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English 404 - Adolescent Literature

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Going Solo - Roald Dahl

1) Age Group

I would suggest this book for children ages 11-14. The stories are shorter, and well written, but occasionally the subject matter can be grotesque.

2) What is the theme of the story?

This book is somewhat autobiographical, and comprises a series of short stories about things that the author experienced. There are different themes, depending on the story, but the ongoing themes of discovery, experiencing the world, and coming-of-age are seen throughout.

3) List 3 books you could recommend to a child who likes this story and wants to read more.

Roald Dahl's *Boy* - not exactly an autobiography, but instead Dahl recounts some interesting stories from his childhood.

Roald Dahl's *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar and Six More* - Another book of short stories by Dahl, there are some parts of stories that have a grippingly real feeling to them, and some of these stories are based on true events.

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* - a classic, and many similar themes, including courage and justice.

4) Review

The stories in Dahl's "semi" autobiography follow him on his journey into adulthood. We follow him as he leaves England and travels by ship to dark, exotic Africa to work for Shell Oil. He writes of the interesting things that happen to him - the people he meets on his journeys, his servant in Africa, and the scare of being threatened by the ever present green and black mambas. The second part of the book happens after the break out of World War II. Being English, he wants to help out his country, so he enlists and trains to be a fighter pilot in the Royal Air Force. We get to see what it is like to crash in the desert in Libya, the long recovery, and the terror and excitement to be in the middle of the Battle of Athens, fighting in an underpowered plane against a German air force that outnumbered the RAF by a factor of 10. Throughout this, we are entertained by Dahl's gifted writing - he chooses to tell us the most interesting parts of his life, and by any account - they are fascinating.

Works Cited

Dahl, Roald. *Boy*. Puffin, 1986. Print.

Dahl, Roald. *Going Solo*. Scholastic, 1996. Print.

Dahl, Roald. *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar and Six More*. Perfection Learning, 2000.

Print.

Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Grand Central Publishing, 1988. Print.