

# Tall Stories and Revolting Rhymes

WORKSHEET A

I was a famous writer. Although I died in 1990, my stories are still very popular with children and adults. I'll tell you a bit about my life – see if you can guess who I am.

My father, Harald, moved to Britain from his native Norway in around 1911 with his second wife, Sofie. They settled in Llandaff, Wales, and over the next six years they had five children. I was the third child, born on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1916. I was only three when my eldest sister died of appendicitis. The whole family was sad but my father never recovered. He died of pneumonia two months later. When I was old enough, I attended Llandaff Cathedral School. In the story of my childhood, published in 1984, I wrote about my memories of this and other schools I attended. I ended up at Repton, a secondary school in England. To be honest, I can't say I enjoyed school. I enjoyed doing sport but I didn't care much for the academic side. However, while I was at Repton, we would each receive a plain cardboard box from time to time. Inside each box was a selection of chocolate bars created by the manufacturer Cadbury's for us to test. These episodes inspired me to write a book called *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* much later.

As an adult I worked for the Shell Oil Company in Tanzania until World War II broke out in 1939. I joined the RAF (Royal Air Force) and trained to be a pilot. Unfortunately, on my first combat outing I ran out of fuel and had to crash land in the Libyan desert. I was injured in the crash and spent several months in hospital. After seeing some action in Greece, I was posted to the United States to an administrative position. My job was to encourage Americans to help Britain's war effort by giving their help and their money.

I became quite popular as a storyteller in America; I even wrote a story called *Gremlin Lore*, about the creatures which are known to sabotage RAF planes (some people claim these are mythical creatures, but we pilots know they are real!). The story was passed on to a young man called Walt Disney, who wanted to make my story into an animated feature called *The Gremlins*. In the end the film wasn't made but my reputation as a writer was. I started out writing mainly short stories for newspapers and women's magazines, and then published collections of these stories, including such tales as *Taste*, *Skin* and *Lamb to the Slaughter*.

I married Patricia Neal (whom I had met two years earlier) in 1953. She was a glamorous Hollywood actress and she chose me to be her leading man. We had five children over the course of our marriage, which lasted almost thirty years. Watching my children as they grew was a fascinating experience. Children love being frightened, they love chocolate and toys and money and they love being made to giggle. I started writing more and more stories for children. In 1983 I divorced Patricia and married Felicity. It was a happy and productive time for me. I wrote some of my most famous stories during the 1980s including *The BFG*, *The Witches*, and *Matilda*. As I mentioned before, I died on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1990, in Oxford, England. My legacy, I believe, is the hours of entertainment I continue to give children and adults alike with my tales of the unexpected. Do you know me?

Answer the questions.

Write your answers in the puzzle below to reveal my name and the title of the autobiography of my childhood.

1. What was the name of the secondary school I attended? (6)
2. What was my mother's name? (5)
3. I was born and grew up in which district in Wales? (8)
4. What was my father's name? (6)
5. This illness claimed the life of my sister. (12)
6. The director who nearly turned my first book into an animated feature film. (6)
7. I lived and worked here until the war. (8)
8. Children love this – I know I did – I even wrote about a factory which made it. (9)
9. My first published story was called \_\_\_\_\_ *Lore*. (7)
10. When my plane ran out of fuel, I crash-landed in the desert of this country. (5)
11. The RAF is an abbreviation for the *Royal* \_\_\_\_\_ (3,5)
12. The name of my second wife. (8)

