

## Literature

### Unit 1.4 The Wish (Short Stories)

### Class 11 English Exercise

*Roald Dahl*

## About Author

Roald Dahl was a British novelist, short story writer, poet, screenwriter, and wartime fighter pilot. His books have been sold more than 250 million copies worldwide. Dahl was born in Wales to Norwegian immigrant parents. He served in the Royal force during the Second World War.

The story “The Wish” is about a young child and his imaginative game of carpet. This story has presented the child’s wish as well as the frightening event of his childhood.

## Summary

The story “The Wish” is about a young boy who had a frightening event in his childhood. At the beginning of the scene, we find an unnamed child looking at his kneecap’s scab and bent forward to examine it closely. He picked his scab gently which fell upon the edge of the red carpet. When he moved near the scab different colours of the carpet attracted his attention. He creatively imagined each different colour represent something. In his imagination, he supposed the red coloured spots as lumps of coal that could burn him, black colour as a poisonous snake that could bite him, and yellow colour as the only safe zone for him where he could step and cross the huge carpet to get inside, he would be gifted a puppy for his birthday.

So the boy begins his quest. The first part is easygoing but reached some difficult parts and has to take long strides. He wobbles but stretched out his arm to keep himself in a steady position. Then reaching a turning point, he chooses left because it’s difficult but

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black spots were less there. He reaches the halfway point and knows he cannot turn back or jump off. Then he begins to feel panic rising in his chest. He takes another step to the only close yellow spot and his foot is only a centimeter from the black patch. A snake stirs and raises its head to watch him. Although he was trying to balance himself it did not work. He started to cry as he touched the black.

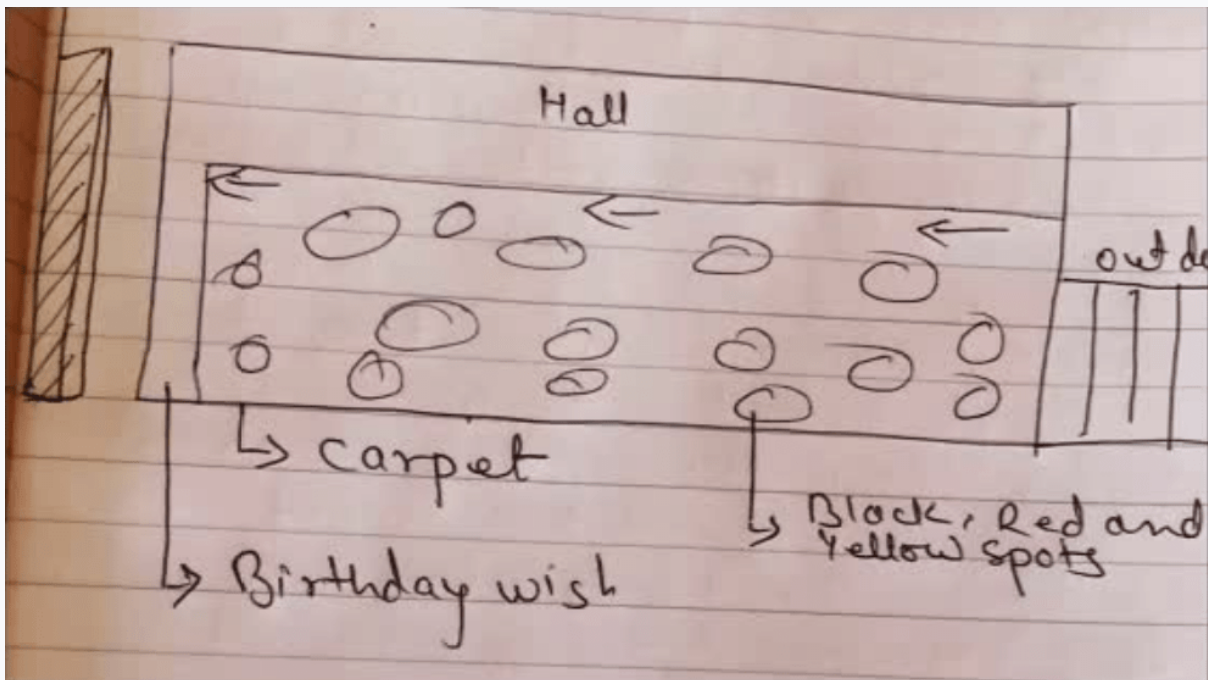
And the story ends with his mother who was looking for him behind a house outside the sunshine.

## Analysis and Interpretation of The Wish

- The story “The Wish” is about a young boy’s fantasy in which his carpet is alive with snake and fire. The writer has used imagery and metaphor which helps to reflect on the delicacy of our childhood innocence.
- Unnecessary fear is harmful.
- Fear causes people to make bad choices.
- The images and metaphor represent the obstacles and challenges he faces as he matures. Vivid challenges that Dahl uses to reinforce the metaphor include the scab, red spots on carpet, black sections, etc. He faces many challenges in pursuit of his goal which represent the obstacles in his path to maturity.

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A pictorial representation of the room.

## The Wish – Complete Exercise

### ***Understanding the text***

Answer the following questions.

a. What did the child do to the scab on his knee?

**Answer:** The child gently picked the scab off his cut with his finger nails and put it on his thigh. Finally he flipped it with his finger.

b. What kind of effect did the carpet have on the child?

**Answer:** The child became extremely amazed to see the red carpet. He had never really notice it before in such a way. The different colors of carpet seemed to brighten mysteriously and spring out at him in a most dazzling way. He was thoroughly lost in those colors and his imagination.

c. What was he afraid of while walking across the carpet?

**Answer:** He was afraid of the black poisonous snakes and the red coals while walking across the carpet.

d. What motivated and encouraged the child to start and continue on his journey?

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**Answer:** His wish of getting a puppy on his birthday or as a birthday gift motivated and encouraged the child to start and continue on his journey.

**e. What did the child see as he looked down on the black patterns of the carpet?**

**Answer:** The child saw different colours brightening mysteriously. He was lost in different colours' spots. He kept on thinking in his imagination about the colours and their different forms. Hence, the child saw the poisonous snake with the oily body of snake arising to catch or bite him as he looked down on the black patterns of the carpet.

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## ***Reference to the context***

**a. The writer creates two voices in the story. Who are they?**

**Answer:** Yes, the writer creates two voices in the story and they were (a narrator) and the voice of the young boy i.e. the child.

**b. Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.**

“...the black parts are snakes, poisonous snakes, adders mostly, and cobras, thick like tree-trunks around the middle, and if I touch one of them, I'll be bitten and I'll die before tea time. And if I get across safely, without being burnt and without being bitten, I will be given a puppy for my birthday tomorrow.”

**i. What does 'the black part' mean?**

**Answer:** The black part means the difficulty, challenges and suffering in the journey.

**ii. Who is the speaker?**

**Answer:** The speaker is a young boy.

**iii. Why doesn't the speaker want to be burnt?**

**Answer:** He doesn't want to be burnt because he wants to reach across the carpet safely to receive the gift 'a puppy' on his birthday.

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**c. Which images and metaphors are used in the story?**

**Answer:** The main metaphor in the story “The Wish” by Roald Dahl is the child’s journey along the carpet as a representation of the obstacles and challenges he faces as he matures. Vivid images that Dahl uses to reinforce the metaphor include the scab as the boy’s primary challenge, the red spots on the carpet as hot lumps of coal, and the black sections as evil poisonous snakes.

**d. Summarize the short story “The Wish” in about 200 words.**

**Answer:** ([Look at top of the page](#))

**e. The story shows the events through the eyes of the narrator and the child. Comparing the two styles, who presents a more interesting or effective view for the readers? Why?**

**Answer:** In “The Wish,” a boy uses his imagination to travel across a red, black, and yellow carpet. The child’s represents the story in more interesting and effective than the narrator’s, because it is vivid and suspenseful. The child was in a hardship situation and he faces hardships and won all the challenges as motivated by a Birthday gift as a puppy by completing his journey at the end.

**f. Is “The Wish” a story about self-confidence overcoming fear or about greed? Give your arguments.**

**Answer:** Roald Dahl’s “The Wish” is about self-confidence overcoming fear rather than about greed as it is all about self-confidence and overcoming fear. Admittedly, “greed,” the desire for a puppy, is a motivating factor. However, the puppy motivator is a fantasy that boy has made up to help him overcome his fear of crossing the treacherous carpet. He says to himself, ‘if I get across safely, without being burnt and without being bitten, I will be given a puppy for my birthday tomorrow.

The child seems fearful while watching his scab. He thinks much about picking it. He raises many questions with himself. He picks out his scab being panic. But when he sees the carpet his fear increases high. He gathers his confidence to cross the carpet. He creates his obstacles supposing the colours as coals and snakes. He even puts his goal across the carpet. He moves on bravely on the carpet wishing for a puppy on his birthday as a birthday gift. He tries his best to overcome his fear. His self-confidence and his wish end as he falls down in black colours.

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Even the puppy becomes part of his project of overcoming fears to achieve a goal: But the fear of not getting the puppy compelled him to go on. This tale enters into the mind of an imaginative child and reflects the child's ability to turn something as common place as a patterned carpet into a scene of adventure and challenge in which he can act out his fears in a safe environment.

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## ***Reference beyond the text***

a. Do you think our wish can be fulfilled? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Having wishes is significant in itself. But not all the wants, desire and wishes are fulfilled. We need hard and complicated practice to fulfil our wish, want, desire, and interest. If a wish comes true, it is one of the most beautiful things on earth. It is, therefore, essential to deal constructively with the obstacles on the way to your wish. Some of the common hurdles that stops us from fulfilling our wishes are:

- I have no money for it / I don't want to spend my money on it
- I want to, but I don't have time for it / I'm too caught up in my everyday life
- I'm scared. Fear of failure. Afraid of making the wrong decision. Afraid to disappoint other people
- I have doubts whether it is right for me

So to fulfill our wishes we should deal with above mentioned problems. For this we can do the following things:

- Try to realize the wish in the small version. Try to satisfy the need behind the wish.
- Trick everyday life and proceed in small steps.
- Address fears and debunk them as much as possible.
- Create clarity. Get a clear picture of where we want to go.
- Strengthen self-image so that our wishes becomes possible.

b. Why do you think some people might have a frightening nature? What would you suggest to them to overcome it?

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**Answer:** Some people might have a frightening nature due to the lack of self-confidence and being less sociable. Some people, especially innocent ones easily lose their confidence as they face obstacles in their paths of life.

I would suggest the following points to overcome it:

- Learn more about your fear, this first step can be the hardest one but it's also absolutely necessary.
- Use your imagination in positive ways.
- Use your brain in a different way than usual.
- Focus on your breathing.
- Practice mindfulness.
- Use nature as your therapist.

## THE END

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