

Danny the Champion of the World

Roald Dahl

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Danny is a young boy who lives with his father William in a caravan where they run a gas station as well as a garage. Danny's mother died many years ago, making him and his father extremely close. Danny's father owns the only spot between a sea of land owned by a Mr. Victor Hazell, a man who Danny's father detests as he had once spoken rudely to Danny. One night when Danny wakes up and is unable to find his father in the area, he stays awake till when his father arrives, discovering that his father had been attempting poaching. Danny's father begins a story of his father (Danny's grandfather), in his words the greatest poacher in the world. Danny's grandfather developed such methods as the "Sticky Hat" and "The Horsehair Stopper". Danny allows his father to go about poaching again, until one day his father does not come back. Danny takes a car from the garage (even though he is only nine) and drives it to Mr. Hazell's part of the wood where he finds that his father has been caught in a tiger trap set up to stop poachers. Danny gets him out where he is then treated by the town doctor, Doc Spencer.

Danny's father one day tells him that his dream is to poach all of the pheasants before Mr. Hazell's big shooting party so that there are no pheasants left for him to shoot when Danny suggests they put sleeping tablets prescribed by Doc Spencer inside raisins and spread them for the pheasants to eat, a method dubbed the "Sleeping Beauty". Going through with their plan, Danny and his father poach 120 pheasants from Mr. Hazell's woods, causing Mr. Hazell to come to their gas station the next day brimming with anger. He sees that the pheasants have tried to escape and Danny's father, with the help of the local Constable, helps the pheasants go and land on Mr. Hazell's car, scratching its paint and causing him to leave fuming. Danny is now called "the champion of the world" by William, Doc Spencer, and the Constable.

Roald Dahl's unique sense of writing makes his books a joy to read, moving with a quick pace as well as an innocent, childish humor. He gives Danny a somewhat realistic aspect to relate to as well as a clearly fictional aspect (I mean really what nine-year-old can drive a car?). I recommend this book for all young boys, a thoroughly enjoyable book through and through.

Recommended Titles:

The BFG – Roald Dahl

The Kid Who Became President – Dan Gutman