

BRITFILMS

BRITISH SCHOOL FILM FESTIVAL

#11 - 2017/2018

Study Guide

THE BFG

THE BFG

German certification	minimum age 0 recommended for 8 years and older
Language	English with German subtitles
Country, Year	USA 2016
Running time	117 min.
Directed by	Steven Spielberg
Starring	Mark Rylance (BFG), Ruby Barnhill (Sophie), Penelope Wilton (Queen Elizabeth II), Jemaine Clement (Fleeshlumpeater), Rebecca Hall (Mary) and others

What THE BFG is about

Sophie was very lucky. She was abducted from her orphanage not by the dangerous, man-eating giants, but by the nicest and friendliest giant imaginable. This giant, who is truly deserving of the name Big Friendly Giant (or BFG for short), is very different from the others, which explains why he is constantly bullied and mocked. He is a collector and distributor of dreams. The BFG shelters Sophie in his house in giant country and protects her from the other, less friendly giants. But how does one get rid of those mean monsters? Sophie comes up with a plan. A plan that needs the royal help of Queen Elizabeth II. of England.

Steven Spielberg has turned Roald Dahl's novel of the same name into an enchanting fairy tale that takes the viewer on a journey through a wondrous world while staying very close to its two protagonists. The (perfectly animated) BFG, smoothly voiced by Mark Rylance, is the star of the film. Due to his unique way of speaking and his polite demeanour he becomes a very endearing presence that the lonely orphan Sophie can relate to. Spielberg also approaches Dahl's fondness for the eerie and frightening by including some enjoyably scary scenes that are not too challenging, even for younger audiences.

The following work sheets deal with

- Roald Dahl's playful language (sometimes called „gobblefunk“)
- What the film tells you about monsters and men and what makes the BFG so lovable
- The design elements that make the film seem scary at times

Publishing information

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Photo credits: Constantin Film

(All the stills are from the Blu-ray of BFG – SOPHIE & DER RIESE, published in Germany by Constantin Film. They serve as image quotations, to enable study of the film's content, and not as illustrations.)

Gobblefunk

Gobblefunk is a common name for the language that Roald Dahl's friendly giant speaks. Explain the meaning behind the following words and, if possible, translate them into English and German.

hopscotchy	
whizpopping	
scrumdiddlyumptious	
frobscottle	
snozzcumber	
human bean	

Think of another word that might fit the BFG's language.

Your word	Your definition

Now construct a simple sentence and use your word in it. Read it out loud for your classmates and let them guess what the word means.

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About humans and giants

Quite often, the BFG casually talks about people:

SOPHIE

But why did you bring me here?
Why did you take me?

BFG

Well, I had to take you. Because the first thing you'd be doing is you'd be scuddling around and yoddlng that you were actually seeing a giant. And then there would be a great rumple dumpus, wouldn't there? And all the human beans would be rummaging and whiffling for the giant what you saw and get wildly excited and they'd be locking me up in a cage to be looked at with all the squiggling, you know, hippo dumplings, crocodown dillies and giggirafs. And then there would be a gigantus looksy giant hunt for all of the boys.

SOPHIE

I won't tell. No one will listen to me anyway, I'm an untrustworthy child.

Dialogue excerpt from THE BFG

Technically, it's the giants who are monsters. But how does the BFG think about humans?

What do you learn about human adults and their treatment of children? How do you feel about that?

What makes the BFG special in comparison to adult humans? Why do Sophie and the BFG become friends?

In the excerpt above, mark all words belonging to the BFG's fantasy language. Write the „correct“ words next to the text.

Pretty scary

THE BFG is based on a novel by Roald Dahl. Dahl is known for his (sometimes) dark humor and the frightening scenes that are often part of his stories.

Describe what makes the following images seem creepy or frightening. Consider for example

- The lighting / mood
- The colors
- The perspective
- The proportions of people and/or things



1



2



3



4

Aside from these, which scene did you find especially creepy? Retell it and try to describe, how the creepiness is created.