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Opening extract from

# Roald Dahl's Mischief and Mayhem

Written by

**Roald Dahl**

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# The Hat and the Superglue

The hat itself was one of those flat-topped pork-pie jobs with a jay's feather stuck in the hatband and Mr Wormwood was very proud of it. He thought it gave him a rakish daring look, especially when he wore it at an angle with his loud checked jacket and green tie.

Matilda, holding the hat in one hand and a thin tube of Superglue in the other, proceeded to squeeze a line of glue very neatly all round the inside rim of the hat. Then she carefully hooked the hat back on to the peg with the walking-stick. She timed this operation very carefully, applying the glue just as her father was getting up from the breakfast table.

Mr Wormwood didn't notice anything when he put the hat on, but when he arrived at the garage he couldn't get it off. Superglue is very powerful stuff, so





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powerful it will take your skin off if you pull too hard. Mr Wormwood didn't want to be scalped so he had to keep the hat on his head the whole day long, even when putting sawdust in gear-boxes and fiddling the mileages of cars with his electric drill. In an effort to save face, he adopted a casual attitude hoping that his staff would think that he actually meant to keep his hat on all day long just for the heck of it, like gangsters do in the films.



When he got home that evening he still couldn't get the hat off. 'Don't be silly,' his wife said. 'Come here. I'll take it off for you.'

She gave the hat a sharp yank. Mr Wormwood let out a yell that rattled the window-panes. 'Ow-w-w!' he screamed. 'Don't do that! Let go! You'll take half the skin off my forehead!'

Matilda, nestling in her usual chair, was watching this performance over the rim of her book with some interest.



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'What's the matter, Daddy?' she said. 'Has your head suddenly swollen or something?'

The father glared at his daughter with deep suspicion, but said nothing. How could he? Mrs Wormwood said to him, 'It must be Superglue. It couldn't be anything else. That'll teach you to go playing round with nasty stuff like that. I expect you were trying to stick another feather in your hat.'

'I haven't touched the flaming stuff!' Mr Wormwood shouted. He turned and looked again at Matilda, who looked back at him with large innocent brown eyes.

Mrs Wormwood said to him, 'You should read the label on the tube before you start messing with dangerous products. Always follow the instructions on the label.'

'What in heaven's name are you talking about, you stupid witch?' Mr Wormwood shouted, clutching the brim of his hat to stop anyone trying to pull it off again. 'D'you think I'm so stupid I'd glue this thing to my head on purpose?'





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Matilda said, 'There's a boy down the road who got some Superglue on his finger without knowing it and then he put his finger to his nose.'

Mr Wormwood jumped. 'What happened to him?' he spluttered.

'The finger got stuck inside his nose,' Matilda said, 'and he had to go around like that for a week. People kept saying to him, "Stop picking your nose," and he couldn't do anything about it. He looked an awful fool.'

'Serve him right,' Mrs Wormwood said. 'He shouldn't have put his finger up there in the first place. It's a nasty habit. If all children had Superglue put on their fingers they'd soon stop doing it.'

Matilda said, 'Grown-ups do it too, Mummy. I saw you doing it yesterday in the kitchen.'

'That's quite enough from you,' Mrs Wormwood said, turning pink.



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Mr Wormwood had to keep his hat on all through supper in front of the television. He looked ridiculous and he stayed very silent.

When he went up to bed he tried again to get the thing off, and so did his wife, but it wouldn't budge. 'How am I going to have my shower?' he demanded.

'You'll just have to do without it, won't you,' his wife told him. And later on, as she watched her skinny little husband skulking around the bedroom in his purple-striped pyjamas with a pork-pie hat on his head, she thought how stupid he looked. Hardly the kind of man a wife dreams about, she told herself.



Mr Wormwood discovered that the worst thing about having a permanent hat on his head was having to sleep in it. It was impossible to lie comfortably on the pillow. 'Now do stop fussing around,' his wife said



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to him after he had been tossing and turning for about an hour. 'I expect it will be loose by the morning and then it'll slip off easily.'

But it wasn't loose by the morning and it wouldn't slip off. So Mrs Wormwood took a pair of scissors and cut the thing off his head, bit by bit, first the top and then the brim. Where the inner band had stuck to the hair all around the sides and back, she had to chop the hair off right to the skin so that he finished up with a bald white ring round his head, like some sort of a monk. And in the front, where the band had stuck directly to the bare skin, there remained a whole lot of small patches of brown leathery stuff that no amount of washing would get off.





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At breakfast Matilda said to him, 'You must try to get those bits off your forehead, Daddy. It looks as though you've got little brown insects crawling about all over you. People will think you've got lice.'

'Be quiet!' the father snapped. 'Just keep your nasty mouth shut, will you!'

All in all it was a most satisfactory exercise. But it was surely too much to hope that it had taught the father a permanent lesson.






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# TRICK

# Sticky Rocket

**Attention, please.** However mean and nasty someone has been, unless you are the heroine of a Roald Dahl story, it is best NOT to superglue someone's hat to their head. It would make the lovely doctors and nurses at the nearest hospital **VERY CROSS**. So, step away from the head of an actual human and step towards something truly **ASTRONOMICAL**.

## YOU WILL NEED:

- ☆ One rocket
- ☆ One launchpad
- ☆ 18 buckets (approx) of industrial-grade superglue
- ☆ One spacesuit (with helmet)
- ☆ One tank of oxygen



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## WHAT YOU DO:

1. Go to your nearest **space centre**. (There's a rather nice one at **Cape Canaveral in Florida, USA**. You could go to a theme park while you're there. Maybe visit the beach.)
2. Locate the **launchpad** and wait for the dead of night.
3. Carefully pour each of your **18 buckets of industrial-grade superglue** on to the launchpad to form a thin coating.
4. **DO NOT STEP IN THE SUPERGLUE**. (This is very important. You don't want to be glued to the launchpad too.)
5. Go back to your motel and wait until a **rocket** is wheeled v-e-r-y s-l-o-w-l-y to the launchpad and popped on top of it. You should hear a very sticky **SLURP** when this happens.
6. Go back to the space centre on launch day, **wearing your spacesuit**. Don't forget your **oxygen tank** too.
7. Count down with everyone else so that **NO ONE SUSPECTS** your fiendishly clever plan.
8. **Then... ta-daaaaa!** When the countdown reaches zero, the rocket won't go ANYWHERE.*

* There is a slim chance that the rocket's engines will be so megawattingly POWERFUL that it will shoot into space anyway and take the launchpad, the surrounding Tarmac and quite possibly YOU with it, which is why you need the spacesuit and the oxygen too. NEVER go to space without them.



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# Spot the Mischief Maker

**So you think you know Roald Dahl's books inside out and back to front and upside down, do you?**
Then read the clues to identify THIS character and prove it.



1. She looks and smells as lovely as a *rose*. (Or so she says.)

2. Yet she is also like a **great white soggy over-boiled cabbage**. (You do know what a great white soggy over-boiled cabbage looks like, don't you? If not, please use your imagination. Do not boil a great white soggy over-boiled cabbage to find out, because the smell is just **AWFUL**.)

3. SHE says that she has a *shapely nose and silky locks and dainty toes*. (How DELIGHTFUL. She sounds like Cinderella.)

4. Her SISTER says that she'd make a lovely Frankenstein. **(Yikes! What a MONSTER.)**

5. After her appearance in a Roald Dahl book, this character can't help feeling a bit **FLAT**. (The important word in this clue is FLAT, by the way. That's why it's in capitals. So that you notice it. Do you get it now? Do you, **DO YOU?**)

## Who is she?



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# Sticky Jokes

What's round, tasty and very slippery?
**An oiled sweet.**

What's brown and sticky?
**A stick.**

Why did the robbers go to the chocolate factory?
**They wanted the lolly.**

Did you hear about the person who spent 25 years testing an everlasting gobstopper for no wages?
**He was a sucker.**



What do you call a chocolate-factory owner who sits up a horse chestnut tree?
**Willy Conker.**



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# Gooey Questions

**Congratulations!** You've NEARLY reached the end of the first chapter. All you have to do is answer these icky, sticky, super-tricky questions about **GOO** and then you're done.

*** But be warned: they are for Roald Dahl Experts only.**

1. Inside which type of **chocolate bar** did Charlie find a *Golden Ticket*?
2. Who did ***Willy Wonka*** build a **chocolate palace** for?
3. What did **Matilda** use to stick her **father's hat** to his head?
4. How did **Mr Twit** catch the birds for his *Bird Pie*?



The answers are on **page 00**. If you got all four correct, cartwheel around your nearest supermarket. If you didn't, go for a ride on a fuzzy fruit with a squidgy sticky inside … or read *James and the Giant Peach* again. Whichever's easier.



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# TRICK

# The Booby-Trapped Peach

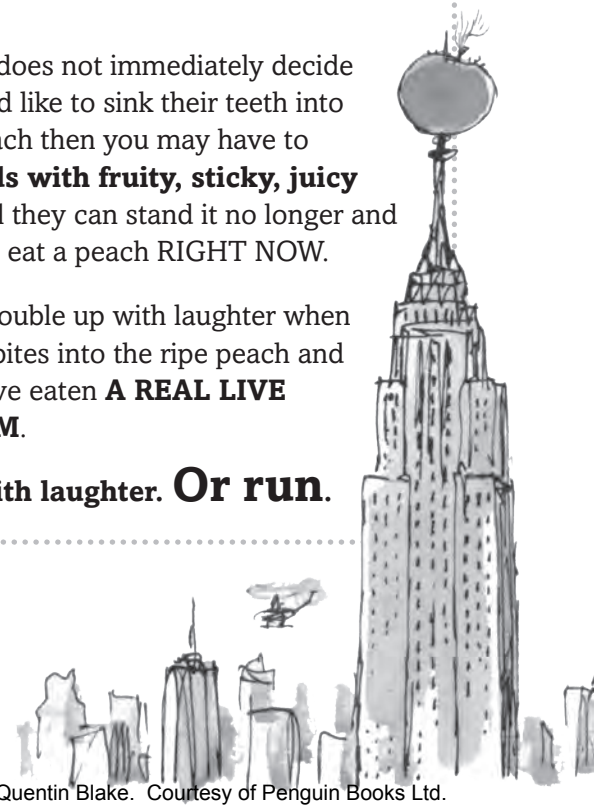
Unless you happen to have a giant-fruit-and-veg shop nearby, you're unlikely to have a giant peach. (Or a giant earthworm, for that matter.) DON'T PANIC. For this trick, you will need one average, run-of-the-mill, really quite normal-sized peach, available from all good fruit-and-veg shops. But it must be VERY RIPE.

## YOU WILL NEED:

- ☆ One ripe peach
- ☆ One jelly worm (the edible sort)
- ☆ One cocktail stick
- ☆ One fruit bowl

## WHAT YOU DO:

1. Being VERY careful, **spear your peach** with a cocktail stick and wiggle it about a bit so that you've made a small tunnel in your sticky, juicy fruit.
2. **Poke the jelly worm into the tunnel**. Leave a little bit of the worm sticking out of the peach, just like in *James and the Giant Peach*.
3. Put the **booby-trapped peach** into the fruit bowl.
4. **Wait.**
5. If a grown up does not immediately decide that they would like to sink their teeth into a delicious peach then you may have to **fill their heads with fruity, sticky, juicy thoughts** until they can stand it no longer and simply have to eat a peach RIGHT NOW.
6. Get ready to double up with laughter when the grown up bites into the ripe peach and thinks they have eaten **A REAL LIVE EARTHWORM**.
7. **Double up with laughter. Or run.**





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