Chapter 1 Here Comes Charlie

These two very old people are the father and mother of Mr. Bucket. Their names are Grandpa Joe and Grandma Josephine.

And these two very old people are the father and mother of Mrs. Bucket. Their names are Grandpa George and Grandma Georgina.

This is Mr. Bucket. This is Mrs. Bucket.

Mr. and Mrs. Bucket have a small boy whose name is Charlie Bucket.

This is Charlie.

How d'you do? And how d'you do? And how d'you do again? He is pleased to meet you.

The whole of this family – the six grown-ups (count them) and little Charlie Bucket – live together in a small wooden house on the edge of a great town.

The house wasn't nearly large enough for so many people, and life was extremely uncomfortable for them all. There were only two rooms in the place altogether, and there was only one bed. The bed was given to the four old grandparents because they were so old and tired. They were so tired, they never got out of it.

Grandpa Joe and Grandma Josephine on this side, Grandpa George and Grandma Georgina on this side.

Mr. and Mrs. Bucket and little Charlie Bucket slept in the other room, upon mattresses on the floor.

In the summertime, this wasn't too bad, but in the winter, freezing cold draughts blew across the floor all night long, and it was awful.

There wasn't any question of them being able to buy a better house – or even one more bed to sleep in. They were far too poor for that.

Mr. Bucket was the only person in the family with a job. He worked in a toothpaste factory, where he sat all day long at a bench and screwed the little caps on to the tops of the tubes of toothpaste after the tubes had been filled. But a toothpaste capcrewer is never paid very much money, and poor Mr Bucket, however hard he worked, and however fast he screwed on the caps, was never able to make enough to buy one half of the things that so large a family needed. There wasn't even enough money to buy proper food for them all. The only meals they could afford were bread and margarine for breakfast, boiled potatoes and cabbage for lunch, and cabbage soup for supper. Sundays were a bit better. They all looked forward to Sundays because then, although they had exactly the same, everyone was allowed a second helping.

The Buckets, of course, didn't starve, but every one of them – the two old grandfathers, the two old
grandmothers, Charlie’s father, Charlie’s mother, and especially little Charlie himself—went about from morning till night with a horrible empty feeling in their tummies.

Charlie felt it worst of all. And although his father and mother often went without their own share of lunch or supper so that they could give it to him, it still wasn’t nearly enough for a growing boy. He desperately wanted something more filling and satisfying than cabbage and cabbage soup. The one thing he longed for more than anything else was... CHOCOLATE.

Walking to school in the mornings, Charlie could see great slabs of chocolate piled up high in the shop windows, and he would stop and stare and press his nose against the glass, his mouth watering like mad. Many times a day, he would see other children taking bars of creamy chocolate out of their pockets and munching them greedily, and that, of course, was pure torture.

Only once a year, on his birthday, did Charlie Bucket ever get to taste a bit of chocolate. The whole family saved up their money for that special occasion, and when the great day arrived, Charlie was always presented with one small chocolate bar to eat all by himself. And each time he received it, on those marvelous birthday mornings, he would place it carefully in a small wooden box that he owned, and treasure it as though it were a bar of solid gold; and for the next few days, he would allow himself only to look at it, but never to touch it. Then at last, when he could stand it no longer, he would peel back a tiny bit of the paper wrapping at one corner to expose a tiny bit of chocolate, and then he would take a tiny nibble—just enough to allow the lovely sweet taste to spread out slowly over his tongue. The next day, he would take another tiny nibble, and so on, and so on. And in this way, Charlie would make his six penny bar of birthday chocolate last him for more than a month.

But I haven’t yet told you about the one awful thing that tortured little Charlie, the lover of chocolate, more than anything else. This thing, for him, was far, far worse than seeing slabs of chocolate in the shop windows or watching other children munching bars of creamy chocolate right in front of him. It was the most terrible torturing thing you could imagine, and it was this: In the town itself, actually within sight of the house in which Charlie lived, there was an ENORMOUS CHOCOLATE FACTORY!

Just imagine that!

And it wasn’t simply an ordinary enormous chocolate factory, either. It was the largest and most famous in the whole world! It was WONKA’S FACTORY, owned by a man called Mr. Willy Wonka, the greatest inventor and maker of chocolates that there has ever been. And what a tremendous, marvellous place it was! It had huge iron gates leading into it, and a high wall surrounding it, and smoke belching from its chimneys, and strange whizzing sounds coming from deep inside it. And outside the walls, for half a mile around in every direction, the air was scented with the heavy rich smell of melting chocolate!

Twice a day, on his way to and from school, little Charlie Bucket had to walk right past the gates of the factory. And every time he went by, he would begin to walk very, very slowly, and he would hold his nose high in the air and take long deep sniffs of the gorgeous chocolatey smell all around him.
Oh, how he loved that smell!

And oh, how he wished he could go inside the factory and see what it was like!

Chapter 2 Mr. Willy Wonka’s Factory

In the evenings, after he had finished his supper of watery cabbage soup, Charlie always went into the room of his four grandparents to listen to their stories, and then afterwards to say good night.

Every one of these old people was over ninety. They were as shrivelled as prunes, and as bony as skeletons, and throughout the day, until Charlie made his appearance, they lay huddled in their one bed, two at either end, with nightcaps on to keep their heads warm, dozing the time away with nothing to do. But as soon as they heard the door opening, and heard Charlie’s voice saying, ‘Good evening, Grandpa Joe and Grandma Josephine, and Grandpa George and Grandma Georgina,’ then all four of them would suddenly sit up, and their old wrinkled faces would light up with smiles of pleasure – and the talking would begin. For they loved this little boy. He was the only bright thing in their lives, and his evening visits were something that they looked forward to all day long. Often, Charlie’s mother and father would come in as well, and stand by the door, listening to the stories that the old people told; and thus, for perhaps half an hour every night, this room would become a happy place, and the whole family would forget that it was hungry and poor.

One evening, when Charlie went in to see his grandparents, he said to them, ‘Is it really true that Wonka’s Chocolate Factory is the biggest in the world?’

‘True?’ cried all four of them at once. ‘Of course it’s true! Good heavens, didn’t you know that? It’s about fifty times as big as any other!’

‘And is Mr. Willy Wonka really the cleverest chocolate maker in the world?’

‘My dear boy,’ said Grandpa Joe, raising himself up a little higher on his pillow, ‘Mr. Willy Wonka is the most amazing, the most fantastic, the most extraordinary chocolate maker the world has ever seen! I thought everybody knew that!’

‘I knew he was famous, Grandpa Joe, and I knew he was very clever…’

‘Clever!’ cried the old man. ‘He’s more than that! He’s a magician with chocolate! He can make anything – anything he wants! Isn’t that a fact, my dears?’

The other three old people nodded their heads slowly up and down, and said, ‘Absolutely true. Just as true as can be.’

And Grandpa Joe said, ‘You mean to say I’ve never told you about Mr. Willy Wonka and his factory?’

‘Never,’ answered little Charlie.

‘Good heavens above! I don’t know what’s the matter with me!’

‘Will you tell me now, Grandpa Joe, please?’
'I certainly will. Sit down beside me on the bed, my dear, and listen carefully.'

Grandpa Joe was the oldest of the four grandparents. He was ninety-six and a half, and that is just about as old as anybody can be. Like all extremely old people, he was delicate and weak, and throughout the day he spoke very little. But in the evenings, when Charlie, his beloved grandson, was in the room, he seemed in some marvellous way to grow quite young again. All his tiredness fell away from him, and he became as eager and excited as a young boy.

‘Oh, what a man he is, this Mr. Willy Wonka!’ cried Grandpa Joe.

‘Did you know, for example, that he has himself invented more than two hundred new kinds of chocolate bars, each with a different centre, each far sweeter and creamier and more delicious than anything the other chocolate factories can make!’

‘Perfectly true!’ cried Grandma Josephine. ‘And he sends them to all the four corners of the earth! Isn’t that so, Grandpa Joe?’

‘It is, my dear, it is. And to all the kings and presidents of the world as well. But it isn’t only chocolate bars that he makes. Oh, dear me, no! He has some really fantastic inventions up his sleeve. Mr. Willy Wonka has! Did you know that he’s invented a way of making chocolate ice cream so that it stays cold for hours and hours without being in the refrigerator? You can even leave it lying in the sun all morning on a hot day and it won’t go runny!’

‘But that’s impossible!’ said little Charlie, staring at his grandfather.

‘Of course it’s impossible!’ cried Grandpa Joe. ‘It’s completely absurd! But Mr. Willy Wonka has done it!’

‘Quite right!’ the others agreed, nodding their heads. ‘Mr. Wonka has done it.’

‘And then again,’ Grandpa Joe went on speaking very slowly now so that Charlie wouldn’t miss a word, ‘Mr. Willy Wonka can make marshmallows that taste of violets, and rich caramels that change colour every ten seconds as you suck them, and little feathery sweets that melt away deliriously the moment you put them between your lips. He can make chewing-gum that never loses its taste, and sugar balloons that you can blow up to enormous sizes before you pop them with a pin and gobble them up. And, by a most secret method, he can make lovely blue birds’ eggs with black spots on them, and when you put one of these in your mouth, it gradually gets smaller and smaller until suddenly there is nothing left except a tiny little pink sugary baby bird sitting on the tip of your tongue.’

Grandpa Joe paused and ran the point of his tongue slowly over his lips. ‘It makes my mouth water just thinking about it,’ he said.

‘Mine, too,’ said little Charlie. ‘But please go on.’

While they were talking, Mr. and Mrs. Bucket, Charlie’s mother and father, had come quietly into the room, and now both were standing just inside the door, listening.

‘Tell Charlie about that crazy Indian prince,’ said Grandma Josephine. ‘He’d like to hear that.’
‘You mean Prince Pondicherry?’ said Grandpa Joe, and he began chuckling with laughter.

‘Completely dotty!’ said Grandpa George.

‘But very rich,’ said Grandma Georgina.

‘What did he do?’ asked Charlie eagerly.

‘Listen,’ said Grandpa Joe, ‘and I’ll tell you.’

Chapter 3 Mr. Wonka and the Indian Prince

‘Prince Pondicherry wrote a letter to Mr. Willy Wonka,’ said Grandpa Joe, ‘and asked him to come all the way out to India and build him a colossal palace entirely out of chocolate.’

‘Did Mr. Wonka do it, Grandpa?’

‘He did, indeed. And what a palace it was! It had one hundred rooms, and everything was made of either dark or light chocolate! The bricks were chocolate, and the cement holding them together was chocolate, and the windows were chocolate, and all the walls and ceilings were made of chocolate, so were the carpets and the pictures and the furniture and the beds; and when you turned on the taps in the bathroom, hot chocolate came pouring out.

‘When it was all finished, Mr. Wonka said to Prince Pondicherry, “I warn you, though, it won’t last very long, so you’d better start eating it right away.”

“Nonsense!” shouted the Prince. “I’m not going to eat my palace! I’m not even going to nibble the staircase or lick the walls! I’m going to live in it!”

‘But Mr. Wonka was right, of course, because soon after this, there came a very hot day with a boiling sun, and the whole palace began to melt, and then it sank slowly to the ground, and the crazy prince, who was dozing in the living room at the time, woke up to find himself swimming around in a huge brown sticky lake of chocolate.’

Little Charlie sat very still on the edge of the bed, staring at his grandfather. Charlie’s face was bright, and his eyes were stretched so wide you could see the whites all around. ‘Is all this really true?’ he asked. ‘Or are you pulling my leg?’

‘It’s true!’ cried all four of the old people at once. ‘Of course it’s true! Ask anyone you like!’

‘And I’ll tell you something else that’s true,’ said Grandpa Joe, and now he leaned closer to Charlie, and lowered his voice to a soft, secret whisper.

‘Nobody… ever… comes… out!’

‘Out of where?’ asked Charlie.

‘And… nobody… ever… goes… in!’

‘In where?’ cried Charlie.

‘Wonka’s factory, of course!’
‘Grandpa, what do you mean?’

‘I mean workers, Charlie.’

‘Workers?’

‘All factories,’ said Grandpa Joe, ‘have workers streaming in and out of the gates in the mornings and evenings – except Wonka’s! Have you ever seen a single person going into that place – or coming out?’

Little Charlie looked slowly around at each of the four old faces, one after the other, and they all looked back at him. They were friendly smiling faces, but they were also quite serious. There was no sign of joking or leg-pulling on any of them.

‘Well? Have you?’ asked Grandpa Joe.

‘I… I really don’t know, Grandpa,’ Charlie stammered.

‘Whenever I walk past the factory, the gates seem to be closed.’

‘Exactly!’ said Grandpa Joe.

‘But there must be people working there…’

‘Not people, Charlie. Not ordinary people, anyway.’

‘Then who?’ cried Charlie.

‘Ah-ha… That’s it, you see… That’s another of Mr. Willy Wonka’s clevernesses.’

‘Charlie, dear,’ Mrs. Bucket called out from where she was standing by the door, ‘it’s time for bed. That’s enough for tonight.’

‘But, Mother, I must hear…’

‘Tomorrow, my darling…’

‘That’s right,’ said Grandpa Joe, ‘I’ll tell you the rest of it tomorrow evening.’

Chapter 4 The Secret Workers

The next evening, Grandpa Joe went on with his story.

‘You see, Charlie,’ he said, ‘not so very long ago there used to be thousands of people working in Mr. Willy Wonka’s factory. Then one day, all of a sudden, Mr. Wonka had to ask every single one of them to leave, to go home, never to come back.’

‘But why?’ asked Charlie.

‘Because of spies.’

‘Spies?’

‘Yes. All the other chocolate makers, you see, had begun to grow jealous of the wonderful sweets that Mr. Wonka was making, and they started sending in spies to steal his secret recipes. The spies
took jobs in the Wonka factory, pretending that they were ordinary workers, and while they were there, each one of them found out exactly how a certain special thing was made.'

‘And did they go back to their own factories and tell?’ asked Charlie.

‘They must have,’ answered Grandpa Joe, ‘because soon after that, Fickelgruber’s factory started making an ice cream that would never melt, even in the hottest sun. Then Mr. Prodnose’s factory came out with a chewing-gum that never lost its flavour however much you chewed it. And then Mr. Slugworth’s factory began making sugar balloons that you could blow up to huge sizes before you popped them with a pin and gobbled them up. And so on, and so on. And Mr. Willy Wonka tore his beard and shouted, “This is terrible! I shall be ruined! There are spies everywhere! I shall have to close the factory!”’

‘But he didn’t do that!’ Charlie said.

‘Oh, yes he did. He told all the workers that he was sorry, but they would have to go home. Then, he shut the main gates and fastened them with a chain. And suddenly, Wonka’s giant chocolate factory became silent and deserted. The chimneys stopped smoking, the machines stopped whirring, and from then on, not a single chocolate or sweet was made. Not a soul went in or out, and even Mr. Willy Wonka himself disappeared completely.

‘Months and months went by,’ Grandpa Joe went on, ‘but still the factory remained closed. And everybody said, “Poor Mr. Wonka. He was so nice. And he made such marvellous things. But he’s finished now. It’s all over.”

‘Then something astonishing happened. One day, early in the morning, thin columns of white smoke were seen to be coming out of the tops of the tall chimneys of the factory! People in the town stopped and stared. “What’s going on?” they cried. “Someone’s lit the furnaces! Mr. Wonka must be opening up again!” They ran to the gates, expecting to see them wide open and Mr. Wonka standing there to welcome his workers back.

‘But no! The great iron gates were still locked and chained as securely as ever, and Mr. Wonka was nowhere to be seen.

“‘But the factory is working!’ the people shouted. “Listen! You can hear the machines! They’re all whirring again! And you can smell the smell of melting chocolate in the air!”’

Grandpa Joe leaned forward and laid a long bony finger on Charlie’s knee, and he said softly, ‘But most mysterious of all, Charlie, were the shadows in the windows of the factory. The people standing on the street outside could see small dark shadows moving about behind the frosted glass windows.’

‘Shadows of whom?’ said Charlie quickly.

‘That’s exactly what everybody else wanted to know.

“‘The place is full of workers!’ the people shouted. “But nobody’s gone in! The gates are locked! It’s crazy! Nobody ever comes out, either!”’

‘But there was no question at all,’ said Grandpa Joe, ‘that the factory was running. And it’s gone
on running ever since, for these last ten years. What’s more, the chocolates and sweets it’s been turning out have become more fantastic and delicious all the time. And of course now when Mr. Wonka invents some new and wonderful sweet, neither Mr. Fickelgruber nor Mr. Prodnose nor Mr. Slugworth nor anybody else is able to copy it. No spies can go into the factory to find out how it is made.

‘But Grandpa, who,’ cried Charlie, ‘who is Mr. Wonka using to do all the work in the factory?’

‘Nobody knows, Charlie.’

‘But that’s absurd! Hasn’t someone asked Mr. Wonka?’

‘Nobody sees him any more. He never comes out. The only things that come out of that place are chocolates and sweets. They come out through a special trap door in the wall, all packed and addressed, and they are picked up every day by Post Office trucks.’

‘But Grandpa, what sort of people are they that work in there?’

‘My dear boy,’ said Grandpa Joe, ‘that is one of the great mysteries of the chocolate-making world. We know only one thing about them. They are very small. The faint shadows that sometimes appear behind the windows, especially late at night when the lights are on, are those of tiny people, people no taller than my knee…’

‘There aren’t any such people,’ Charlie said.

Just then, Mr. Bucket, Charlie’s father, came into the room. He was home from the toothpaste factory, and he was waving an evening newspaper rather excitedly. ‘Have you heard the news?’ he cried. He held up the paper so that they could see the huge headline. The headline said:

WONKA FACTORY TO BE OPENED AT LAST TO LUCKY FEW

Chapter 5 The Golden Tickets

‘You mean people are actually going to be allowed to go inside the factory?’ cried Grandpa Joe. ‘Read us what it says – quickly!’

‘All right,’ said Mr. Bucket, smoothing out the newspaper.

‘Listen.’

Evening Bulletin

Mr. Willy Wonka, the confectionery genius whom nobody has seen for the last ten years, sent out the following notice today:

I, Willy Wonka, have decided to allow five children – just five, mind you, and no more – to visit my factory this year. These lucky five will be shown around personally by me, and they will be allowed to see all the secrets and the magic of my factory. Then, at the end of the tour, as a special present, all of them will be given enough chocolates and sweets to last them for the rest of their lives! So watch out for the Golden Tickets! Five Golden Tickets have been printed on golden paper, and these five Golden Tickets have been hidden underneath the ordinary wrapping paper of
five ordinary bars of chocolate. These five chocolate bars may be anywhere – in any shop in any street in any town in any country in the world – upon any counter where Wonka’s Sweets are sold. And the five lucky finders of these five Golden Tickets are the only ones who will be allowed to visit my factory and see what it’s like now inside! Good luck to you all, and happy hunting! (Signed Willy Wonka.)

‘The man’s dotty!’ muttered Grandma Josephine.

‘He’s brilliant!’ cried Grandpa Joe. ‘He’s a magician! Just imagine what will happen now! The whole world will be searching for those Golden Tickets! Everyone will be buying Wonka’s chocolate bars in the hope of finding one! He’ll sell more than ever before! Oh, how exciting it would be to find one!’

‘And all the chocolate and sweets that you could eat for the rest of your life – free!’ said Grandpa George. ‘Just imagine that!’

‘They’d have to deliver them in a truck!’ said Grandma Georgina.

‘It makes me quite ill to think of it,’ said Grandma Josephine.

‘Nonsense!’ cried Grandpa Joe. ‘Wouldn’t it be something, Charlie, to open a bar of chocolate and see a Golden Ticket glistening inside!’

‘It certainly would, Grandpa. But there isn’t a hope,’ Charlie said sadly. ‘I only get one bar a year.’

‘You never know, darling,’ said Grandma Georgina. ‘It’s your birthday next week. You have as much chance as anybody else.’

‘I’m afraid that simply isn’t true,’ said Grandpa George. ‘The kids who are going to find the Golden Tickets are the ones who can afford to buy bars of chocolate every day. Our Charlie gets only one a year. There isn’t a hope.’