

RELAXED PERFORMANCE GUIDE

THE
GRUFFALO'S
CHILD



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VISUAL GUIDE FOR RELAXED PERFORMANCES

About Tall Stories

Tall Stories Theatre Company is a not-for-profit charitable organisation, which presents old, new and timeless stories in a physical, visual style, always acknowledging the presence of the audience. Our productions link original music with dynamic movement – and lots of laughs. The company was founded in 1997 by directors Olivia Jacobs and Toby Mitchell.

About the Book

The show is based on the book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. The stage adaptation includes all the text of the book and is driven along with music, songs and lots of fun.

What is the play about?

The Story

One wild and windy night the Gruffalo's child ignores her father's warnings about the 'Big Bad Mouse' and tiptoes out into the snow.

On the way she meets the same fox, owl and snake that her father had met some years before. Each woodland creature points her in a different direction, so by the time the little Gruffalo gets to the heart of the deep dark wood; she begins to have serious doubts whether the scary mouse that her dad has told her about really exists.

Just about to give up and go home, she sees a little mouse and decides to stop for a mousey snack. But Mouse is not in the mood to be eaten and comes up with an ingenious plan to scare the little Gruffalo away. Standing on a twig as the moon shines, Mouse casts a big bad mousey shadow on the ground – and this is enough to send the Gruffalo's Child running home...

Theatrical Style

The production combines Tall Stories' unique physical storytelling style with new songs, humour and a touch of magic. In addition, puppetry is used to help create the sense of the size of the Gruffalo next to his child as well as to illustrate the scary mouse that the Gruffalo's child thinks she has seen... For the majority of the show, a narrator (who later becomes Mouse) leads us through the tale.

The set is made up of trees that move to indicate the different parts of the deep dark wood.

The show's main points

The characters

The Gruffalo's Child, The Gruffalo, Snake, Owl, Fox and Mouse

The Gruffalo's Child is a musical play made up of three actors. Two of the actors play the Gruffalo's Child and Mouse without changing roles throughout. The third actor plays the parts of the Gruffalo predators (Snake, Fox and Mouse). All actors also start the show as storytellers.

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The actors' faces are visible and the costumes are minimal to facilitate the very physical style of the performance.

Puppetry is used to enhance the size and scale of the Gruffalo and the Big Bad Mouse.

There is plenty of music in the show with all the actors singing songs and interacting with audiences on a regular basis. The characters are friendly and approachable. Counting, rhyme, rhythm and repetition form a large part of the production, so feel free to sing-a-long, dance and answer back when the feeling takes you!

The Actors



Andrew Mudie as The Gruffalo



Andrew Mudie as Snake

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Andrew Mudie as Owl



Andrew Mudie as Fox



Andrew Mudie as Narrator

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Sophie Alice as The Gruffalo's Child



Sophie Alice as Narrator



Catriona Mackenzie as Mouse

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Catriona Mackenzie as Narrator

A story of what the play is about

The performance opens with three storytellers coming out onto the stage. It is cold and they throw snowballs at each other and two of the storytellers run away or hide. The remaining one starts to tell us the story of the Gruffalo's Child. The Gruffalo is asleep in his cave having a bad dream about The Big Bad Mouse. As he awakens, The Gruffalo's Child enters the scene and asks her dad about his dream. Was he dreaming of giant spiders? Or enormous vampire bats? Or fire-breathing dragons? To which he replies that he was dreaming of a mouse; a terrifying, gruesome, horrifying mouse. The Gruffalo's Child starts to laugh, saying mice are tasty and she and her dad should go out hunting

But The Gruffalo said it before and says it again: "No Gruffalo should ever set foot in the deep dark wood". Immediately after, a catchy and enjoyable song is sang on stage by The Gruffalo and his child which explains the sentence above: that no Gruffalo should ever venture into the deep dark wood. The Gruffalo then makes her promise she will follow his advice as this is the only way she will be able to avoid The Big Bad Mouse.

**"The Gruffalo said that no Gruffalo should
Ever set foot in the deep dark wood"**

The Gruffalo ignores her father's warning and decides to venture out into the snow with her trusty stick man toy....

The Gruffalo's Child first encounters the Snake, who is throwing a skin-warming party where they celebrate by singing Hip hip Ole, in Snake's truly Spanish spirit. The Gruffalo's Child asks him if the Big Bad Mouse is invited to the party and Snake says there isn't such a thing as The Big Bad Mouse. He is, however, scared when the child mentions she's The Gruffalo's Child and gives her a tip of where mouse will be.

"The Big Bad Mouse is down by the lake eating Gruffalo cake"

The Gruffalo's Child continues with her journey with Stickman and she's not scared. She then encounters the Owl who is teaching flying lessons. He hasn't seen The Big Bad Mouse either and upon learning that he is facing a Gruffalo, he tells The Gruffalo's Child that the mouse is

"Somewhere nearby, eating Gruffalo-pie"

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Owl vanishes soon after without The Gruffalo's Child noticing, but she soon comes across Fox who tries who, also scared he might be eaten tells her that the Big Bad Mouse is –

“Under a tree, drinking Gruffalo tea”

When all hope seems lost, the tiny mouse appears and but this mouse is nothing like the creature the Gruffalo had described to his child. “There's no such thing as The Big Bad Mouse”, the Gruffalo's Child exclaims and prepares to make a snack of the little mouse.

Just then Mouse has a brilliant idea to avoid being eaten by the Gruffalo's Child, he climbs onto a tree branch and waits for the full moon to set. “Let me introduce to you, A dear, old friend of mine, He and I, we go back a while, The Big Bad Mouse”. The full moon projects a large shadow onto the ground making The Gruffalo's Child believe she has come across The Big Bad Mouse.

In fear she runs back to the safety of the Gruffalo cave and leaves Stickman behind by mistake. Mouse tries to stop her in order to hand her the wooden toy, but it's too late. The Gruffalo's Child has already made her way to her home where she's “a bit less brave...a bit less bored”. The performance ends with mouse putting Stickman into The Gruffalo's Child's arms while she sleeps.

Lighting

There are night and day lighting states in the show.

The lights will dim to signal the start of the performance.

The houselights will be kept on at a low level throughout the performance so at no point will it be completely dark in the auditorium.

A blackout on stage will signal the end of the show.

There are no strobe or flashing lights used in this production.

Sound

All music is pre-recorded with live singing.

There are moments where the audience are encouraged to shout out and join in with the songs.

The volume will be brought down slightly.

There are no loud bangs or crashes but at times the characters will yell.

Running Time

The show is approximately 55 minutes long with no interval.

Recommended Age

Ages 3+ and their families.