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# The Witches



## Synopsis

From the bestselling author of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *The BFG!* This is not a fairy tale. This is about real witches. Grandmamma loves to tell about witches. Real witches are the most dangerous of all living creatures on earth. There's nothing they hate so much as children, and they work all kinds of terrifying spells to get rid of them. Her grandson listens closely to Grandmamma's stories—but nothing can prepare him for the day he comes face-to-face with The Grand High Witch herself!

## Book Information

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Paperback: 224 pages

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Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 590 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #6,493 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in *Books > Children's Books >*

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

"This is not a fairy tale. This is about real witches." So begins one of Roald Dahl's best books ever, and, ironically, it is such a great story because the premise is perfectly plausible from the outset. When the narrator's parents die in a car crash on page two (contrast this terribly real demise with that of James's parents who are devoured by an escaped rhinoceros in *James and the Giant Peach*), he is taken in by his cigar-smoking Norwegian grandmother, who has learned a storyteller's respect for witches and is wise to their ways. The bond between the boy and his grandmother becomes the centerpiece of the tale--a partnership of love and understanding that survives even the boy's unfortunate transformation into a mouse. And once the two have teamed up to outwitch the

witches, the boy's declaration that he's glad he's a mouse because he will now live only as long as his grandmother is far more poignant than eerie. Of course, there's adventure here along with Dahl's trademark cleverness and sense of the grotesque. Dahl also communicates some essential truths to children: if they smoke cigars, they'll never catch cold, and, most importantly, they should never bathe, because a clean child is far, far easier for a witch to smell than a dirty one. (Ages 7 to 10, or read aloud to younger children) --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

"How is it it's so real you think it must be true ... and so fantastic you can't begin to guess what will happen next?" New Statesman --New Statesman --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

I first read this book when I was in the third grade, 25 years ago. I instantly decided then that it was my favorite book and I read and re-read it many times. I loved it. I recently took on a research project involving children's and young adult stories and have a long reading list of Children's stories to read - I put "The Witches" at the top of my list for nostalgia's sake, not sure what to expect. As an adult, I can report, that it is simply a magnificent story. I can see why I loved it so much as a child. Dahl never dismisses the reader (children) as being inept. Like the Grandmother in the story, Dahl knows children don't require extreme coddling. He's not timid about using fear to tell a great story. Parents strive to create a safe world for their children. But that illusion is one that all parents must slowly deconstruct to prepare children for reality. Fairy tales are an integral part of that deconstruction. In fairy tales, monsters can exist in a way that allows children face their fears and walk through those fears to the other side where strength, courage and confidence are found. "The Witches" is a frightening, yet thrilling read for children. Dahl is a masterful storyteller and in "The Witches" he has weaved imagination, fear and courage into a fantastically fun story that has stood the test of time and remains refreshingly relevant for each generation.

Any full-length novel by Roald Dahl (we've read almost all of them) is going to be excellent, a mixture of zaniness, intelligence, and wonder. Here we have the familiar contrast of appalling or even evil adults alongside much friendlier and more sympathetic ones, with the hapless child thrown into weird and frightening situations and bravely plunging in.

Grandmother tells her grandson how to recognize a witch, what he should do if he sees one, how he can avoid being taken by a witch. The grandson listens carefully and keeps watch. She almost makes me believe there are witches. The grandson does have an encounter with not one witch but

an entire conference room full of them. He is turned into a mouse. He is a clever boy and is able to escape. Instead of being depressed that he is now a mouse, he and grandma hatch a plan to put the witches out of business for good. He is the one with the ideas and Grandma is always amazed at his cleverness and helps him carry out his plan. Another boy was also changed into a mouse. His parents are disgusted by him now that he is a mouse. Grandma is very sad that his parents don't love him just because he's a mouse. But Grandma continues to be loving and considerate. She rearranges the house so her grandson/mouse can be safe and independent. She carries him in her purse when they go out. The adventure with the witches is funny and clever but the real story was in the tenderness between Grandmother and Grandson. As the boy/mouse considers his new reality he asks her how long a mouse would live. She is honest as well as hopeful. A mouse does not live as long as a boy would. But he isn't an ordinary mouse so he will live longer than an ordinary mouse. I liked Roald Dahl before but this book sealed him as one of my favorite authors.

Roald Dahl has never written a dull book in his life, and I enjoyed this. He brings his own Norwegian heritage into the book (to an extent). And, as always, he brings a bit of darkness. And the comedy is fast and good. Sadly, I didn't think this book was as funny as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, or *James and the Giant Peach* (my all time favorite). But it is funny. Lynn Redgrave's reading is competently done. Again, I preferred her reading of a Narnia book to this one. But she carries the story. It is a great author being read by a great actress, and it is the sort of CD set that parents and children alike will enjoy, especially on any long car rides.

It's a beautiful printing, too.. the cover art pops! I remember a teacher in elementary school reading this aloud to us, and our utter enthrallment/worry over how it was all going to end. For the record, I prefer the book ending to that of the film adaptation. It has just the right amount of fear and suspense for a children's tale, and is vibrantly written. It arrived fast, brand spanking new and will probably be passed down to my grandchildren in tatters.

Dark but the droll humor comes through. As with all his books, children appear to be victims and become heroes. Some allusions to nursery rhymes and funny visuals of the witches themselves. As an adult, I loved it and children will devour the fast paced altercations and descriptive language.

I remember reading this book as a kid & loving it. My Mom was the librarian at the time & lots of parents were angry about this book being about witches ... it thought it was too funny ... why get

your panties in a bunch ... it is not a true story. If it gets kids, adults to read & have imaginations it is great!! loved it again as an adult ... would not hesitate to read it again. need to check into more of his books too.

This is a really cute children's book aimed at the middle grades. Its high points are the scary sections and the little adventures that the main character goes through after the witches cast a spell on him (no spoilers, I won't tell you what they do). I was a little disappointed about the predictability of the last few chapters, but overall it is a solid chapter book that kids 7-12 will enjoy.

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