

# *The Landlady* by Roald Dahl



# I. Direct Characterization



- The author shows you exactly what he wants you to think about the personality or physical description of the characters.
- This is a sample answer. You may have different ones. Check with me to see if you are correct! 😊
- “Billy was seventeen years old. He was wearing a new navy-blue overcoat, a new brown trilby hat, and a new brown suit, and he was feeling fine” (73).



## 2. Indirect Characterization

- Writer shows the character in action and let us decide for ourselves what kind of person we are meeting
- Answers may vary. Check with me to see if you are correct! 😊
- “She patted the empty place beside her on the sofa, and she sat there smiling at Billy and waiting for him to come over” (78).
- “His landlady sailing into the room with a large silver tea tray in her hands. She was holding it well out in front of her, and rather high up, and though the tray were a pair of reins on a frisky horse” (76).
- “But this dame was like a jack in the box. He pressed the bell—and out she popped” (74).



# 3. Setting



- The time and place of the story
- “Billy Weaver had traveled down from London on the slow afternoon train, with a change at Reading on the way, and by the time he got to Bath, it was about nine o’clock in the evening, and the moon was coming up out of a clear starry sky over the houses opposite the station entrance.”
- “BED AND BREAKFAST, it said.”

## 4. Foreshadowing



- The use of hints or clues to suggest what will happen later
- “But the air was deadly cold and the wind was like a flat blade of ice on his chest.”
- **PREDICTION:** The reader gets the feeling from this description that there will be a death by “deadly cold.” Also “flat blade of ice” gives you the impression that something will fall down on him.

## 4. Foreshadowing



- “Each word was like a large black eye staring at him..., holding him, compelling him, forcing him to stay where he was.”
- **PREDICTION:** You can predict that someone is watching his everyone move with “black eye.” You can also predict that Billy is being manipulated to stay, and therefore, something harmful will happen later.

## 4. Foreshadowing



- “You see, it isn’t very often I have the pleasure of taking a visitor into my little nest.”
- **PREDICTION:** The Landlady doesn’t have many visitors, so something must be wrong with her or her service. The description of the **BED and BREAKFAST** seems too good to be true.

## 4. Foreshadowing



- “Now where on earth had he heard that rather unusual name before?”
- **PREDICTION:** Billy will hopefully make the connection that the Landlady had something to do with the disappearance of the two men.



## 4. Foreshadowing



- “Now and again, he caught a whiff of a peculiar smell that seemed to emanate directly from her person.”
- **PREDICTION:** Readers can make the predication that the “peculiar smell” is poison.

## 4. Foreshadowing



- “I stuff all my little pets myself when they pass away.”
- **PREDICTION:** Readers can predict that Billy will become another one of the Landlady’s “little pets”. Likewise, she plans to kill Billy and stuff him. You can at the very least predict that she is crazy and her conversation is not normal.

## 4. Foreshadowing



- “The tea tasted faintly of bitter sweet almonds, and he didn’t much care for it.”
- **PREDICTION:** The reader can predict that the “bitter sweet almonds” are a sign of poison. Since Billy doesn’t like it, he shouldn’t drink it.

## 5. Suspense



- A state of uncertainty or excitement, as in awaiting a decision or outcome, usually accompanied by a degree of apprehension or anxiety.
- In the story, Billy almost remembers something about Mulholland, but the landlady interrupts him—twice. How does she interrupt him the first time? The second time?

## 5. Suspense Continued..



- What effect do the two interruptions have?
- What do we think about the pickled walnuts?
- What do we make of the Landlady's inability to remember Billy's name?
- When the Landlady says, "Only You (80)." This is the highest moment of suspense.



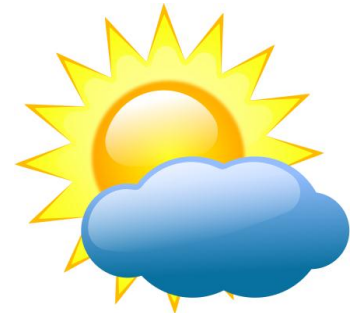
## 6. Dramatic Irony

- The reader knows something that a character does not know
- The reader seems to know that the Landlady will poison and embalm his body before Billy does.



## 6. Verbal Irony

- When the characters say one thing but mean something else
- “The morning sun comes right in the window, Mr. Perkins....”
- Does the Landlady intend for Billy to actually see the morning sunshine?
- Why does the Landlady continue to forget Billy’s name?



## 6. Situational Irony

- The situation turns out to be just the opposite of what we'd expect
- He has never been to Bath before. He seems to be afraid of boardinghouses but thinks this house is pleasant. It is ironic that a seemingly sweet, nice Landlady will more than likely poison Billy just as Mulholland and Temple.





## 7. Dialect

- a way of speaking that is characteristic to a particular place or group of people
- “But this dame was like a jack in the box.”
- I think dame means woman.



## 7. Dialect



- The name itself conjured up imagers of watery cabbage...and a powerful smell of **kippers**.
- I think **kippers** means some type of food. It is a type of fish that is smoked and salted. It is served for breakfast in Great Britain.

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## 7. Dialect



- “The girl is slightly dotty.”
- I think dotty means crazy or senile.



## 7. Dialect



- “I mean famous cricketers or footballers or something like that?”
- I think cricketers means a game of some kind. This refers to people who play cricket, a game that is popular in Great Britain.

## 8. Mood

- The mood is the readers' feelings after reading the story.
- This story makes you feel eerie. It is a creepy story that should make you feel a little unsettled.



## 8. Tone

- Tone is the author's attitude in the story.
- The tone of this story is dark and scary.

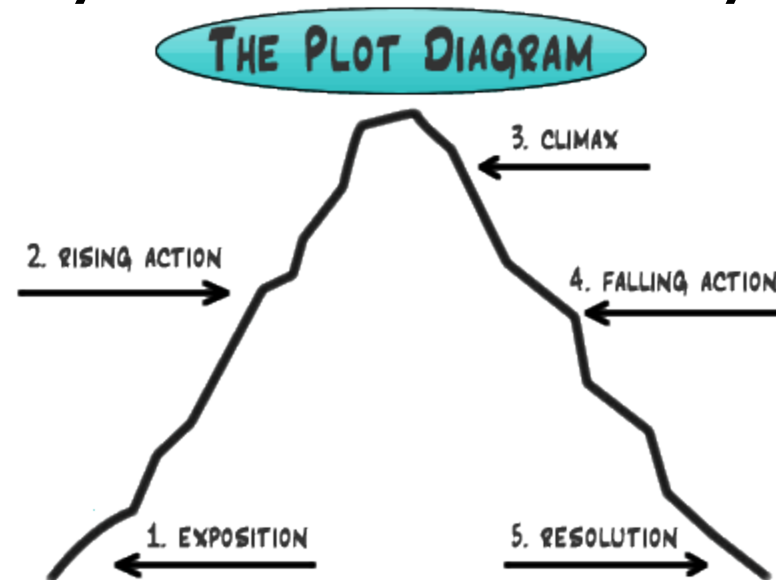


# Other Important Terms:

## Plot



- The events in the story
- Billy Weaver arrives in Bath, London and is looking for a place to stay. He stumbles upon a Bed and Breakfast, but this place doesn't exactly turn out how Billy expects.





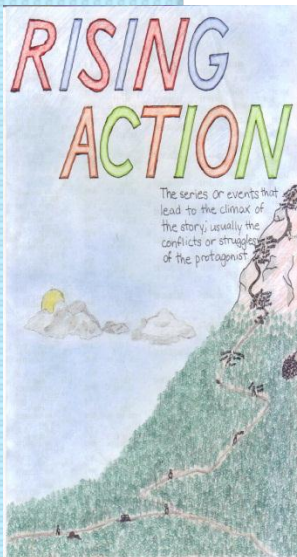
# Exposition



- Synonym for basic situation
- The episode that gets the story going, usually at the beginning of the story.
- Characters and setting are introduced
- Billy arrives in Bath, London looking for a place to stay.
- Billy is described as an upbeat business man, and he meets the landlady who is seemingly nice and gentle.

# Rising Action

- The events between the Exposition and Climax
- Billy accepts an invitation to stay at the BED AND BREAKFAST.
- The Landlady shows him his room, and they begin having tea.
- The Landlady can't seem to remember Billy's name.
- Billy begins to question The Landlady about Mr. Temple and Mr. Mullholland.



# Climax

- The highest point in the story
- Billy discovers he is the **ONLY ONE** staying at the **BED AND BREAKFAST** at the end of the story.
- We are left with a cliffhanger...



# Point of View



- 3<sup>rd</sup> person point of view
- Seems to be an **omniscient** limited narrator
- **Omniscient**—The narrator is an all-knowing outsider who can enter the minds of more than one of the characters
- “And now a peculiar thing happened to him. He was in the act of stepping back and turning away from the window when all at once his eye was caught and helped in the most peculiar manner by the small notice that was there. BED AND BREAKFAST, it said” (74).



# Static Characters

- Characters that do not change in the story
- The Landlady and Billy



# Dynamic Character

- A character that changes
- None?



# Oxymoron

- When two contradictory terms are placed near each other
- Terribly nice



Good morning is a  
★☺!# oxymoron!

# Hyperbole

- An extreme exaggeration
- Sleeping dachshund curled up asleep by the fire
- “The old girl is slightly dotty (crazy)” (75).

## HYPERBOLE

The king's nose was three feet long!



My dad can lift over two tons!



That food was so hot my ears were smoking!



That boy runs faster than a car!

I'm so tired I could sleep a year.



I'm 20 feet tall this month.

I must have walked a hundred miles!



He cried so long that he made a lake!

I'm so hungry I could eat a horse!



You have a million toys at your house!



# Allusion

- A historical, geographical, literary, religious reference in a story
- As though they were both famous for the same sort of thing, if you see what I mean—like ...well...like Dempsey and Tunney, for example or Churchill or Roosevelt
- Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney were American boxers who competed for the world heavyweight championship in 1926.
- Churchill was prime minister and Roosevelt was president of the U.S. during WWII.
- Both groups of people were famous for the same thing at different times or different places.



# Symbol

- An object or action that means something more than its literal meaning
- Bitter almonds and/or walnuts would be recognized as potassium cyanide



# Parallel Episodes

- Repeated events in the story
- The fate of Mulholland and Temple
- Now....Billy Weaver

