



## ROALD DAHL

Roald Dahl (13 September 1916 – 23 November 1990) was a British author of popular children's literature and short stories, a poet, screenwriter and a wartime fighter ace. His books have sold more than 300 million copies worldwide. He has been called "one of the greatest storytellers for children of the 20th century."

Dahl was born in Wales to affluent Norwegian immigrant parents, and lived for most of his life in England. His parents, Harald and Sofie, were from Norway. Roald was named after the famous Norwegian explorer, Roald Amundsen. Norwegian was his first language, and he spoke it at home.

Dahl's upbringing involved attending boarding schools, including St Peter's and Repton, where he faced difficulties, including homesickness and harsh discipline, which later influenced his writing. During his time at Repton, the Cadbury chocolate company would send new chocolates for students to taste-test, sparking Dahl's dream of inventing a new chocolate bar, which ultimately inspired *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

With the outbreak of World War II, Dahl joined the Royal Air Force, becoming a fighter pilot. His experiences as a pilot significantly shaped his writing, particularly his autobiographical work, *Going Solo*, where he recounts his wartime adventures. After having children, Dahl began writing children's books, publishing his first, *The Gremlins*, in 1943. He then went on to create beloved children's classics such as *James and the Giant Peach*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Matilda*, *The Witches*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, *The BFG*, *George's Marvellous Medicine* and *Danny, the Champion of the World*. Dahl had a distinct writing routine, meticulously using yellow pencils on yellow legal paper in a specially built hut in his garden. He would consistently work for two hours at a time, followed by a break, and then return for another two-hour session, believing in discipline over waiting for inspiration.

Although Roald Dahl wrote many books for adults, he is best known for his action-packed children's books filled with memorable, magical and often bizarre characters. Many of his works feature children triumphing over cruel and beastly adults. Dahl's short stories are known for their unexpected endings, and his children's books for their unsentimental, macabre, often darkly comic mood, featuring villainous adult enemies of the child characters. Dahl had a way with words that appealed to children so much that he invented over 500 new words, offering a kid-friendly language to support his storytelling. Six of his words were actually adopted into the Oxford Dictionary in 2016.

The vivid yet bleak nature of Dahl's imagination was matched by the scribbly illustrations of Quentin Blake. Dahl's writing is very visual and his books have provided a rich source of material for the screen. Dahl turned the novel *Charlie and the chocolate Factory* into screenplay for the film *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (1971). Some of his other screenwriting credits include *You Only Live Twice* (1967) and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (1968), both based on novels by Ian Fleming. Dahl's own books *James and the Giant Peach* (1961), *The Witches* (1983), and *Matilda* (1988) were adapted by others into movies during the 1990s.

Each of his stories is an unexpected adventure to the weirdest, wonkiest and most wonderful worlds that continue to enthrall generations of kids and adults alike. His enduring stories, characterized by mischievousness, humour, and underlying messages of kindness and resilience, continue to be cherished by generations, with Roald Dahl Day celebrated annually on his birthday, September 13th.