

VERKLARING VAN TERMEN

allegory: een verhaal dat twee betekenissen heeft. Bijvoorbeeld: er wordt een concreet verhaal verteld, dat ook een abstracte betekenis heeft.

author: de schrijver.

characters: de personen of figuren.

events, incidents: gebeurtenissen; wat er in het verhaal gebeurt.

fable: een kort verhaal met een moraal. De handelende personen zijn meestal dieren.

fairy tale: sprookje, een fantastische vertelling waarin het goede op meestal magische wijze over het kwade zegeviert.

genre: soort verhaal, bijvoorbeeld een detectiveroman, een psychologische roman, een fabel.

main character: hoofdpersoon.

narrator: verteller, de 'ik-persoon'.

novel: roman.

novelette: een lang verhaal, maar korter dan een roman.

point of view: perspectief; van wiens gezichtspunt uit het verhaal wordt verteld.

setting: de plaats waar en de tijd wanneer het verhaal zich afspeelt.

short story: kort verhaal.

theme: het idee dat aan een boek ten grondslag ligt; wat de schrijver door middel van het verhaal probeert te zeggen.

1. JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH (1961)

by Roald Dahl

Author

Roald Dahl was born in Wales in 1916 of Norwegian parents. He started writing stories in 1942. His best-known collections of stories are *Someone Like You*, *Kiss Kiss* and *Switch-Bitch*. Some of his children's stories are *The Fantastic Mr Fox*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *The BFG* (Big Friendly Giant) and *Danny The Champion of the World*.

Genre

James and the Giant Peach is a fantasy and a children's story: animals can talk, there is magic and the main character, a boy of seven, finds a solution for every problem. However, Dahl's humour and lively imagination make his stories attractive for older readers as well.

Characters

James Henry Trotter, the seven-year-old hero of the story.

Aunt Sponge and *Aunt Spiker*, his horrible aunts.

Old Green Grasshopper (*sprinkhaan*).

A Ladybird (*lieveheersbeestje*).

A Centipede (*duizendpoot*).

Miss Spider (*spin*).

An Earthworm, a *Glow-worm* and a *Silkworm* (*zijderups*).

The *Cloud-Men*, creatures made of air and hair, responsible for bad weather.

The Story

Part 1 (chapters 1-10). James Henry Trotter lives with his parents in a house by the sea. When he is four years old his parents are eaten by a rhinoceros (*neushoorn*). James goes to live with his two aunts, who treat him very badly. They live in an old house on top of a high hill. James has to work hard, and is not allowed to leave the garden or to play with any other children. One hot day Aunt Sponge, who is as fat as a pig, and Aunt Spiker, who is as thin as a broom-stick, are sitting in deck-chairs drinking lemonade while James is chopping wood. He feels so miserable that he begins to cry. When the aunts get angry, James hides in a bush. There he meets a funny old man who gives him a bag full of little green stones which seem to be alive. The old man tells James that if he puts the green things in water and drinks them something marvellous will happen. If he does not, the first thing the green things meet will have all their power. While James is running to the kitchen, he falls down. The bag bursts and

the green things sink into the soil, near an old peach tree (*perzikboom*). His aunts angrily send him back to work. Suddenly they see a big peach in the tree. They want James to pick it for them, but then they see that the peach is growing fast. It becomes so big that the tree bends over until the peach is resting on the ground. When the peach is as big as the tree it stops growing.

The next day, the aunts have a fence built around the giant peach and charge one shilling to people who want to have a look at it. James is locked in his room all day, and at night sent out to clean the whole garden. As he walks around the peach he feels that something is going to happen. In the peach he discovers a hole which is the beginning of a tunnel. James goes through the tunnel and reaches the stone (*pit*) in which there is a little door.

Part 2 (chapters 11-18). Inside the stone a number of animals are waiting for him in a nice room. There is a grasshopper, a spider, a ladybird, a centipede, an earthworm and a silkworm, all as big as James. At first James is afraid of them but they are very friendly, although they quarrel among themselves sometimes, especially the earthworm and centipede. Before they get into their beds, made by Miss Spider, James helps the centipede to take off his forty-two boots. They have some trouble waking up the glow-worm on the ceiling, who has to switch off her light. Lying in the dark James realizes he is beginning to like his new friends.

The next morning the peach begins to roll down the hill. The centipede sings about the marvellous things they will see in the land to which the peach is rolling. In the garden the two aunts are waiting for tourists. The enormous peach crushes them both and causes great panic among people and animals. A chocolate factory is destroyed and all kinds of other buildings. The peach keeps on rolling until it falls over a cliff into the sea, where it floats (*drijft*).

James and the animals have a very bad time while the peach is rolling and they are glad when it finally comes to a standstill. They think they have reached some wonderful country, but when they climb out of the tunnel they see they are in the middle of the sea. They are afraid they will starve to death, but James tells them to eat from the peach. It is the best food they have ever eaten, and the centipede sings a song about the delicious taste of the peach.

Part 3 (chapters 19-26) James and the animals are frightened by a number of sharks (*haaien*) who attack the peach. But suddenly James has a brilliant idea. He orders Miss Spider and Silkworm to make strong pieces of string, as fast as they can. With the strings he wants to tie seagulls to the stem of the peach so that the peach will be lifted up. The earthworm is to serve as bait (*aas*) for the seagulls.

All the animals think it is a wonderful idea, except the earthworm of course. He has to lie near the tunnel. Every time a seagull comes down to eat a nice piece of worm, the grasshopper and the ladybird pull the earth-

worm into the tunnel and James catches the bird in a loop (*lus*) of silk string. Then he ties the string to the stem of the peach. When they have tied 502 seagulls to the peach it rises out of the sea. James and his friends are happy to be flying. Luckily, the peach is hardly damaged; the sharks were unable to eat from it because of their long, pointed noses.

They see a ship, the *Queen Mary*, on its way to America. The grasshopper makes music and tells James about different kinds of grasshoppers. The earthworm tells him how useful worms are for the soil. The ladybird is useful because she eats harmful insects. The centipede, on the other hand, is proud to be a pest (*schaadelijk dier*). Miss Spider catches flies and mosquitoes in her webs. The centipede starts dancing and singing, but he forgets where he is and falls off the peach. With the help of a piece of silk string James lowers himself and finds the poor centipede in the sea. The other animals pull them back onto the peach.

Part 4 (chapters 27-39). Without making any noise the peach flies through the night. High in the clouds they see Cloud-Men: tall, hairy white creatures, who are making hailstones (*hagel*). They are practising for the winter. The centipede shouts at the Cloud-Men and makes them angry. They throw hailstones at the peach so that James and his friends have to hide in the tunnel. When they have left the Cloud-Men behind, the peach is leaking in several places.

Soon they see other Cloud-Men who are painting a rainbow. It is hanging on ropes and the Cloud-Men are lowering it down to the earth. The peach hits the rainbow which breaks into two parts. The silk ropes of the peach get tangled up with the ropes of the rainbow. One of the Cloud-Men gets hold of a silk string and climbs down towards the peach. But the centipede cuts through the string and the Cloud-Man is pulled into the air by the seagull. The peach gets unstuck again and drifts away. The angry Cloud-Men throw all kinds of things at the peach. The centipede is covered with purple rainbow paint, but he is washed clean by a very heavy rainshower sent by the Cloud-Men. While they are flying on, they see a great number of Cloud-Men at work.

The following morning they are flying over land. They see extremely tall buildings, so they know they have reached America. James says they have to cut loose some seagulls so that the peach will land slowly. In New York people are afraid that the round ball that is hanging over their city is a bomb. It begins to come down slowly. Then an aeroplane cuts through the remaining strings and the peach falls down quickly.

By chance the peach falls onto the sharp pinnacle (*spietorentje*) of the Empire State Building and gets stuck there. At first the people of New York City are very much afraid of the monsters on the ball. But when James explains who they are and what has happened, he and his friends get a great welcome. The children of New York eat the peach and James's friends all get good jobs and become rich. The peach stone is put in the middle of Central Park and becomes James's house and a meeting-place for many children.

Questions (The numbers refer to the parts.)

1. a. What do the two aunts sing about while James is chopping wood?
b. What does Aunt Sponge want to do as soon as the peach has stopped growing?
 2. a. How did the animals come to be so large?
b. How is the peach cut loose from the tree?
 3. a. Who makes an inspection of the peach after it has begun to fly, and how?
b. Why is Miss Spider especially glad that Aunt Sponge has been killed?
 4. a. What happened to Miss Spider's grandmother?
b. Why doesn't the peach land after the first few strings have been cut through over New York City?
- General:*
- Which animal is:
- a. blind?
 - b. a pessimist?
 - c. disliked by most humans?

2. DANNY THE CHAMPION OF THE WORLD (1975)

by Roald Dahl

Author

See *James and the Giant Peach* (page 7).

Genre

Danny The Champion of the World is an adventure story. It is based on a short story written by Dahl, called 'The Champion of the World.' You can find the story in his collection of short stories called *Kiss Kiss* (1959).

Setting

The story takes place in our time. It is situated partly in and near a filling-station (*pompstation*) in the village where Danny and his father live, and partly in the wood belonging to Mr Victor Hazell.

Characters

Danny, the nine-year-old narrator of the story.

William, his father.

Mr Victor Hazell, a rich but unpleasant man.

Dr Spencer, a friend of Danny's father.

Charlie Kinch, a taxi driver.

Sergeant Enoch Samways, the village policeman.

Mrs Grace Clipstone, the vicar's wife.

Mr Snoddy and Captain Lancaster, teachers at Danny's school.

The Story

1. Danny, a young boy, lives with his father in an old caravan. The caravan is behind their filling-station and the small garage where Danny's father repairs cars.
2. Danny likes his father very much. Every night his father tells him a bedtime story. Many stories are about the BFG, the Big Friendly Giant. The BFG collects children's dreams. He explodes bad dreams but he makes magic powders out of good ones and blows the powder into the bedrooms of children, giving them marvellous dreams. Danny's father says he has seen the BFG only once.
3. Like his father, Danny loves engines and cars. His father says he will be a very good mechanic (*monteur*) one day. When Danny is seven his father sends him to school. One day they make a kite (*vlieger*) and on another occasion Danny's father makes a fire-balloon. On his ninth birthday, his father gives him a small car, made of soapboxes.
4. One night, when Danny wakes up, his father is not in his bed. Danny is very worried. Hours later his father comes home. He has been to Ha-

