**The Sweet Shop**

*This extract is taken from Roald Dahl’s autobiography: “BOY. Tales of Childhood”.*

The sweet-shop in Llandaff in the year 1923 was the very centre of our lives. Without it, there would have been very little to live for. But it had one terrible drawback, this sweet-shop. The woman who owned it was a horror. We hated her and we had good reason for doing so.

Her name was Mrs Pratchett. She was a small skinny old hag with a moustache on her upper lip and a mouth as sour as a green gooseberry. She never smiled. She never welcomed us when we went in, and they only times she spoke were when she said things like, “I’m watchin’ you so keep yer thievin’ fingers off them chocolates!” Or “I don’t want you in ‘ere just to look around! Either you *forks* out or you *gets* out!”

But by far the most loathsome thing about Mrs Pratchett was the filth that clung around her. Her apron was grey and greasy. Her blouse had bits of breakfast all over it, toast-crumbs and tea stains and splotches of dried egg-yolk. It was her hands, however, that disturbed us most. They were disgusting. They were black with dirt and grime. They looked as though they had been putting lumps of coal on the fire all day long. And do not forget please that it was these very hands and fingers that she plunged into the sweet jars when we asked for a pennyworth of Treacle Toffee or Wine Gums or Nut Clusters or whatever. The mere sight of her grimy right hand, with its black fingernails, digging an ounce of Chocolate Fudge out of a jar would have caused a starving tramp to go running from the shop. But not us. Sweets were our life-blood. We would have put up with far worse than that to get them. So we simply stood and watched in sullen silence while this disgusting old woman stirred around inside the jars with her foul fingers.

The other thing we hated Mrs Pratchett for was her meaness. Unless you spent a whole sixpence in one go, she wouldn’t give you a bag. Instead you got your sweets twisted up in a small piece of newspaper which she tore off a pile of old Daily Mirrors lying on the counter.

So you can well understand that we had it in for Mrs Pratchett in a big way, but we didn’t quite know what to do about it. Many schemes were put forwards but none of them was any good. None of them, that is, until suddenly, one memorable afternoon, we found the dead mouse.

**The Sweet Shop**

1. Where was the sweet-shop? (1 mark)

Llandaff \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Find and copy a group of words from the text which shows how important the sweet-shop was to Dahl and his friends. (1 mark)

\_sweets were our life-blood

1. What does Mrs Pratchett mean by “*Either you forks out or you gets out!*” (1 mark)

\_\_\_\_\_If you come in the shop you must buy something

1. Explain what Dahl means when he says sweets were the boys “*life-blood*”. (1 mark)

\_\_Sweets are very important to them, they are a big treat Using information from the text, tick one box to show whether each statement is true or false.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| (2 marks) | **True** | **False** |
| Mrs Pratchett was small and very thin. | 😊 |  |
| Mrs Pratchett’s blouse was stained with tea. |  | ☹ |
| The sweet-shop sold liquorice. | 😊 |  |
| Sweets were always wrapped in newspaper. |  | ☹ |

1. How does Mrs Pratchett treat Dahl and his friends when they visit her sweet-shop? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (2 marks)

\_\_\_ She never welcomed us when we went in, and they only times she spoke were when she said things like, “I’m watchin’ you so keep yer thievin’ fingers off them chocolates!” Or “I don’t want you in ‘ere just to look around! Either you *forks* out or you *gets* out!”

1. “*We simply stood and watched in* ***sullen*** *silence...” The word sullen is closest in meaning to: (1 mark)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gloomy | 😊 | Quiet |  | Bored |  | Content |  |

1. How does Dahl make you want to read the next chapter? (1 mark)

\_\_\_\_\_They find the dead mouse, I want to know what they are going to do with it .

**The Great Mouse Plot**

My four friends and I had come across a loose floor-board at the back of the classroom, and when we prised it up with the blade of a pocket knife, we discovered a big hollow space underneath. This, we decided, would be our hiding place for sweets and other small treasures such as conkers, monkey-nuts and birds’ eggs.

One day, when we lifted it up, we found a dead mouse lying among our treasures. It was an exciting discovery. Thwaites took it out by its tail and waved it in front of our faces. “What shall we do with it?” he cried.

“It stinks!” someone shouted. “Throw it out of the window quick!”

“Hold on a tick,” I said. “Don’t throw it away.” Thwaites hesitated. They all looked at me. When writing about oneself, one must strive to be truthful. Truth is more important than modesty. I must tell you, therefore, that it was I and I alone who had the idea for the great and daring Mouse Plot. We all have our moments of brilliance and glory, and this was mine.

“Why don’t we,” I said, “slip it into one of Mrs Pratchett’s jars of sweets? Then when she puts her dirty hand in to grab a handful, she’ll grab a stinky dead mouse instead.” The other four stared at me in wonder. Then, as the sheer brilliance of the plot began to sink in they started grinning. They cheered me and danced around the classroom. “We’ll do it today!” they cried. “We’ll do it on the way home! *You* had the idea,” they said to me, “so *you* can be the one to put the mouse in the jar.”

Thwaites handed me the mouse. I put it into my trouser pocket. Then the five of us left the school, crossed the village-green and headed for the sweetshop. We felt tremendously jazzed up. We felt like a gang of desperadoes setting out to rob a train or blow up the sheriff’s office.

“Make sure you put it into a jar which is used often,” someone said.

“I’m putting it in Gobstoppers,” I said. “The Gobstoppers jar is never behind the counter.”

“I’ve got a penny,” Thwaites said, “so I’ll ask for one Sherbert Sucker and one Bootlace. And when she turns away to get them, you slip the mouse in quickly with the Gobstoppers”

Thus everything was arranged. We were strutting a little as we entered the shop. We were the victors now and Mrs Pratchett was the victim. She stood behind the counter, and her small malignant pig-eyes watched up suspiciously as we came forward. “One Sherbert Sucker, please,” Thwaites said to her holding out his penny.

I kept to the rear of the group, and when I saw Mrs Pratchett turn her head away for a couple of seconds, I lifted the heavy glass lid of the Gobstopper jar and dropped the mouse in. Then I replaced the lid as silently as possible. My heart was thumping like mad and my hands had gone all sweaty.

“And one Bootlace, please,” I heard Thwaites saying. When I turned round, I saw Mrs Pratchett holding out a Bootlace in her filthy fingers. “I don’t want all the lot of you troopin’ in ‘ere if only one of you is buyin,” she screamed at us. “Now beat it! Go on, get out!”

As soon as we were outside, we broke into a run. “Did you do it?” they shouted at me.

“Of course I did!” I said.

“Well done you!” they cried. “What a super show!”

I felt like a hero. I *was* a hero. It was marvellous to be so popular.

**The Great Mouse Plot**

1. Whose perspective is the extract written from? (1 mark)

\_\_Roald Dahl \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. List three items that Dahl and his friends used to hide under the loose floorboard: (2 marks)
2. conkers\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_monkey nuts\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Bird eggs\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. How did the boys decide who should be the one to hide the dead mouse? (1 mark)

They decided it should be Dahl since it was his idea \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Using information from the text, tick one box to show whether each statement is true or false.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| (2 marks) | **True** | **False** |
| Thwaites carried the dead mouse to Mrs Pratchett’s sweet-shop. |  | ☹ |
| The Great Mouse Plot took place on the way to school. |  | ☹ |
| At the sweetshop, Thwaites ordered a Gobstopper. |  | ☹ |
| Thwaites paid for his sweets with a penny. | 😊 |  |

1. Find and copy a group of words from the text which suggest that boys were very excited on the way to the sweet-shop. (1 mark) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We felt tremendously jazzed up \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. “*We were strutting a little as we entered the shop*”. What does this tell you about the way they were feeling? (1 mark)

Excited and confident \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Why did Thwaites buy one Sherbert Sucker and one Bootlace? (1 mark)

To distract Mrs Prachett \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Why did Dahl choose to hide the mouse in the Gobstopper’s Jar? (1 mark)

Because it is used a lot \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. How can you tell Dahl was nervous while carrying out the Great Mouse Plot? Give two ways: (2 marks)
2. His heart was thumping \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. His hands were sweaty \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why do you think the boys “*broke into a run*” after leaving the sweet-shop? (1 mark)

\_\_\_because they didn’t want to get caught \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_