



The Great Automatic Grammatizator And Other Stories

Roald Dahl

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Is it really possible to invent a machine that does the job of a writer? What is it about a landlady's house that makes it so hard for her guests to leave? Does Sir Basil Turton value most his wife or one of his priceless sculptures? Here are thirteen of Roald Dahl's most unexpected tales, offering young readers the perfect introduction to the adult writing of a storytelling genius. From the sensitivity of stories such as "Katina" to the surprising creepiness of "Taste", these stories are full of all the fun, excitement and wonder of Roald Dahl's writing, offering originality, ingenuity, horror, unexpected twists and turns, a touch of the macabre - and much more besides.

The Great Automatic Grammatizator And Other Stories Details

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Author : Roald Dahl

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From Reader Review The Great Automatic Grammatizator And Other Stories for online ebook

Ashleigh says

I love Roald Dahl's stories to bits, but gave this volume four stars simply because his children's books are the ceiling for me.

My top five in this collection were:

1.) The Landlady

This packs a hefty punch of eerie atmosphere into just over ten pages. The landlady in question is a special, schizoid brand of crazy and harbours only a select few guests for long-term stays... .

2.) Mrs Bixby and the Colonel's Coat

I love the title of this story as it fittingly describes how the much sought after coat never ends up belonging to Mrs Bixby at all. It ties in with the recurring theme of rotten characters being served their due, an idea which Dahl was quite preoccupied with in his writing.

3.) Katina

I'm not sure if this story is based on true events which occurred while Dahl was working in the RAF, nevertheless it's incredibly touching and heartbreaking in the end. It leaves you with the feeling of despair that can only be induced by the loss of innocent lives, especially during wartime.

4.) Vengeance Is Mine Inc.

Another delightful story about gaining revenge, except in this one the main characters use the desire for vengeance in others to turn a profit for themselves.

5.) The Way up to Heaven

A highly strung wife and a patronising husband make for a dynamic which can only tend to the survival of one. Perhaps this is what Dahl imagines women fantasise about when they begin to grow tired of their husbands.

Luca says

He is a smart character that knows what he is doing

El Biblionauta says

Roald Dahl és ben conegut com a autor de llibres infantils, molts dels quals han esdevingut clàssics i han estat adaptats amb gran èxit a la gran pantalla; Charlie i la fàbrica de xocolata i Matilda en són dos clars exemples. La seva faceta d'escriptor per adults, però, no és tan visible per al gran públic. Gràcies a aquest recull editat per Sembrar Llibres podem albirar les qualitats d'un autor que té molt a dir en narrativa (no només en contes per a nens), un escriptor que mostra en Els millors relats que domina a la perfecció

l'estructura i el tempo del relat curt.

Pots llegir la ressenya sencera a <http://elbiblionauta.com/ca/2018/06/0...>

Alice says

Cute and enjoyable but definitely not one of Roald Dahl's best works, I missed the typical traits of his writing.

Sheri says

I started reading this on Halloween with my 11 year old as a bed-time read aloud. I will review the stories here as we read them, not necessarily in the order of the book.

Vengeance is Mine, INC--this is cute, but more than a little dated (they are going to retire with \$20K as if they are super rich). They also can simply disappear (which is much more difficult in modern society). He liked the story though as as concept and I think the evidence of a historic time period was interesting.

The Butler--this one was a bit over my 11 year old's head. He followed well enough, but the subtleties of classism and wine conosourism were lost. Kind of how they were for Mr. Cleaver. Short and cute; I also wondered about the relationship between Estragon and Tibbs.

Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's coat---so clearly these are not children's stories. On one hand, I wish I had realized that before we started, but on the other they are providing great talking points. We liked that Mrs. Bixby did not get the coat, certainly after 8 years cheating on her husband she doesn't deserve it. The secretary showing up with it was the coup de grace though...a surprise but then also overkill. After all, if he is cheating too then it kinda puts Mrs. off the hook.

The Automatic Grammatizator--this story so clearly epitomizes our fear of machines (and is rather prescient for the time it was written) as replacement for humans. We are still pursuing AI (and I don't imagine that the formulization of stories is so difficult), but in different and more interactive ways that Dahl envisioned here. I found it interesting that my boy (born in 2005 and very computer-literate) scoffed at this about halfway through; "There is no way that a machine can write stories that are good enough mom. Only people are truly creative."

The Way Up to Heaven--We starting reading this one together, but then my son finished it without me (he had run out of things to read on his kindle). After I finished, we discussed it. He understood that the husband died in the elevator, but had missed the wife's listening at the door and so had not realized that she KNEW and essentially murdered him. We went on to discuss the theme of revenge in all of these stories and he insisted that murdering him just for making her late for a flight was a bit extreme. He seems to think that the wife will get a come-uppance in her later life.

Royal Jelly--This was just odd. Neither one of us particularly liked it. The idea of a honey-based super food is intriguing (and not completely unbelievable), but the fact that the husband had turned himself into part-bee and was on the way of turning the baby was just a bit too much. It also didn't fit with the revenge theme of

the rest of the book.

Katina--This was just a sad war story. It reminded me of "Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong" by Tim O'Brien. As a woman, I have always been rather happy that I can't get sent off to war; I am rather intrigued by these stories of women (girls) who find themselves as part of the platoon.

The Umbrella Man--The title story is short and cute, but far from the best in the book. Ironically enough he did not get his comeuppance. We get to see the con man at his game, but there is no punishment. I wasn't quite sure this fit with the others and was surprised that it was the title story.

Parson's Pleasure--My husband came in while we were reading this one and he said he knew it, but he was rather surprised to hear it was Roald Dahl. I also thought this story was familiar, might be that it was in another collection somewhere? Anyway, again Dahl drives home the theme of just desserts; the swindler does not get swindled, but he is deprived of his treasure.

Man from the South--Again, this was good enough with the whole betting shenanigans until we got to the end and Dahl adds the layer of the woman and man having bet multiple times. It was just funny enough to be not creepy; if Dahl had taken a different tone, this could have been scary.

The Landlady-- I liked this one quite a bit. We knew right away that the old lady was gonna kill him, but the taxidermy at the end was a cute add on. So far, I am pretty sure it is my 11 year old's favorite in the book.

Taste--As I mentioned earlier, my son has snuck off with this book a few times and read some stories without me. This has been an interesting lesson in how much he enjoys short stories; we shall get him some more for his kindle. Anyway, He read this and Neck alone a few days ago, so I read Taste last night to play catch up. I had it figured out as soon as the host boasted that he keeps the wine breathing where the gourmet had suggested. I did not think the gourmet would be unveiled though until it was too late (maybe fast forward a bit and it was after the wedding or after the daughter is pregnant). Rather absurd story overall considering that the girl should have a stronger say in her marriage.

Neck--I am just not sure I got this one. I have yet to discuss with the little one (this is the other story he read on his own); clearly the husband would have killed the wife with the axe, but is the saw any better? Why not just unmask her adultery and divorce her? I was just not sure HOW Basil would get his revenge.

PurplyCookie says

"The Great Automatic Grammatizator" (from "Someone Like You"): A mechanically-minded man reasons that the rules of grammar are fixed by certain, almost mathematical principles. By exploiting this idea, he is able to create a mammoth machine that can write a prize-winning novel in roughly fifteen minutes. The story ends on a fearful note, as more and more of the world's writers are forced into licensing their names-and all hope of human creativity-to the machine.

"Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat" (from "Kiss Kiss"): Mrs. Bixby cheats on her meek, dentist husband with a rich, dashing colonel. When their relationship breaks off, the colonel offers Mrs. Bixby a gorgeous

and expensive mink coat. In an attempt to explain the coat away, Mrs. Bixby sets up an elaborate trick with the help of a pawn shop -- but her husband learns of the ruse and manages to turn the tables.

"The Butler" (from **"More Tales of the Unexpected"**): An obnoxious and newly wealthy couple employs a butler and chef to impress dinner guests. The butler recommends that the husband buy expensive wines to please company, and the man slavishly follows the idea. The butler and the chef reap the rewards of this idea, while making the "fashionable" couple look like fools.

"Man from the South" (from **"Someone Like You"**): At a seaside resort in Jamaica, a strange old man makes a bet with an American man in his late teens. If the young man's cigarette lighter can spark ten times without fail, the American will win a brand-new Cadillac car -- but failure means losing the little finger on his right hand. The high-tension wager ensues, and with only a few sparks left, a woman -- who knows only too well the cost of the old man's bets -- appears and stops the madness.

"The Landlady" (from **"Kiss Kiss"**): A young man traveling to London on business stops at a bed and breakfast along the way, where a strange -- and slightly dotty -- landlady eagerly welcomes him. The offsetting nature of the house -- and the news that only two other young men have ever stayed there -- confuses and frightens the young man. In the end, the landlady -- who indulges in the odd hobby of taxidermy -- and the boy share a drink of tea that tastes of bitter almonds, and the landlady softly smiles, staring at what may be her latest stuffing project.

"Parson's Pleasure" (from **"Kiss Kiss"**): A man discovers an extremely rare piece of Chippendale furniture at the farm of some boorish ranchers. He desperately attempts to buy the piece cheap, in hopes of selling it at an auction to earn a huge sum. He manages to buy the piece -- only for the ranchers to destroy it in an attempt to make it fit in his car.

"The Umbrella Man" (from **"More Tales of the Unexpected"**): A mother and daughter meet a gentlemanly old man on a street corner, who offers them a beautiful silk umbrella in exchange for a pound note. They trade, and the daughter notices that the "feeble" old man suddenly seems much sprier. They follow, and discover that the gentleman is really a clever con artist, who visits various pubs, has a drink, and then steals another umbrella to continue the cycle!

"Katina" (from **"Over to You: Ten Stories of Flyers and Flying"**): A group of RAF pilots stationed in Greece during World War II discover a hauntingly beautiful young girl, whose "family is beneath the rubble." She becomes their squadron's unofficial "mascot". In the end, her fragile life is taken as she stands defiantly against a rain of bullets from Nazi airplanes, shaking her fists into the heavens.

"The Way Up to Heaven" (from **"Kiss Kiss"**): Mrs. Foster suffers from a chronic phobia of being late for things. Her husband seems to enjoy the cruel sport of purposely delaying their actions, just to see his wife become riled. On the day when Mrs. Foster must fly to Paris to visit her grandchildren, her husband engages in his usual tricks. But as Mrs. Foster rushes to return to the house, she hears a strange noise -- and suddenly turns triumphantly toward her cab. It is only when she returns, and calls a man to "repair the lift" that was stuck between floors in the house, that readers can guess Mr. Foster's fate.

"Royal Jelly" (from **"Kiss Kiss"**): A new pair of parents fears for the life of their little girl, who is sickly and underweight. The husband, a beekeeper, remembers hearing of the miraculous royal jelly used by bees to transform one particular larva into a queen. He adds the mixture to his daughter's bottles, and she puts on weight at an astonishing rate. The mother senses that something is amiss, and the husband confesses his actions -- along with the fact that he himself swallowed buckets of the jelly for months in an attempt to cure

his impotence. The royal jelly did the trick -- but the strange side effects include a disturbing metamorphosis for both father and daughter.

"Vengeance is Mine Inc." (from **"More Tales of the Unexpected"**): Two brothers who are short on cash bemoan their fates over breakfast while reading the society column of a newspaper. Reading it, they hit upon a scheme to take revenge on cruel tabloid writers in exchange for money from wealthy patrons. The unconventional plan works, and the brothers line their pockets with the spoils of their plans.

"Taste" (from **"Someone Like You"**): A rich man with a beautiful young daughter hosts a dinner party, inviting a famous partaker of fine wines. When the rich man boasts that he has a wine that the expert cannot identify, the stakes become frighteningly high -- if he can guess the make of the wine, he will win the daughter! After an elaborate show, the expert guesses everything right; however, the family's maid appears on the scene and manages to expose the guest as a cheat, saving the girl.

"Neck" (from **"Someone Like You"**): A newspaper heir finds himself suddenly engaged to the voluptuous and controlling Lady Tutton. He loses all control of his life, and only his trusted butler and friends realize how broken he is by her control. A weekend trip to their estate, however, proves the perfect opportunity for Lord Tutton to engage in a bitter case of revenge against his wicked wife -- her head is trapped in a piece of sculpture, and he decides to use a sharp saw to "cut" her free.

Splendidly written, each story gives some insight into human nature. Dahl lays out his stories in a way to make you feel that you are reading a sort of twisted fairy tale, using surreal language and situations. It is really unlike anything I have ever read before and it is sure to spark your imagination whether you are young or old. (P.S.: If you're an avid Dahl lover like me, you might have seen some of these stories already. That's all right -- you're bound not to have seen all, or even most of them.)

More of Purplycookie's Reviews @: <http://www.goodreads.com/purplycookie>

Book Details:

Title The Umbrella Man and Other Stories (also published as "The Great Automatic Grammatizator")

Author Roald Dahl

Reviewed By Purplycookie

Kacey says

Roald Dahl is the reason I love to read, and my inspiration to become a writer myself one day. So I admit I have a certain bias to him. With that said, I loved every single one of these stories. I can't think of any that I disliked or was bored with in any way. Dahl has a way of weaving the story together to make all the characters interesting and the plot engaging, even in a short amount of space.

The different flavors of each story were delightful. Some sent a shiver down my spine, some were quirky and fun, and some were haunting. I think my personal favorites involved characters screwing with each other or taking advantage of each other. Patron's Pleasure, Neck, Taste and The Umbrella Man come to mind. I

couldn't help but laugh in delight as each of those stories came to an end.

What else is there to say? Roald Dahl holds a special place in my heart. His children's books helped me gain a love for reading, and I'm happy to see that the spirit I found there exists here in his adult stories as well. Sir, you were truly a gift to literature.

Dylan Moore says

This was a great story, I thoroughly enjoyed it. It makes you infer alot and has a great ending/cliffhanger!

Jonathan says

Matilda was captivating as read out loud by my fourth grade teacher. So I had high hopes for this collection but came up wanting more. Considerably more.

This collection starts off with the zingers of "The Great Automatic Grammatizator," an indictment of greedy publishers and lazy writers (the message will never be outdated) that doubles as a plain fun story.

Other shorties worth the look are "Parson's Pleasure" and "Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat" - karma, baby! - and the sickest of the lot, "Royal Jelly." (Don't read if you're pregnant or may become pregnant - but do.)

"Parson's Pleasure" and "Vengeance is Mine Inc." have stellar setups but precious little payoff. The latter's premise is quite amusing. It's a criticism of most of these stories actually, that they seem to tail off three to five 'graphs too soon. Maybe Dahl meant to leave much to the reader, for each to continue with the story in his head.

Elsewhere, "The Landlady" is way too obvious (that moron deserves it) and the titular story has perhaps the least payoff of the whole batch. Anyone seeking Dahl's seedier, more macabre humor and storytelling, or anything grotesque and patently adult, will be disappointed here. This is young-adult stuff, and not good young-adult stuff really.

"Katina" is set in wartime and intrigues in light of Dahl's own time in the Royal Air Force. The outcome's never in doubt there either, though, and the story seems out-of-place amidst the existential would-be thrillers.

"The Way Up To Heaven" provides a late-breaking thrill, but I can't recall now what two or three of these tales were about, and that's telling.

I still dig Dahl and will look to get back on terms with him by delving into a co-worker's tome that has just about all of his short stories. Oh, and Matilda's still my girl.

Bhawna Widhani says

The Umbrella man is a funny one :p

I was surprised by the slyness of the main character.

Marc Pastor says

A Toronto, mentre miràvem una posta de sol espectacular, en Martí Sales vam recomanar-me fervorosament que llegís els relats de Roald Dahl d'una vegada per totes. Per una raó o per una altra, mai m'hi havia posat, tot i que en coneixia la fama del seu gust pels finals sorpresa (una de les meves debilitats) i de tenir un sentit de l'humor força negre i finíssim.

En coneixia, sobretot, aquell "L'Home del Sud" que també s'inclou en aquesta antologia, i que va tenir dos versions televisives en el serial d'Alfred Hitchcock (més una adaptació a càrrec de Quentin Tarantino a Four Rooms).

El primer que xoca d'aquest recull és que està fet (en la seva edició original) amb la voluntat d'apropar els contes de Dahl als lectors més joves, tot i que un cop llegit es fa palès que són per a totes les edats, i que la mala bava hi és present de forma molt sibilina en la majoria d'ells.

Potser es troba a faltar una mica d'introducció a cada conte, per a qui o per a on va ser escrit, l'any de publicació, etc, per posar-los en context. N'hi un que ha quedat tecnològicament desfasat ("La Gran Gramatitzadora Automàtica"), un altre que tot i mantenir el to inquietant té un mcguffin que ja no aguanta el tipus ("La gelea reial") i un tercer que, de tant innocent, provoca més tendresa que comèdia ("La venjança és meva SA"). Tantmateix, són contes excel·lents que segueixen funcionant un cop hom es treu seixanta o setanta anys d'història del damunt.

És curiós com Roald Dahl basa els contes tot sovint en juguesques que no surten bé (o que surten massa bé) o en malentesos que s'acaben resolen (de forma fins i tot extremadament ambigua) en el darrer paràgraf. N'hi ha que no deixen de ser acudits allargats o ocurrencies divertides ("L'home del paraigua"), que el talent de l'autor converteix en petites peces delicioses.

La sensació un cop acabat el darrer conte és l'antologia és d'haver fet tard, molt tard, i la necessitat de buscar una obra integral per llegir-m'ho absolutament tot.

Ashley says

The Umbrella Man was an average story to me. It tells the story of a young girl and her mother, who come across a polite old man. The Umbrella man was easy to follow, and I did like the plot twist. But other than that, personally, this wouldn't be my go-to book. It isn't very descriptive, and it was somewhat of a bore. I recommend this book if you feel like a bit of light reading.

Pablo Garcinuño says

Recopilación de 13 relatos de Dahl dirigida a adolescentes. Hay verdaderas joyas dentro ('Katina' me encantó) en las que prima el ingenio y el humor del escritor británico, así como el magistral uso de la tensión.

Rachel says

I decided to read this book after reading A Lamb to the Slaughter in school. I loved Roald Dahl books as a child, so I was curious about what his stories for older children were like. I was not disappointed. Some of the stories are really memorable, I read this book almost ten years ago and I can remember some of the stories vividly. My particular favourites from the book were Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat , Royal Jelly and the books name sake The Great Automatic Grammatizator.

(view spoiler)

From this book learnt about the evils of corporate exploitation and mass production and that if you cheat on your partner bad things will happen to you. Also even though I know it is completely fictional I am to this day skeptical about beauty and cosmetic products that contain royal jelly and the entire Burt's bees range makes me uncomfortable.

Claudia says

Great read when being sick :)

Ash says

Long Story Shrt The Story was Short

Minh Trang says

Th?t ra mình ??c có m?t truy?n ng?n Ng??i ?àn ông che dù thôi, nh?ng ?ành ?n gian tính là ?ã ??c c? cu?n v?y :)

Câu chuy?n x?y ra trên ???ng ph? London m?t ngày m?a, gi?a m?t bà m? ba m??i t? tu?i, m?t cô con gái m??i hai tu?i, và m?t ng??i ?àn ông nh? thó và l?ch s? v?i chi?c dù l?a trong tay. Hai m? con không ?em theo cây dù nào nên ph?i ???ng trú m?a, và m?t ng??i ?àn ông ?ã xin ???c ??i cây dù l?a ?t ti?n c?a mình ?? l?y ch? m?t b?ng ?i taxi v? nhà "cho ?ôi chân ???c ngh? ng?i". Hai m? con c? ngh? ?ã g?p ???c m?t ng??i ??y t? tr?ng, không ch?u l?y không ti?n c?a ai, mà ng? ?âu ch? m?t lát sau ?ã th?y v?n ?? xoay chuy?n hoàn toàn

khác.

Những câu chuyện của Roald Dahl ?u nh? th?, tình ti?t r?t kì l?, nh?ng l?ng ghép bên trong là r?t nhi?u ?i?u thú v? :)

M?t câu quote nh?: “?ng bao gi? v?i vấ. Luôn thông th? khi ?ánh giá ng?i khác. Nh? th? con s? không bao gi? sai l?m.”

Jill Guccini says

I found & bought this book while volunteering at the library bookstore. I've decided I'd like to go back and try to read every book by my favorite childhood authors - Roald Dahl and Paul Zindel, mainly - and I'm increasingly finding that Dahl wrote all these other adult books other than *Boy* and *Flying Solo* I had never heard of. Although I only realized halfway into this book after reading the back cover that this was a collection of his stories apparently chosen for young adults, but like most young adult novels, I couldn't really tell. At first I wasn't sure what to make of the stories - they were all enjoyable, good reads, but overall they were all kind of quirky and dark, but I suppose that's really to be expected of Dahl. There was one longer story in the middle though, 'Katina,' in which there wasn't much quirky humor at all but was overall a well written, serious story about war, which I couldn't help but believe came out of or was at least inspired by his own experiences in World War II. Taken in with the rest of the stories, all undoubtedly creative and unique, I think the book really made me appreciate even more what a strange, tireless mind this guy had.

Clare Almine says

I already read some of his books for children (like Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, James and the Giant Peach, Fantastic Mr. Fox and others) and I find his works a little bit inappropriate for kids (well, parts of his books) but on this collection of short stories, I can say that he is the best storyteller of all time. As in!

Amin Muhaimin says

This is a disappointment.

Yeah, I am a fan of Roald Dahl. The last time I read Skin other stories, he was absolutely brilliant. All the stories are awesome. Yeah, unexpected and you were excited with the ending.

But this one, I didn't even get all those feelings. Yeah, the story still unexpected but mostly when at the end of the story I was like... "Ooo...okay" and "Haa...did I miss anything?(so I turned few pages back and read again expecting i missed the punchline)".

I'm not sure if I didn't understand the story.

The cover story, The Great Automatic Grammatizator, I wasn't sure if there is hidden meanings of TGAG and Adolph Knipe or it's just an ironic or sarcasm for the authors around that time. Or perhaps I think to much. Hoho. But compared to Skin, no doubt Skin is better and brilliant and unbelievable.

I think I should just mention the story I enjoyed most, they are The Way Up To Heaven and Mrs. Bixby and The Colonel's Coat.

The Umbrella Man, The Landlady, Taste and Neck are OK. Katina is fine but I think too much information, same goes to Royal Jelly, The Butler and Parson's Pleasure. Maybe this is the reason why I found the stories kind of boring.

It just like you read the great creation of Paulo Coelho, The Alchemist then you tried to read Aleph expecting there will be another phenomenon but it's a trash. Sorry to say this.

Btw, I think Roald Dahl was fond of wine.

I will give him another chance for Kiss Kiss.
