

KIEZgroup: Talking about Spring - and The Fantastic Mr Dahl (cf. Vocab)

1 a. It's spring! Have you noticed anything interesting during the week - using which sense?

1 b Dahl and the magic of spring!

2. Thinking of Dahl writing home from school - and to whom he wrote and from whom he got letters or messages - talk to your neighbour

a) about writing letters as a child or

b) to which children you write/wrote.

(Did you write many letters as a child? To whom do you write now? Did you enjoy it? Do you miss it nowadays if you phone instead? (Or use whatsapp.)

On p. 57 Dahl apologizes to his mother for his bad writing!)

3. The Fantastic Mr Dahl: you read to the end of the chapter.

I suggest a chapter a week in future - but some are longer than others. You have to watch out and if you have the time and inclination, then read a bit! We can always talk about where there were problems - try just to read!

a. Problems?

b. Find a word or phrase that means about the same as these:

eg 1. saved - line 2 on page 39 = rescued

2. I ask myself, I think about (p. 39, line 3 of the second paragraph)

3. wrong letters, orthography (p. 39, line 5 of second paragraph)

4. uninteresting p. 40, top line

5. I don't think I believe him p. 40, line 12

6. seen, understood p. 41, l.6

7. something good p. 41, l. 7

8. tell, communicate p. 41, next to last line of the second paragraph.

9. suddenly - p. 41, last line

10. I don't believe it p. 42 , first line of the second paragraph

c. Talking about Englishness - 'Mama' being European (p. 40) - Mummy or Mother or Mom/Mum for the Anglo-Saxons; 'tuckbox' being typical, 'prefect' for later as vocab. (In charge, like a sub-teacher).

d. How do you like Michael Rosen speaking to you when you're reading? Eg p. 40 last line.

e. People have always collected things. What do you collect? Is it less interesting nowadays now we have more money, relatively speaking, and easy communication?

How do you feel about the people who collected works of art which are now the basis of so many museum collections?

f. Nicknames - and how comforting it is if somebody knows it.

g. Dahl and empathy. Do we need empathy in our writers?

h. The importance of sports - some can do sports better than learning subjects.
(pp. 45-46)

i. The English thing of knowing which position you are in the class. Does it happen in other countries? (p. 47)

m Being a foreigner...p. 47 (Are most writers outsiders?)

n A writer of extremes p. 49

o Storytelling in school! Can you imagine it? Have you experienced it?

(P Self-medicating. Cf later)

q Which books did you read as a child? Do you recognize any of what he read? (How much time do children have for reading now? Cf middle of p. 55). Look at the bottom of 55 together! Dahl read Hilare Belloc. Here's one:

Matilda told such Dreadful Lies,
It made one Gasp and Stretch one's Eyes;
Her Aunt, who, from her Earliest Youth,
Had kept a Strict Regard for Truth,
(respect)

Attempted to believe Matilda:
The effort very nearly killed her,
And would have done so, had not she
Discovered this Infirmary. (illness?!)

For once, towards the Close of Day,
Matilda, growing tired of play,
And finding she was left to alone,
Went tiptoe to the telephone

And summoned the Immediate Aid
(called for, sent for)
Of London's Nobel Fire-Brigade.
Within an hour the Gallant Band (heroic)
Were pouring in on every hand,

From Putney, Hackney Downs and Bow,
With Courage high and Hearts a-glow
They galloped, roaring through the Town,
"Matilda's House is Burning Down"
Inspired by British Cheers and Loud
Proceeding from the Frenzied Crowd,

They ran their ladders through a score (a
score = 20)
Of windows on the Ball Room Floor;
And took Peculiar Pains to Souse
(make wet)

The Pictures up and down the House,
Until Matilda's Aunt succeeded
In showing them they were not needed
And even then she had to pay
To get the Men to go away! . . .

. . .
It happened that a few Weeks later
Here aunt was off to the Theatre
To see that Interesting Play
The Second Mrs. Tanqueray.

She had refused to take her Niece
To hear this Entertaining Piece:
A Deprivation Just and Wise (*Vorenthalten*)
To Punish her for Telling Lies.

That Night a Fire did break out-
You should have heard Matilda Shout!
You should have heard her Scream and
Bawl, (*schreien, brüllen*)
And throw the window up and call

To People passing in the Street-
(The rapidly increasing Heat
Encouraging her to obtain
Their confidence)-but it was all in vain!
(*Vertrauen*)

For every time She shouted "Fire!"
They only answered "Little Liar!"
And therefore when her Aunt returned,
Matilda, and the House, were burned.