

It was a warm summer evening and Klausner walked quickly through the front gate and around the side of the house and into the garden at the back. He went on down the garden until he came to a wooden shed and he unlocked the door, went inside and closed the door behind him.

The interior of the shed was an unpainted room. Against one wall, on the left, there was a long wooden workbench, and on it, among a littering of wires and batteries and small sharp tools, there stood a black box about three feet long, the shape of a child's coffin.

Klausner moved across the room to the box. The top of the box was open, and he bent down and began to poke and peer inside it among a mass of different-coloured wires and silver tubes. He picked up a piece of paper that lay beside the box, studied it carefully, put it down, peered inside the box and started running his fingers along the wires, tugging gently at them to test the connections, glancing back at the paper, then into the box, then at the paper again, checking each wire. He did this for perhaps an hour.

Then he put a hand around to the front of the box where there were three dials, and he began to twiddle them, watching at the same time the movement of the mechanism inside the box. All the while he kept speaking softly to himself, nodding his head, smiling sometimes, his hands always moving, the fingers moving swiftly, deftly, inside the box, his mouth twisting into curious shapes when a thing was delicate or difficult to do, saying, "Yes . . . Yes . . . And now this one . . . Yes . . . Yes . . . But is this right? Is it—where's my diagram? . . . Yes . . . Yes . . ."

.. Ah, yes ... Of course .... Yes, yes ... That's right .... And now ..... Good .... Good .... Yes ... Yes, yes, yes." His concentration was intense; his movements were quick; there was an air of urgency about the way he worked, of breathlessness, of strong suppressed excitement.

Suddenly he heard footsteps on the gravel path outside and he straightened and turned swiftly as the door opened and a tall man came in. It was Scott. It was only Scott, the doctor.

"Well, well, well," the Doctor said. "So this is where you hide yourself in the evenings."

"Hullo, Scott," Klausner said.

"I happened to be passing," the Doctor told him, "so I dropped in to see how you were. There was no one in the house, so I came on down here. How's that throat of yours been behaving?"

"It's all right. It's fine."

"Now I'm here I might as well have a look at it."

"Please don't trouble. I'm quite cured. I'm fine."

The Doctor began to feel the tension in the room. He looked at the black box on the bench; then he looked at the man. "You've got your hat on," he said.

"Oh, have I?" Klausner reached up, removed the hat and put it on the bench.

The Doctor came up closer and bent down to look into the box, "What's this?" he said. "Making a radio?"

"No. Just fooling around."

"It's got rather complicated-looking innards."

"Yes." Klausner seemed tense and distracted.

"What is it?" the Doctor asked, "It's rather a frightening-looking thing, isn't it?"

"It's just an idea."

"Yes?"

"It has to do with sound, that's all."

"Good heavens, man! Don't you get enough of that sort of thing all day in your work?"

"I like sound."

✓

Roald Dahl was a versatile Norwegian-British novelist, short story writer, poet and screenwriter. Dahl served in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War, in which he became a flying ace and intelligence officer, and rose to the rank of acting wing commander.

- In 1953, he published the best selling story collection Someone Like You.
- It was followed by a couple best selling children's books, James and the Giant Peach (1961) and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (1964).
- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory has been filmed in 2005.
- Regarded as one of the greatest story-tellers for children during the 20th Century, he wrote 19 children's books.
- His awards for contributing to literature include the 1983 World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement and British Book Awards' Children's Author of the Year in 1990.
- In 2008, The Times placed Dahl 16th on its list of 'The 50 Greatest British Writers since 1945'.
- His books have sold more than 250 million copies worldwide.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Page \_\_\_\_\_

Dear students, you all know that the story, 'To Build a Fire' has been omitted from your syllabus. So, I am discontinuing our discussion regarding the story.

## THE SOUND MACHINE

### ▣ About the story

The story 'The Sound Machine' was originally published in 1949 in the New Yorker. The primary source of the story is 'The Collected Short Stories of Roald Dahl'.

It has also appeared in many other collections like More Tales of the Unexpected (1980), Skin and other Stories (2002)

In 1981, The Sound Machine was adapted for television as a part of the British series Tales of the Unexpected which regularly featured episodes based on Dahl's stories. This narrative belongs to the literary tradition of imagined technologies. Dahl was inspired by the theory of E.T.A. Hoffman who believed that sound technology acts as a prosthesis, an ear which enables us to ~~can~~ hear the inaudible sounds we know exist but cannot hear or sense it.

The story is about an eccentric scientist who is obsessed with sound. He works at the back of the garden in his wooden shed. The interior of the ~~room~~ shed is an unpainted room where he has a long wooden workbench, wires, and batteries littered all around. There is a black box about three feet long, the shape of a child's coffin. That box is

the object of fascination.

Klausner, the protagonist of the story, is a restless man. He moves impetuously across the room to the box. He fidgets all around and peers inside the box. He picks up a paper kept beside it and then repeats the action again. His behaviour shows signs of agitation and anxiety. He begins fiddling with the three dials in the box and simultaneously observes the movement of the mechanism in it. His hands reflect his nervousness and he keeps speaking to himself.

He is deeply engrossed in his work when he hears footsteps outside. Dr. Scott, a tall man arrives who happens to visit him to check his throat. Being occupied in his wires and batteries, he tells him.

"Please don't trouble. I am quite cured. I'm fine."

The doctor can feel a sense of restlessness and restlessness in the room. He looks at the black box and asks him about it. He remarks that the inner part of the box are intricate. Klausner says that he is working on an idea which is still in form of uncertainty. It is related to sound.