimental piece of gum and chews herself into a giant blueberry. She



is consequently removed from the factory. With the hope of being on his beloved television, Mike Teavee **shrinks** himself, and his father has to carry him out in his breast pocket.

When only Charlie remains, Willy Wonka turns to him and congratulates him on winning. The whole day has been another contest, the prize for which is the entire chocolate factory. Together they go to Charlie's house in the glass elevator and Willy Wonka takes the whole family back to the chocolate factory to live out the rest of their lives.

## TEXT

### The Great Gum Machine

*In this chapter the children and Willy Wonka are visiting the Inventing Room where there is a gigantic machine. When Mr Wonka presses a few buttons, the machine starts **rumbling**. After a long interval of rumbling and shaking and **whizzing**, a tiny drawer pops out of the machine. In the drawer is “a little grey strip”.*

Mr Wonka led the party over to a gigantic machine that stood in the very centre of the Inventing Room. It was a mountain of **gleaming** metal that towered high above the children and their parents. Out of the very top of it there **sprouted** hundreds and hundreds of thin glass tubes, and the glass tubes all **curled** downwards and came together in a **bunch** and **hung** suspended over an enormous round tub as big as a bath.

‘Here we go!’ cried Mr Wonka, and he pressed three different buttons on the side of the machine. A second later, a mighty rumbling sound came from inside it, and the whole machine began to shake most frighteningly, and steam began **hissing** out of it all over, and then suddenly the watchers noticed that **runny stuff** was pouring down the insides of all the hundreds of little glass tubes and **squirting** out into the great tub below. And in every single tube the runny stuff was of a different colour, so that all the colours of the rainbow (and many others as well) came **sloshing** and splashing into the tub. It was a lovely sight. And when the tub was nearly full, Mr Wonka pressed another button, and immediately the runny stuff disappeared, and a whizzing **whirring** noise took its place; and then a giant whizzer started whizzing round inside the enormous tub, mixing up all the different coloured liquids like an ice-cream soda.

Gradually, the mixture began to **froth**. It became frothier and frothier, and it turned from blue to white to green to brown to yellow, then back to blue again.

‘Watch!’ said Mr Wonka.



Click went the machine, and the whizzer stopped whizzing. And now there came a sort of sucking noise, and very quickly all the blue frothy mixture in the huge basin was sucked back into the stomach of the machine. There was a moment of silence. Then a few queer rumblings were heard. Then silence again. Then suddenly, the machine let out a monstrous mighty groan, and at the same moment a tiny drawer (no bigger than the drawer in a slot machine) popped out of the side of the machine, and in the drawer there lay something so small and thin and grey that everyone thought it must be a mistake. The thing looked like a little strip of grey cardboard. The children and their parents stared at the little grey strip lying in the drawer.

'You mean that's all?' said Mike Teavee, disgusted.

'That's all,' answered Mr Wonka, gazing proudly at the result. 'Don't you know what it is?'

There was a pause. Then suddenly, Violet Beauregarde, the silly gum-chewing girl, let out a yell of excitement. 'By gum, it's gum!' she shrieked. 'It's a stick of chewing-gum!'

'Right you are!' cried Mr Wonka, slapping Violet hard on the back. 'It's a stick of gum! It's a stick of the most amazing and fabulous and sensational gum in the world!'

'This gum,' Mr Wonka went on, 'is my latest, my greatest, my most fascinating invention! It's a chewing-gum meal! It's... it's... it's... That tiny little strip of gum lying there is a whole three-course dinner all by itself!' [...]

'If you were to start chewing it,' said Mr Wonka, 'then that is exactly what you would get on the menu. It's absolutely amazing! You can actually feel the food going down your throat and into your tummy! And you can taste it perfectly! And it fills you up! It satisfies you! It's terrific!'

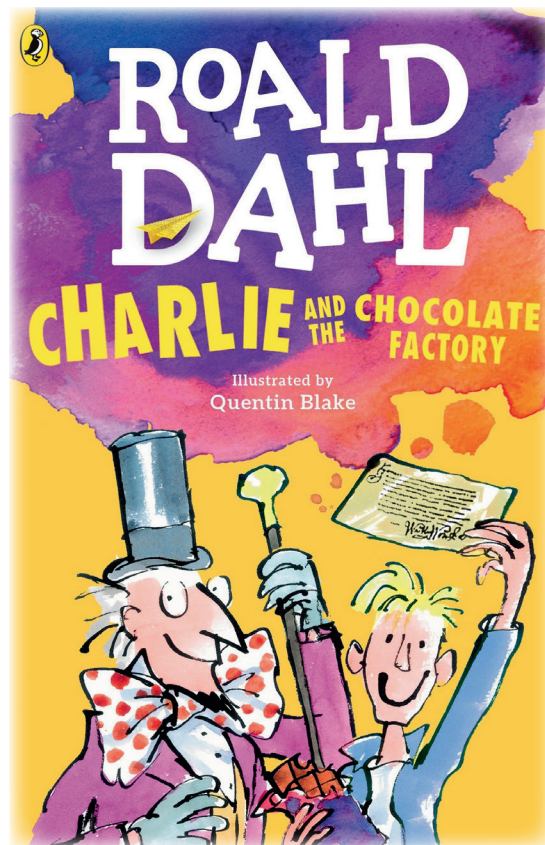
[...] 'I want the gum!' Violet said obstinately.

'I would rather you didn't take it,' Mr Wonka told her gently. 'You see, I haven't got it quite right yet. There are still one or two things...'

'Oh, to blazes with that!' said Violet, and suddenly, before Mr Wonka could stop her, she shot out a fat hand and grabbed the stick of gum out of the little drawer and popped it into her mouth.

[...] Mr Wonka was wringing his hands and saying, 'No, no, no, no, no! It isn't ready for eating! It isn't right! You mustn't do it!'

[...] 'Mercy! Save us!' yelled Mrs Beauregarde. 'The girl's going blue and purple all over! Even her hair is changing colour! Violet, you're turning violet, Violet! What is happening to you?'



**to avoid:** evitare

**basin:** tinozza

**to blazes with that!:** Al diavolo!

**brat:** moccioso

**bunch:** fascio

**cardboard:** cartone

**curled:** arricciato

**to defy all odds:** andare contro ogni pronostico

**to devise:** ideare

**flaw:** difetto

**to froth:** schiumare

**to gleam:** luccicare

**to grab:** afferrare

**gruesome:** raccapricciante

**to hiss:** sibilare

**to hung:** penzolare

**to imperil:** mettere in pericolo

**ingenious:** geniale

**lasting:** duraturo

**nut-judging:** selezionatore di noci

**queer:** strano

**renowned:** famoso

**to rumble:** rombare

**runny stuff:** sostanza liquida

**sheller:** sgusciatore

**to shrink:** restringersi

**to slosh:** schizzare

**to sprout:** spuntare

**to squirt:** schizzare

**stormy:** burrascoso

**tiny:** minuscolo

**tummy:** pancia

**to whirr:** emettere un ronzio

**to whizz:** ronzare

**to wreak revenge on:**

vendicarsi di

**wrapper:** involucri

## COMPREHENSION

### 1 Read the text and answer the questions.

1. What is special about the gum made by Mr Wonka?
2. Which of the following adjectives does not describe Mr Wonka? Inventive, eccentric, paternalistic, gullible.
3. When Mike Teavee sees the product of the long process, he is disgusted. Why?
4. What is the reaction of Violet Beauregarde?
5. What does she do?
6. Does Mr Wonka let her give the gum a try?

## ANALYSIS

### 2 Read the introduction to the author and the text again and answer the questions.

1. Who is the narrator?
2. What is the point of view?
3. What is the tone?
4. How is language used in the novel?
5. How would you define the writing style?
6. In the moral world of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, there is no ambiguity: children are either bad or good. How can bad children be recognized?
7. Do the bad children receive a punishment?

## DISCUSSION

- 3 If you could create a sweet – any sweet in the world – what would it taste like and what other effects would it have? Go crazy: it doesn't have to be rooted in reality.
- 4 Imagine you are the winner of the final prize. What would you be like as the chocolate factory owner? Would you let children come and explore, or keep it closed to the public?

