



The Gruffalo's Child

Written by Julia Donaldson

Illustrated by Axel Scheffler

2004 Macmillan Children's Books (32 pages)

NOVEL STUDY

The Gruffalo's Child by Julia Donaldson

SUMMARY

This book is a follow up to the ever popular story, 'The Gruffalo'. In this story the Gruffalo's Child decides to defy her father's advice to stay away from the woods. While her father sleeps, she goes on an adventure through the woods to find the 'Big Bad Mouse'. The Gruffalo's child meets many familiar characters along the way and finally meets the mouse in question. The book explores the themes of bravery, feeling scared and feeling safe.

CHARACTER REVIEW

The Gruffalo

The Gruffalo's Child

Snake

Owl

Fox

The Big Bad Mouse

SEL THEMES IN THE BOOK

- Feelings – bored, scared, safe
- Self-Management – calming down
- Family

STUDY QUESTIONS

Pages 1 - 2

- **The Gruffalo's Child is hearing a story from her daddy. Look at her face – how does she feel about the story she is hearing?** *Happy, excited, interested*
- **How can you tell?** *She is smiling*
- **How do you feel when someone is telling you a story? What is your favourite story to hear?**
- **The Gruffalo's Child asks what the Big Bad Mouse looks like – what do you think he looks like?** *Have children predict what the Big Bad Mouse looks like – those who have heard 'The Gruffalo' may explain that he's not really big.*

Pages 3 - 4

- **The Gruffalo describes the Big Bad Mouse. Look at the face of the Gruffalo's Child– how does she feel about this story now?** *Scared, worried*
- **How can you tell?** *Her eyes are looking down, she isn't smiling*

Activity

- **Drawing** – Have the children draw the Big Bad Mouse from the description in the book. Have children explain their drawings.

Pages 5 - 6

- **Why did the Gruffalo's Child go into the wood?** *She was bored.*
- **What do you do when you get bored?** *Play a game, lego, play with sibling, tell an adult. The conversation might move on to not OK behaviours such as annoying a sibling – allow children to speak freely.*
- **Do you think going into the wood is a good idea?** *No because her daddy said it was dangerous, no because the Big Bad Mouse lives in the wood. This could be a good opportunity to revisit the not OK behaviours we do when we are bored and talk about why playing a game or playing with someone else is a better choice.*

Activity

- **Toy bag** – Have the children gather toys that the Gruffalo's Child could play with when she is bored and put in a 'bored bag'. Explain that these are good choices to make when we are bored.

Pages 7 - 8

- **Look at the Gruffalo's Child's face – how does she feel now?** *Scared*
- **How can you tell?** *Her eyes are big, she isn't smiling, her eyebrows are up. Ask children to show you their scared face – you may have to show the difference between scared and scary.*
- **Do you think it is the tail of the Big Bad Mouse?** *No it looks like a snake's tail or yes the Gruffalo said the Big Bad Mouse's tail was scaly*

Pages 9 – 10

- **Look at the Gruffalo's Child's face – how does she feel now?** *Scared*
- **How can you tell?** *Her eyes are big, she isn't smiling, her eyebrows are up.*
- **But the Gruffalo's Child says 'I'm not scared' - why?** *She's being brave, she doesn't want to feel scared – it's an uncomfortable feeling*



Activity

- **Create** – As a group come up with recipe for a Gruffalo cake. Have children make the recipe using materials such as playdough, sand, flour, sugar etc.

Pages 11 - 12

- **What did the Gruffalo say the Big Bad Mouse's eyes look like?** *'pools of terrible fire'*
- **Look at the eyes in the trees – do they look like pools of terrible fire?** *Discuss the shape and colour of the eyes.*

Pages 13 - 14

- **The Gruffalo's Child says she's not scared. She has a toy with her. Sometimes a special toy can help us if we feel scared. What toys help you when you feel scared?** *Discuss toys that make us feel safe. Explain that it is ok to have a special toy to make us feel better.*

Pages 15 - 16

- **The Gruffalo's Child is looking for clues to find the Big Bad Mouse. What clue has she found here?** *Whiskers and an underground house. She knows the Big Bad Mouse has whiskers and an underground house.*
- **Our faces can give clues to show how we are feeling. Let's guess how we're feeling.** *Have children come up one by one to show a feeling you whisper in their ear – happy, sad, excited, scared. For each face discuss what 'clues' there were – wide/small eyes, smile/frown, eyebrows up/down.*

Pages 17 - 18

- **The Gruffalo's Child says "it's all a trick" – how do you think she feels about this?** *Annoyed, upset, sad.*
- **Has anyone ever played a trick on you – how did you feel?**

Pages 19 - 20

- **Does the mouse look scared of the Gruffalo's Child? What clues can you see on their face?** *No – the mouse looks fine/happy. He has a smile, his eyes aren't big*

Activity

- **Midnight Feast** – As a group create a midnight feast for the Gruffalo's Child. Use items from around the room such as toy food, cuddly toys and playdough.

Pages 21 - 24

- **The mouse has had an idea – what do you think it is?**
- **The Gruffalo's Child calms down and listens to the mouse – she unclenches her fist. How do you calm down?** *Breathing, playing with a toy, cuddle from family member, favourite blanket*

Activity

- **Mindfulness breathing** – As a group practise doing nothing but breathing. There are lots of videos on YouTube that can be used for breathing exercises/mindfulness for kids. A really simple way is just to play calm music for 1 minute and have everyone lie on the floor and just be still for 1 minute to understand how 'calm' feels.



Pages 25 - 26

- **How does the Gruffalo's Child feel now?** *Scared,*
- **How can you tell?** *Her eyes are big, her mouth is open, her eyebrows are up, she has jumped up like she got a fright*
- **Has the mouse really gone and got The Big Bad Mouse?** *No it's the shadow of the moon making him look bigger – it's a trick.*

Activity

- **Shadow puppets** – Create a darker space and using a torch show the children how to make shadow puppets and project them onto a wall.

Pages 27 - 28

- **What did the Gruffalo's Child do because she was scared?** *She ran away.*
- **What can we do when we are scared?** *Tell someone, cuddle a toy, cuddle a family member, cry*

Pages 29 - 32

- **How does the Gruffalo's Child feel now?** *Safe, happy (if children do not mention safe make sure to bring this word up)*
- **How can you tell?** *She is smiling, she is cuddled up*
- **What makes you feel safe?** *Family, nursery, school,*

Activity

- **Puppets** – Recreate the story using puppets. Encourage the children to name how characters are feeling at each point in the story.