

## **Merit of English Section**

### **Junior Division**

**Name of Winner: LEUNG Ching Sum Maegan**

**Name of School :HKCCCU Logos Academy**

**Book Title : Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**

**Author : Roald Dahl**

**Publisher : Puffin Books**

Have you ever read a book which is amusing and original, yet thought-provokingly offers in-depth insights into parenting issues? To my surprise, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl does just that.

This story is about 5 children who win a visit to Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory. However, 4 of them come to a sticky end because they do not behave well. Whenever they

misbehave, the Oompa Loompas, the fantastical factory workers who sing songs, would appear and teach us about the parenting problems that have led to the children's demise.

Apart from the amusing plot with hilarious punchlines, the importance of parenting and its effects are conveyed throughout the whole story. I would like to dive into the details of what Oompa-Loompas' songs tell us about how children should be raised.

The parents of Augustus Gloop have performed permissive parenting raising a rather greedy and indulged boy. Augustus accidentally falls into the Chocolate River while lapping up the chocolate and later gets stuck in the pipe. The Oompa-Loompas chant a song about him calling him a "*big greedy nincompoop*" and "*unutterably vile*". The horrendous behaviour is related to a serious parenting problem—

permissive parenting. Apart from the consequence, we can see this by how he is brought up without limits on eating. In the interview for the first one to find the gold ticket, his mother described that eating is his habit. Therefore, it is nearly impossible for him to not find one gold ticket. Besides, she allows or even encourages him to eat without boundaries, saying that such behaviour is “better than a hooligan”. Permissive parenting means that parents are overly responsive to their children’s desires, yet undemanding and permissive. Augustus is so greedy and revolting as a result of his mother’s failure to intervene.

Another form of permissive parenting has raised Veruca Salt, a self-centred and indulged princess. In the story, she demands a trained squirrel from the factory, and runs down the staircase to grab one, neglecting Mr. Wonka’s warning. The singing instantly starts echoing. This time the rhetorical

questions in their lyrics leave us know doubt as to who to blame as they sing “...and all the scolding and shame should fall upon Veruca Salt?”, “who spoiled her, then?” and “they are her loving parents, MUM and DAD.” The tragic end of falling to the rubbish chute gives a vivid image that spoiling is never going to lead to a good result, and this is permissive parenting. Just as did Augustus Gloop, the Salt’s beautiful little princess has grown into a selfish, greedy child who screams and shouts when she can’t get what she wants. From the results of the two greedy kids, we can conclude that permissive parenting should not be practised.

Authoritarian parenting is demonstrated by Violet’s parents. Despite the numerous warnings that Mr. Willy Wonka has made, little Violet Beareguade stubbornly snatches a non-finished gum and as a result turns into a gigantic blueberry from head to toe. This exhibits her disrespect of authority. Her

mother used the phrase ,“Now, Violet”, which is a common start of a demand. Shockingly, Violet responded “Alright, Mother, keep your hair on!” The conversation portrays authoritarian parenting and how disrespectful she is. The Oompa-Loompas lyrics describe her as a “*repulsive little bum who’s always chewing chewing-gum*”. Authoritarian parenting refers to parents that are very demanding of their children but less responsive. This explains Violet’s bratty and beastly competitive nature.

Uninvolved parenting can also lead to bad habits. Mike Teavee always glues his eyes to the television. He later becomes tiny after he gets sucked into the transporting magical TV. The lyrics ring again, and some key-words suggest the serious consequences of watching too much TV. For example, “*They loll and slop and lounge about, and stare until their eyes pop out*” and “*it makes a child so dull and blind he can no*

*longer understand a fantasy, a fairyland!"* What exactly led Mike to such an addiction to TV and gangster shows? Neglected children typically have frequent behavioural problems. Their parents, who believe the less involvement with their children the better, use TV-watching as an alternative. Mike Teavee's plight is a perfect depiction of this. His parents are unresponsive, undemanding and permissive. Mike grows up without the attention and teachings of his parents, and learns all the things from the TV on his own. This slowly builds up a TV-watching habit which gradually turns into an addiction.

Through the Oompa Loompa's lyrics, Roald Dahl's message is clear. He aims to educate us that children shouldn't be raised by permissive parenting, authoritarian parenting, or uninvolved parenting. Violet Beauregarde, Augustus Gloop, Veruca Salt and Mike Teavee are all evidence of the

consequences of bad-parenting, so we ought to avoid such practices when raising our children.

In contrast, well-behaved Charlie Bucket is the only one who doesn't violate the rules, or ignore the warnings made by Mr. Willy Wonka. Mr. and Mrs. Bucket are authoritative parents who regularly monitor their children, provide enough support and establish firm but flexible boundaries. Charlie is raised to be self-disciplined and kind. Therefore, we can see that parents are recommended to raise children with authoritative parenting. Charlie's good behaviour leads him to unexpectedly win Wonka's surprise of the story. His reward is the Chocolate Factory—and he kindly invites his family to live there too!