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Skin And Other Stories



Synopsis

How would you get rid of a murder weapon without causing suspicion? Where would you hide a diamond where no one else would think of looking? What if you found out that the tattoo on your back was worth over a million dollars? You will discover that just about anything is possible in a Roald Dahl story, and here are eleven of his very best.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Roald Dahl is one of the best storytellers of our time. As evidenced by this short story collection, not everything he wrote was great, but his control over the English language is a rare gift. The way he can have two people talking about such a mundane issue, debating back and forth, without making it monotonous or boring is truly admirable, and just one of the reasons why I enjoyed reading this book. I'll break it down, story by story.
SKIN: Weak beginning that builds up to a story of great intrigue that serves as a great opener to this volume.
LAMB TO THE SLAUGHTER: Probably Dahl's most popular short, and rightfully so. It's deliciously cruel and just so witty.
THE SOUND MACHINE: Captivating and somewhat scary. Top three.
AN AFRICAN STORY: Staggeringly creative and just so odd. Beautifully written story from an imagination so vast and so weird that it'll leave you wondering where all of those ideas come from.
GALLOPING FOXLEY: Great build-up that ends in a

somewhat cheap twist, but still, overall, a good read. THE WISH: Worst story in the collection. A shot at metaphorical story telling that lands on incoherent. THE SURGEON: Could very well be my favorite of the collection. A unique tale that is so well told that you might find yourself wanting to peek at the end to see how it turns out. DIP IN THE POOL: One of the less entertaining stories here. THE CHAMPION OF THE WORLD: Captivating and hilarious. BEWARE OF DOG: The opening scene is evocative, describing the thought process of a pilot who has lost his leg, and how he tries to bale out of his craft. The second half of the story is still interesting, but noticeably loses its footing after the initial attraction. MY LADY, MY DOVE: Very interesting story about a man with an overbearing wife, and how the two of them react to things very differently. There are so many interesting ideas at work here, from the "secret" way of playing the game to the twist ending. 7/10

This collection of stories reveals the diversity of Dahl's thoughts and interests. It is interesting to see if there are any unifying themes in any of the stories. Although I did not find any such theme, each of the stories presents a nice surprise twist at the conclusion, nothing earth shattering and heavy handed, just satisfying. The Sound Machine: A story asserting that all life is played out in a noisy way for all living creatures. An African Story: Man and nature acting together to exact revenge. Galloping Foxley: William is a creature of habit, routine is everything. When the routine is suddenly broken, William resorts to reflection of previous times in his life that might explain the presence of a mysterious stranger causing the interruption. Surprise!! Lamb to the Slaughter: Mary had a little (frozen) lamb. The Wish: Dahl enters the mind of a child to relate an adventure familiar to many children where fantasy becomes reality. The Surgeon: There is really more than one surgeon involved here, but the title still works. Dip In the Pool: There are different meanings to the phrase "Your number is up." The Champion of the World: A story of poachers and keepers and pheasants. Beware of the Dog: A WWII story with the unusual question; exactly which side am I on? My Lady Love, My Dove: Some people pay a lot of attention to social class, but in this story a seemingly intractable class conscious person seems to be very flexible with crossing self-imposed class boundaries.

Roald Dahl is not just for children. I always delighted in his wicked wit in Lamb to the Slaughter and the ambiguity in Beware of Dog, so to find a collection of his short stories was a godsend. His stories rate up there with Flannery O'Connor, William Faulkner and Charlotte Perkins Gilman for disturbing twists.

I read these shorts years ago, and they are still just as enjoyable to read through again now. Great collection. I love Roald Dahl. For those of you out there who only know him for his children's books, I recommend you give his adult oriented works a shot. His ideas are equally creative, and his character as idiosyncratic as ever. However, now Dahl is unleashed, and no longer restricted by any sort of decency standards appropriate for younger readers. It's a fun, and crazy ride.

I absolutely love this book. Roald Dahl is a gripping and suspenseful writer who manages to captivate the reader with a limited amount of gore. The only thing is that this book is listed as young adult, which is probably decided by the publisher, but the subject matter is pretty strong, so parents might want to read it themselves first before giving to their children! I would say 15 or older would enjoy the book, but 11-14 depends on the child.

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