

BOOK REVIEW OF ROALD DAHL'S GEORGE'S MARVELOUSE MEDICINE

Laurensius Wega H.C.K

A2B009095

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES DIPONEGORO UNIVERSITY

ABSTRAK

Novel is a long printed story about imaginary character and events. George's Marvelouse Medicine is novel for children. This novel is easy to understand and written in trivial language because it used to introduce children about literary. There is some of picture to describe the look of the character and what characters do in some occasion to keep the reader interest in reading. It was a good novel but there is something in the ending that makes it a little akward. The ending is hanging and it's feels like there is something unfinished like the story are having more potential to be continued. masih berpotensi supaya cerita dilanjutkan dan dapat menghasilkan akhir cerita yang lebih baik. Kelemahan berikutnya adalah kurangnya peringatan kepada pembaca karna didalam novel tersebut terdapat banyak bahan-bahan yang berbahaya jika dikonsumsi. Karena novel ini ditujukan kepada anak-anak maka diharapkan adanya tambahan peringatan kepada mereka untuk tidak meniru dan memakan bahan bahan yang ada dalam cerita novel ini.

INTRODUCTION

I. Background of Writing

George's Marvellous Medicine is a novel for children. Children books are meant to please and entertain the readers, whether with entertaining stories or appealing illustrations (Mustakim, 2005:2). Children book is like other literary works which contain intrinsic elements such as theme, setting, character, and plot. This story book is perfect to introduce children about literature and make them interested in reading.

The story of the novel is about a child. His name is George and he is 8 years old. He has a lot of mischievous plans in his brain. One day, his parents leave him only with his grandma and suddenly he has the nastiest idea about grandma's medicine. A medicine is supposed to make someone better but grandma never getting any better after taking her medicine so he is planning to make her new medicine.

George's Grandma always said nasty things to him like a boy who grows so fast became stupid and lazy. His Grandma told George to stop eating candy and start eating lettuce three times a day. Grandma also loves the taste of caterpillar, slug, and the best beetley bug because it tastes crunchy in the mouth. George never understands why his grandma always says awful things to him. George thinks that all of the Grandma's behaviour is a disease because all she says are bad and he wants to cure it by making her a new medicine.

The writer will discuss the strengts and weaknesses from the intrinsic elements inside the novel. The writer chose *Book Review "George's Marvellouse Medicine"* Written By *Roald Dahl* as the object of final project because this novel has interesting theme, setting and characters.

II. Roald Dahl and His Works

Roald Dahl was born in Llandaff, South Wales, on September 13, 1916. In Villa Marie. His parents are Norwegian, Harald Dahl and Sofie Magdalene Dahl. Dahl first attended [The Cathedral School, Llandaff](#). At the age of eight, and he transferred to a boarding school in England. In November 1939, Dahl joined the Royal Air Force (RAF) as an aircraftman. Dahl married American actress [Patricia Neal](#), on 2 July 1953 at [Trinity Church](#) in New York City. Their marriage lasted for 30 years and they had five children. After divorce from Neal in 1983, Dahl married [Felicity "Liccy" Crosland](#) at [Brixton Town Hall, South London](#). Roald Dahl died on November 23, 1990. At the age of 74 of a blood disease and was buried in the cemetery at St Peter and St Paul's Church in [Great Missenden](#), Buckinghamshire, England.

Children's stories written by Roald Dahl are [The Gremlins](#) (1943), [James and the Giant Peach](#) (1961) – Film: [James and the Giant Peach](#) (live-action/animated) (1996), [Charlie and the Chocolate Factory](#) (1964)^[a] – Films: [Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory](#) (1971) and [Charlie and the Chocolate Factory](#) (2005), [The Magic Finger](#) (1 June 1966) - Film: [The Magic Finger](#) (animated), [Fantastic Mr Fox](#) (9 December 1970) – Film: [Fantastic Mr. Fox](#) (animated) (2009), [Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator](#) (9 January 1972) – Sequel to [Charlie and the Chocolate Factory](#), [Danny, the Champion of the World](#) (30 October 1975) – Film: [Danny the Champion of the World](#) (TV movie) (1989), [The Enormous Crocodile](#) (24 August 1978) - Film: [The Enormous Crocodile](#) (animated), [The Twits](#) (17 December 1980), [George's Marvellous Medicine](#) (21 May 1981), [The BFG](#) (14 October 1982) – Films: [The BFG](#) (animated) (1989), [The BFG](#) (2016), [The Witches](#) (27 October 1983) – Film: [The Witches](#) (1990), [The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me](#) (26 September 1985), [Matilda](#) (21 April 1988) – Film: [Matilda](#) (1996), [Esio Trot](#) (19 April 1989) – Film: [Roald Dahl's](#)

[*Esio Trot*](#) (2014), [*The Vicar of Nibbleswicke*](#) (9 May 1990), [*The Minpins*](#) (8 August 1991)

SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

George's Marvellous Medicine was a story about child named George. His family lived miles away from the village because his father was a farmer. George had a small family consisting of four people. The first was George, he was just like the other 8 years old children who loved imagining something and exploring something new. The second and the third were Mr and Mrs Kranky. They were George's parents. Mr Kranky was a small man with bandy legs and a huge head. Mrs Kranky was caring and loving person. The last person was George's grandma. She was selfish grumpy old woman. She had wrinkle all over her face and had pale brown teeth.

The story began when George's parents went to the groceries at the town, leaving him and his Grandma in the house. Mom left a message to George to give Grandma's medicine at eleven o'clock. Grandma was always rude and bossy to George whenever his parents were not around. George tried his best to please his old woman, but all of his efforts seemed useless.

At 10.05 AM George looked at Grandma's medicine. Suddenly he had some questions in his mind "why grandma was never better after she took her medicine". Medicine was supposed to make people better, but he had never seen Grandma getting better after taking her medicine. At that moment, he wanted to make new medicine for Grandma.

George had less than one hour to finish his medicine. He took an enormous saucepan and wanders around all rooms in the house and put everything he found in

it. He boils all the mixture inside his saucepan to mix all the materials inside it. As the saucepan got hotter and hotter, suddenly it began to produce rich blue smoke, the color of peacocks, foam and fiery. Fearsome smell was filled the kitchen. It was amazing watching this amazing mixture like it was a life.

George swore that he saw bright sparks flashing in the swirling foam. He suddenly danced around spouting strange words that came into his head out of nowhere. He said “Fiery broth and witch’s brew; Foamy froth and riches blue; Fume and spume and spoondrift spray; Fizzle swizzle shout hooray; Grandma better start to pray”.

All his preparation was ready and the time was exactly eleven o’clock, George went to the living room to give the new medicine to Grandma. Two spoonfuls of George’s medicine made Grandma grow taller even she was going through the roof. George let the brown hen pecked the medicine and it began to grow four or five times of its normal size.

At that moment, George’s mother came back from shopping, she was shocked after seeing the brown hen and Grandma. On the other hand, George’s father was really excited about what he saw. Mr Kranky is happy because for many years he tried to breed bigger animals and his dream came true. George and his father went to the yard to give George’s medicine to all animals in his yard, such as the pig, bullocks, the sheep and pony horse.

They used all of George’s medicine and Mr Kranky asked George to make another one, but George did not quite remember all of the materials. Mr Kranky convinced George that he could help him remember all the materials he used to make

the medicine. Mr Kranky wrote down all the materials that George mentioned while they were exploring every room in the house.

Mr Kranky went to town to buy all the materials. They made second and third medicine, but it failed so they started over to make the fourth medicine. The fourth medicine is ready, but at the same time when they were carrying the medicine, Grandma felt thirsty she wanted a cup of tea and accidentally, drank the fourth medicine because she thought it was tea. The effect of the fourth medicine was gradually making grandma get smaller and smaller, event smaller than ants and finally, she is gone. They were shocked, but they could not do anything, so they just say good bye to Grandma.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF ROALD DAHL'S GEORGE'S MARVELLOUSE MEDICINE

I. STRENGTHS

1. THEME

Theme is the basic idea of the literary works. It is underlying message or big idea inside the stories. Theme related to the internal journey of the main character and it can build some kind of resonates with the readers (Burhan, 2002:68). The writer chose theme as the strength of the novel because of the theme in this novel gives some kind of deep connection between the protagonist and the readers.

The main theme of *George's Marvellouse Medicine* is life experience of the main character. Most of the stories are keeping track of what George does and how he does it. He wanders around his house and mixes various things that he finds in his

house to make the medicine. It is very amusing because it makes the readers wonder what he will do next.

The minor theme of *George Marvellous Medicine* is discovery. George finds a new perspective about medicine and tries to change Grandma with it. The effect of the medicine is also unpredictable because it turns not to cure, but it makes anyone who drinks it will grow four times of its original size. The effect of the medicine is probably caused by the magic spell that George spits accidentally as quoted below:

“Fiery broth and witch’s brew, foamy froth and riches blue, fume and spume and spoondrift spray, fizzle swizzle shout hooray, watch it sloshing swashing sploshing, hear it hissing squishing spissing, Grandma better start to pray” (Roald Dahl, 1981: 34).

It was interesting and so unpredictable when an 8years old use magic spell to complete his medicine. The unpredictable discoveries and live experience that George perform is some how became the interesting part of the story.

2. SETTING

Another strength and interesting point of this book is the setting. Settings are time and place where the story happens. Setting provides particular information about placement and timing. It is supporting the event on the story, so the readers are as if experiencing the reality (Mustakim, 2005: 21).

The story of *George’s Marvellous Medicine* written by Roald Dahl takes place in George’s house. This house is special because this is where George trapped alone in the house with Grandma and finally decided to makes her new medicine. The house is also a farm and its location is far away from the village as quoted below:

George was bored to tears. He didn’t have a brother or a sister. His father was a farmer and the farm they lived on was miles away from anywhere, so there were never any children to play with (Roald Dahl, 1981: 1).

Time settings are described in pretty details in this novel. It says that the story begins on Saturday morning. There is also the time when George starts to make his medicine after he heard some scary story from grandma as quoted below:

As George sat there pondering this interesting problem, his eye fell upon the bottle of Grandma's brown medicine standing on the sideboard. George looked at the kitchen clock. It said five past ten. There was nearly an hour left before Grandma's next dose was due eleven (Roald Dahl, 1981: 14).

The writers take the setting as the strength of the novel because the connection of time and place in this novel is the biggest components that can make the story grow. George and grandma are forced to stay at home by themselves. Social contact that occurs between George and grandma inside the house became the beginning of the bigger problem that will appear inside the story. The message from George's mother in the beginning of the story to give medicine to grandma is also begin to inspire the main character to do more than just giving the ordinary medicine. It was unpredictable because their contact at that time inside the house will lead to the making of George's medicine.

3. CHARACTERS

The word character itself in English literature has many explanations, such as character as attitude, interest, desire, emotion, and moral principles inside the character itself (Burhan, 2002: 165). There are four characters inside *George Marvelous Medicine* but only three of them that strengthen the story. Those characters are George, Mr. Kranky and Grandma.

The first is George. George is the main character of the story. He is 8 years old and he always has mischief plans inside his mind. He also has desire to change his old grandma by using his medicine as quoted below:

I shall make her a new medicine, one that so strong and so fierce and so fantastic it will either cure her completely or blow off the top of her head. I'll make her a magic medicine, a medicine no doctor in the world has ever made before (Roald Dahl, 1981: 14).

The second character is Mr Kranky, Mr Kranky is George father. He is a small man with bandy legs and a huge head. He is a kind father to George but he was not easy person to live with because he always over excited by anything that happened to him as quoted below:

Mr Kranky, working himself up so much that he put butter in his coffee and milk in his toast (Roald Dahl, 1981: 74).

The third character that becomes the strengths of the novel is Grandma. She is a grizzly, grumpy, selfish old woman with pale brown teeth. The worst things about Grandma is that she likes to eat crunchy, creepy and crawlies bugs and snails with the cabbage

Whenever I see a live slug on a piece of lettuce I gobble it up quick before it crawls away. Delicious! She squeezed her lips and said again. Worms and slugs and beetley bugs are Delicious! (Dahl, 1981: 7).

II. WEAKNESSES

The weakness of this novel is the ending of the story. It is so odd when grandma is gone, but nobody seems care about it and the story just end. The end is kind of empty because George's family seems fine after lost one of their family member and they did not feel sad at all as quotes bellow:

For a few minutes, Mrs Kranky kept wandering round with a puzzled look on her face, saying, 'mother, where are you? Where've you gone? Where've you got to? How can I find you?' But she calmed down quiet quickly. And by lunch time, she was saying, 'Ah well, I suppose it's all for the best, really. She was a bit of nuisance around the house, wasn't she?'
'Yes,' Mr Kranky said. 'She most certainly was.' (Dahl, 1981: 103)

The ending feels so odd because they are family and they must feel something in their heart when someone's missing. The story still has potential to be continued and having another chapter to achieve the true ending.

The end of a story which logic and climax in the story is not finish and the story still has potential to be continued (Burhan, 2002: 148).

Another weakness of the novel is when George makes and adds a lot of dangerous ingredients in grandma's medicine. Ingredients include deodorant and shampoo from the bath room, floor polish from the laundry room, horse radish sauce and gin from the kitchen, animal medicine, engine oil and anti freeze from the garage and brown paint. Those items are dangerous and unconsumable, so it is very dangerous if children try to eat them at home. It is not logical if someone makes medicine from the mixture of such ingredients.

Another weakness of this novel is the absence of a warning to the readers. It is because most of the segment or target of the novel are children. There should be warns children not to try and take the "medicine" at home due to the hazardous nature of some of its ingredients. There should be a warning before the story starts "Warning to readers: Do not try to make George's Marvellous Medicine yourselves at home. It is very dangerous.

CONCLUSION

George's Marvelous Medicine is a novel written by Roald Dahl and illustrated by Quentin Blake. The book is praised for its imitateness and humor, but it is also

criticized for its underdeveloped plot and somewhat abrupt ending. The book is one of Dahl's shorter children's books.

Roald Dahl uses the unusual theme of this novel for children. It is about George who has desire to change his grandma to be a better person by using his magic medicine.

The strengths of this story are its theme, setting, and characters. The themes are the life experience and discoveries that the main characters find. The setting of the novel is in the house inside the farm which is far away from anywhere. The characters are George, Grandma, Mr and Mrs Kranky.

However, this book also has weaknesses, such as its plot. The ending of the story is so odd. Another weakness of this book is the unusual story which should warn children not try and take the "medicine" at home due to its ingredients that can harm them.

Dahl's style in writing this novel is simple, but unpredictable as though it is alive. His imagination is explosive and has cheerful rhymes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

<http://www.roalddahl.com/roald-dahl/stories/1980s/georges-marvellous-medicine>

(Access on September, 20 2015)

<http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-origins-of-childrens-literature>

(Access on September, 28 2015)

<http://www.biography.com/people/roald-dahl-9264648#early-writing-career>

(Access on September, 28 2015)

Nurgiantoro Burhan, 2002, *Teori Kajian Fiksi*. Jogjakarta: UGM PRESS

Mustakim. Muh Nur, 2015, Peranan cerita dalam Pembentukan Perkembangan Anak
TK. Jakarta: DEPDIKNAS