***The BFG***

***Chapter 7***

***The Marvelous Ears***

* The BFG worries that Sophie’s parents are missing her. Sophie explains that her parents died when she was a baby and that she lives in an orphanage run by a mean woman who locks them in the cellar for punishment. Sounds about on par with being kidnapped by a giant.
* The BFG feels so sorry for Sophie that he starts to cry.
* Sophie tells him her more pressing concern, which is that the giants will find and eat her eventually. It’s a fair point.
* Sophie asks the BFG what he was doing on her street last night. The BFG doesn’t want to tell her, but Sophie points out that she’ll never see another human again, and she wouldn’t have a chance to tell the other giants, because they would eat her before she could speak.
* Turns out, the BFG was blowing happy dreams into children’s rooms. He says he collects dreams.
* He says dreams make a sound, which only he can hear because of his huge ears. Who would have thought they could come in handy like that?
* Sophie and the BFG get on a tangent about what other things the BFG can hear that Sophie can’t. They include: ladybug footsteps, ants chittering, music from the stars in the sky.
* The BFG can also hear flowers when they’re picked and trees when they’re cut down, and he tells Sophie that they sound like they’re being tortured during these events. Some things you wish you didn’t know.
* Back to happier sounds. The BFG tells Sophie that he usually goes to a special place for catching dreams and brings a net to catch them with.
* The BFG decides he’s hungry and that it’s time to eat.

***Quotations:***

***Quotation 1:***

“I hated it,” Sophie said. “The woman who ran it was called Mrs. Clonkers and if she caught you breaking any of the rules, like getting out of bed at night or not folding up your clothes, you got punished.”  
“How is you getting punished?”  
“She locked us in the dark cellar for a day and a night without anything to eat or drink.”  
“The rotten old rotrasper!” cried the BFG.  
“It was horrid,” Sophie said. “We used to dread it. There were rats down there. We could hear them creeping about.” (7.14-18)

***Explanation 1:***

This horrific punishment—for children—is beyond unfair. It’s downright [Dickensian](https://www.shmoop.com/charles-dickens/). It’s also in line with how children in other Roald Dahl books are treated by adults. Thank goodness for being kidnapped by giants.

***Quotation 2:***

“Such wonderful and terrible sounds I is hearing!” he said. “Some of them you would never wish to be hearing yourself! But some is like glorious music!” He seemed almost to be transfigured by the excitement of his thoughts. His face was beautiful in its blaze of emotions. (7.109-110)

***Explanation 2:***

This is the first time we’re told that the BFG is beautiful. Before, he seemed sort of bumbling and silly. Maybe his beauty is the otherworldly type, like he’s catching a bit of the natural wonder that he is describing to Sophie.

***Quotation 3:***

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***Quotation 4:***

“Dreams,” he said, “Is very mysterious things. They is floating around in the air like little wispy-misty bubbles. And all the time they is searching for sleeping people.” (7.56)

***Explanation 4:***

The main magical elements in this book are dreams. They way they are described makes them almost like creatures. Imagine a dream sidling over to sleeping people to experience them, just like dogs pant up to you asking to be patted.

***Quotation 5:***

She had offended him, she could see that. “I wouldn’t ever be fibbling to you,” he said. “I know you wouldn’t,” Sophie said. “But you must understand that it isn’t easy to believe such amazing things straightaway.” (7.98-100)

***Explanation 5:***

Sophie’s an eager student of the BFG’s brand of magic. He’s just throwing too many new ideas at her too fast. She’s trying to explain that it’s not that she thinks he’s a liar—she just needs time for the ideas to sink in. You know how it takes a few days for that new geometry concept to start making sense? It’s like that. But maybe slightly funnier.

***Quotation 6:***

Sometimes, on a very clear night,” the BFG said, “and if I is swiggling my ears in the right direction” – and here he swiveled his great ears upwards so they were facing the ceiling – “if I is swiggling them like this and the night is very clear, I is sometimes hearing faraway music coming from the stars in the sky.” A queer little shiver passed through Sophie’s body. She sat very quiet, waiting for more. (7.81-82)

***Explanation 6:***

The type of magic in this book is natural magic, associated with elements of the earth like animals, plants, and the stars. They’re elements we’re already familiar with—even though we’re not familiar with the magic they spit out—and that combination is what makes the fantasy really come alive.

***Quotation 7:***

“One of the biggest chatbags is the cattlepiddlers,” the BFG said.  
“What do they say?”  
“They is argying all the time about who is going to be the prettiest butteryfly. That is all they is ever talking about.” (7.116-118)

***Explanation 7:***

This is everything. Caterpillars having reality TV-style catfights—er, caterpillarfights? MTV is on its way with a miniature camera crew.