

## 2nd Grade “THE WISH” by Roald Dahl

Looking at his hand, the child saw the scab of an old cut on his knee. He looked at it closely. Yes, he thought, I will pick it off, even if it isn't ready, even if it bleeds. With his finger he touched the scab. And then, it suddenly came off, leaving a bright red spot on his knee, but it didn't bleed. He picked up the scab and flipped it with a finger so that it flew away and landed on the carpet, the huge red and black and yellow carpet that covered the whole length of the hall. The carpet looked like it grew every time he looked at it.

All of a sudden, the colors of the carpet looked brighter to him. You see, he told himself, I know how it is. The red parts of the carpet are red-hot lumps of coal. What I must do is this: I must walk to the front door without stepping on them. If I touch the red I will be burned. And the black parts of the carpet... yes, the black parts are snakes, poisonous snakes. If I touch one of them, I'll be bitten, and I'll die before my afternoon snack. If I get across the carpet, without being burned and without being bitten, I will be given a puppy for my birthday tomorrow. He got to his feet and

climbed up the stairs to get a better look at the scary carpet. Was it possible? Was there enough yellow? Yellow was the only color he could walk on and be safe. Could he do it?

This would be a challenge. The red hot coals. The snakes. The yellow in the carpet was mixed in with the red and the black. Could he do it? The day before he had walked all the way down the brick sidewalk without ever stepping on a crack. Staying on the yellow part of the carpet shouldn't be too hard. Except for the snakes. He was afraid of snakes. They made him get the shakes. But he would try. He came slowly down the stairs and went to the edge of the carpet. He was wearing sandals. He put one small sandalled foot on a patch of yellow carpet. He was being very, very careful. Then he moved his other foot. Red and black were everywhere. There was just enough room for him to stand with the two feet together on the safe yellow. There! He had started!

He held out his arms sideways to help him balance. He took another step, lifting his foot high over a patch of black, moving to a batch of yellow. When he stepped on the yellow he was very still. All around him was the scary black and red. He kept going.

He wished there were bigger places of yellow on the rug. He slowly moved from yellow to yellow. He would NOT step on the black or red. Then, he began to wobble. He waved his arms to keep his balance. He was halfway across. He stopped on a big safe island of yellow.

He rested on the big patch of yellow and didn't have to be so careful about his feet. He wished he could stop there. He was getting close to the door, but the black and red parts of the carpet were everywhere and the yellow parts ahead looked smaller and smaller. But the fear of not getting the puppy for his birthday made him keep going. Step by step, he went on. He was very careful. The black was what most worried him. He was in the middle. He couldn't turn back. He couldn't jump off sideways because it was too far. Red and black were all around him.

He took another step, putting his foot on the only little piece of yellow he could reach. The black was all around it. He wasn't touching the black, but the carpet snake raised its head and looked at him and he said, "I'm not touching you! Don't bite me!" Then another carpet snake slid across the black patches beside

the first and looked at his foot in the sandal. The boy went up on his toes and stayed there. He was afraid the snake would bite his foot. He had to do something. The next step would have to be a really long one.

He thought of trying to jump over the black, but what if he didn't land on the yellow. What if he landed on the red or the BLACK? He took a deep breath, picked up one foot. He did it! He was safe. His foot was on the yellow. Now, he had to move his other foot to the yellow. He was afraid he would fall. He was almost doing the splits and couldn't move. He looked down and saw what looked like a river of black going between his legs. Was the carpet snake following him?

He had to move his leg. He could not stand like this much longer. Then he started to fall. He put out a hand to stop. His hand landed in the middle of the black! In the middle of the black! He screamed. Outside in the sunshine, behind the house, his mother was looking for her son.