

Dear Jay,

You are asking too much of me. You must realise that I get an awful lot of these letters and you can't expect me to write your thesis for you. It should be fairly obvious to you what the role of the short story is in modern literature. It's a big one. Study particularly the American short story writers like O'Henry and Runyon and Hawthorne and Poe, and lots and lots of English ones.

If you want any dope on me there have been an awful lot of profiles in English magazines over the past year starting with the February 1979 issue of Vogue.

I have read your story. I don't think it's bad, but you must stop using too many adjectives. Study Hemingway, particularly his early work and learn how to write short sentences and how to eschew all those beastly adjectives. Surely it is better to say "She was a tall girl with a bosom" than "She was a tall girl with a shapely, prominent bosom", or some such rubbish. The first one says it all.

Yours sincerely,



Roald Dahl