

ROALD DAHL ON FILM

My Dream Factory

by Simona Dmitrovic, 17, of Takovski Ustanak school

I noticed it the moment I walked into a room. Mostly, because I fell over it. While I was getting up, I realized that I had tripped over a book. A huge book, lying on the floor, with dark-purple covers and golden cursive letters spelling out "The Dream Journal". The tourist guide gave me a reproachful look. We were in the famous Roald Dahl's shed.

"You aren't allowed to touch the objects, while tripping over them is equal to a sin", he told me.

"I think you're having high expectations", I replied, fairly irritated. "The whole room, including the floor is covered with books and papers."

The fact that I was obviously right, and that most of the other tourists seemed to agree, made him ignore me for the rest of the tour. No wonder he was unable to notice that I was the only one left in Dahl's shed when the tour was over. I desired one thing-and that was to open the book that captured my attention. I remember running my fingers over the golden letters spelling out the title, taking it to the Dahl's worktable, then turning the rusty pages in awe. Suddenly, the letters started getting blurry, and everything turned black. The moments passed, and nothing happened. Then, after what seemed like eternity, it looked as if someone had turned the lights back on, and I could see again. The problem was that I wasn't in the same room anymore. I was in a long, narrow hall that ended with a door. I saw a man standing right beside it, waving. I had nowhere else to go, so I started walking slowly towards him. I was half my way there, when I had to stop. The man's face now seemed familiar. Too familiar. He looked just like Roald Dahl. Am I going crazy? I looked back, but the only thing behind me was darkness. I had to keep moving forward.

"Hello, I'm Roald Dahl and today you will be touring The Dream Factory", he said, taking me through the door.

We entered a gigantic room, full of people. In a split second, everything seemed quite normal. But then I noticed, terrified, that while some of the people looked rather ordinary, some of them looked exactly like the creatures I was reading about in fairytales, while I was still a child. They were working on machines that looked like nothing I'd seen in my life. I

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started stuttering, trying to ask Dahl what was going on, but the words just weren't coming out.

"First-the historical overview", Dahl said, taking me through the room. "Nobody knows when The Dream Factory was built. Most of us believe it has existed since eternity, and that the first human being was created in The Dream Factory. On the contrary, some of us believe that the first breath human being took created the dream factory. It's like a chicken or egg question. It's the only thing that causes tension here."

"Look at that", he said, showing me the room. "Do you want to continue touring it? We're just at the beginning, you can always give up..." He looked at me carefully. "...If you're scared of what may come."

"No, I'm not", I lied to him, looking at the fairytale-like room. "Of course I want to continue."

"Then you need to sign something. Come here."

He took me to a wall where enormous paper was hung and framed. Something was written on it in the language I could not understand.

"It is Dreamlandish. I'll translate it to you. Here's what it says:

The cause and purpose of The Dream Factory is to create, serve, and encourage dreams to grow. Here, we believe in what is said in "The Dream Journal", and that is that all the things that live have dreams, whether they belong to flowers, trees, animals, or human beings. For the workers of The Dream Factory, every dream is equally important. You, the one who is reading this, ought to know that your dream also dreams, and it dreams of becoming the truth. Not all of the work is done here. Unless you help us, dreams are lost, and then we mourn. But we still hope, that one day, the power of those who open their eyes to dreams freely will break the chains between two worlds and what is between them will die just to be born again.

Underneath it said:

I solemnly swear I am a dreamer.

"Sign there", Dahl said.

I did.

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"It tells the story of the first dream ever-The Ancient Dream. In there, all of the Earthly dreams are saved, the ones that have come true, the ones that haven't, the ones that lasted, and the ones that didn't. But the thing that is so special about it is that every night, when the clock strikes midnight, it writes itself. It writes all of the dreams, wishes, goals that lie in the human heart during the day. Also, it includes instructions on what potions to use for each dream, and how much of each potion. Now, that the book was stolen, and a half of the "dream creatures" were killed, The Dream Factory was in danger of disappearing. The remaining workers were confused, because the book was their main source of information about the dreams of the Earth. Then, they decided to bring the Dead Writers to the factory. That's why I'm here."

"But why?" I asked.

"Because the writers who have dedicated their lives to dreaming up stories of human destiny, are the ones who know best the wishes of the human heart. From that moment on, the team of Dead Writers has been working every day, patiently, on the new dream book. Some of them have even started working with dream potions and machines, alongside the Magical Creatures. Look, we're finally here!"

We were in a small, dark room. In the center of the room there was a well.

"This is the Magical Well of the Past", Dahl said.

I looked into it. Deep down, I could see glittering, black fluid.

"Here is the place where all the ideas hide. The oldest ideas, the ideas of God and human soul are at the bottom. Newer ideas are closer to the surface."

He took a whole bucket of the fluid.

"Now, we'll bring this back to the workers. And I'll show you the main machines."

We were in the central part of the factory again. Dahl took me to see the first machine. The dwarfs were working there. He gave them the black fluid drained from the Magical Well of the Past.

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“Now, we’ll give the ideas drained from the Magical Well of the Past to the workers who will mix with other potions, following the instructions from the Book of Dreams.”

I saw a dwarf taking a pink potion that was labelled as “Inspiration”, and mixing it with a black fluid from the well. Then, he sent it to the next machine.

“That inspiration”, said Dahl, “You need to be inspired to make your dreams come true.”

In the next machine, the potion mixed was labelled with “Love”.

“Love, that’s the main force that keeps the dream breathing. Without love, a dream is on its deathbed. If you lose the love for what you’re doing, then your dream becomes weak, feeble, and so do you.”

In the next machine, giants were mixing the product with potions labelled as “Hard Work” and “Persistence”. The giants were working there.

“One of the most important potions. Most of the dreams are lost here, also. Hard Work and Persistence are sometimes the hardest to find. It happens when people don’t want to sacrifice themselves for their dream. They don’t want to sacrifice this moment for the following. It usually happens when there isn’t enough love.”

“The next machine is the biggest, said Dahl.” “But we have the smallest amount of the potions here. It’s faith that is mixed here. Faith-many think that it’s not necessary, that hard work and persistence from the last machine are enough. But soon after, they learn that dreams can come true without faith, indeed. But it turns the process of making a dream come true to hell, hardship and misery. You need amazing amount of strength to be faithful to your dream. It may not see like that, but it is true. Also, people nowadays are taught to lose the faith. It makes them miserable. “

“The next machine is connected to the machine of love?” I noticed. It was huge.

“Yes, can you guess what it is?”

But I had already seen the label on the potions. “Fear”.

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“Fear is grand. Enormous. And you know what’s interesting? Love’s connected to the fear, and the more there is love, the more there is fear.”

“When you love the dream you’re working on, you fear to lose it. You fear something will go wrong. You fear you won’t have enough luck. You fear someone will take it away from you. You fear because you worked so hard on it”, I said.

“Fear is normal. But you have to control it yourself. There is no machine for it. That’s the hardest thing for humans to face. It’s just you and your fears. And sometimes the fear wins. Sometimes it becomes so big it swallows the love it was made from. Then, the dreams are finally lost.”

“Where do they go?”

“All of the lost dreams are spilled in the river behind the factory, the Dream River.”

“All is lost there?”

“Almost. But sometimes, the kids that live near the factory swim in the river. Sometimes, a particle of a dream would attach to their body, and as the kids grow, the dream particle spreads through their body. It happens rarely, because their parents think the river is doomed and they won’t let them swim there. But it happens.”

“And what happens if there isn’t enough fear. If the dream comes true?”

“I’ll show you.”

We got closer to the fear machine, and Dahl put in my hand something small, purple, that started moving and glittering. I was holding a dream in my shaking hands. Then, I looked out of the window.

“What’s that?”

“It’s the Cemetery of Broken Dreams. There lie the dreams that are killed at the very moment they are born.”

“How is that?”

“They are killed the very moment they start breathing. Why? Because thoughts are the greatest creators and the greatest killers. They are killed

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by thoughts that are whispering: “You can’t do that”, “You mustn’t do that”, “It isn’t possible”, and “Don’t even bother starting”. The mind becomes so occupied that it cannot even start the first state of dreaming, and that’s imagining. Sometimes they are killed by the words that come from the outer sources. From other people telling you those things. But it’s a much rarer case. Usually, people kill the dream themselves. Here, dreams are buried.

You see how scary it is, how there’s fog all around the cemetery? How you cannot see anything behind it? How it seems like it has no end? Well I am sure it has one. And do you know what’s beginning at the end of that cemetery? The real world. The same world that you come from. The world that I was from. There are many monsters living in the cemetery. Vampires, for example. They will suck your dreams out. Many other monsters that will leave you without motivation, without dreams, without hope, without anything. That will kill your faith. Only the bravest, the strongest dreamer who could get on the other side undamaged, with bravery in his heart and a dream still in his mind, only he will “break the chains between two worlds and what is between them will die and be born again”. That is the sentence that you couldn’t understand. The broken dreams will die, and again will be born when the two worlds collide. For now, we don’t have a dreamer that big. But we dream that one day we will, and until then, the dream is enough. “

Then I remember asking him to go down to the dream river. I wanted to take a bit of dream fluid and bring it home with me. Something happened, I tripped again, probably. I remember falling into the black, dark river.

Then, I woke up. I was at my worktable. I was holding a quill. So, everything had been just a dream? But next to me, there was a bottle, and in a blink of an eye, I realized that it was the same bottle from the dream. I opened it, hoping to find the black dream fluid. But I only found ink. I took the quill and ink and started writing this story.

It is the time for me to start my own dream factory, and the first word I write will be the first step.

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