



THE GRUFFALO

LIVE ON STAGE!

A Visual Guide



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Contact Us – Tall Stories

If you have any questions about the show itself and would like to find out more, please get in contact with Tall Stories via info@tallstories.org.uk or 02083480080 (we're not always in but we'll always pick up if we're in the office!) and we're happy to help.

If you have any feedback about the show please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

We hope you enjoy visiting us in the deep dark wood!

About the Play

How long does the play last?

The play lasts for about 55 minutes – with no interval.

What is the play about?

The Gruffalo is based on the much-loved children's book by Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler and is adapted for the stage by theatre company Tall Stories, internationally recognised for their exciting blend of storytelling theatre, original music and lots of laughs.

The story follows a little brown mouse through the deep dark wood. In her search for nuts, she encounters a Fox, an Owl and a Snake. The story also includes two narrators who, through their storytelling, guide Mouse on her daring adventure.

Fox, Owl and Snake want to eat Mouse, but she outwits each of them by describing an imaginary monster – the Gruffalo. With terrible tusks and terrible claws and terrible teeth in his terrible jaws, his favourite food just happens to be fox, owl then snake! The frightened animals flee to Mouse's refrain... *"Doesn't he know, there's no such thing as a Gruffalo!"*

But then Mouse comes face to face with the very creature she imagined, and the monstrous Gruffalo is hungry! Mouse bravely tells the Gruffalo that she is the scariest animal in the wood.

Laughing, the Gruffalo plays along and agrees to follow Mouse back through the forest, meeting each of the three predators in turn; each takes off at the sight of the pair.

Each time Mouse seemingly scares one of the animals away, the Gruffalo becomes more impressed and when eventually Mouse announces her intention to eat the Gruffalo – *"But now my tummy's beginning to rumble. My favourite food is – Gruffalo crumble!"* – the Gruffalo is terrified and makes his escape. The show ends with Mouse finding a good nut to eat.

Announcements

There may be an announcement just before the show asking for mobile phones to be switched off and advising that photography or filming of any kind is not permitted.

If you need to use a specific electronic device such as an iPad to help with your enjoyment of the show, please inform the ushers as you enter the theatre.

Recommended age

The Gruffalo is recommended for ages 3+. However we often have younger audience members – and many older ones too!

More about the show

You can watch the trailer for The Gruffalo and see some pictures of the show on stage on our website, www.tallstories.org.uk/the-gruffalo

The Characters

The characters in the play are:

The Gruffalo

Mouse

Fox

Owl

Snake

The Narrators

The show is performed by three actors, who play different roles. There is one female actor who plays the part of Mouse and two male actors who play Narrators. One of the male actors also plays all three predators (Fox, Owl and Snake) and the other eventually becomes the Gruffalo!

The stage adaptation includes all the rhyming text of the book and is driven along with music, songs, lots of fun and some audience participation. The characters will speak directly to the audience, so feel free to sing along and answer back when prompted.

The characters are created with costumes that ensure the actors faces are visible throughout the show, including the Gruffalo. The costumes are designed with physical storytelling in mind, and for Fox, Owl and Snake, they build on the base costume that the Narrator wears.

The Gruffalo

The Gruffalo is big and loud! He may be frightening (at least he thinks so), but he is also silly. He likes to talk to the audience. At one point in the show, the Gruffalo runs away from the Mouse and comes down into the audience asking you whether you can save him.

Aaron Dart - Narrator/ Gruffalo

Aaron is one of the Narrators and also plays the Gruffalo.

Here is Aaron.



Here's a quick Q&A so you can get to know him...

What have been your favourite projects to work on?

I played Mr Spout the Tea Pot in Fat Rascal Theatre's gender swapped Beauty and the Beast: A Musical Parody. It was very fun and bonkers!

What's your favourite food?

My favourite food is a Cornish pasty, I could eat them for breakfast, lunch, dinner and if they made a sweet one, dessert as well!

What was your favourite story as a child?

The Tortoise and the Hare. It has a good moral to live by, "slow and steady wins the race" and I really liked the pictures too.

Here is Aaron as **the Gruffalo**:



Here is Aaron as **Narrator**:



Mouse

Mouse is young and brave and full of clever tricks to scare off the predators that are hoping for a tasty lunch. Mouse may ask for the audiences' help during the show to scare away the woodland creatures. Mouse is dressed in a velvet jacket and shorts, with a rope tail and little pink ears – these are revealed at the start of the show!

Mouse is played by Aimee Louise Bevan. Aimee starts the show as a Narrator, then becomes Mouse.

Here is Aimee.

Here's a quick Q&A so you can get to know her...



What have been your favourite projects to work on?

Two of my favourite projects have been Small Island because it was a gorgeous production, and Reach for the Stars because I got to challenge myself with new skills.

What was your favourite story as a child?

Anything Roald Dahl! My all time favourite was probably Matilda

What kind of monster would you invent?

A furry blue monster, with a tail like a beaver, two and a half horns and eyes that change colour when they are happy. They also love ice cream

Here is Aimee as **Narrator**:



Here is Aimee as **Mouse**:



The Predators

One actor plays the three hungry predators; Fox, Owl and Snake. He has a different costume for each character.

The Predators are played by Al Chisholm - Fox, Owl then Snake through the show. Al also sometimes plays a Narrator.

Here is Al.



Here's a quick Q&A so you can get to know him!

What have been your favourite projects to work on?

I've been messing around professionally since 1999. One of my recent favourites was playing Bird and Dragon in 'Room On The Broom' as I loved learning a new skill, puppetry.

What do you like best about your job?

I love working in theatre as I get to travel the world telling stories with friends. I think it's the best job in the world.

What's your favourite food?

I often wonder what food I would choose if I could only eat one thing for the rest of my life. It would probably be ice cream. Never tried owl ice cream though....



Here is Al as a **Narrator!**

This is his base costume, which forms the foundation of all his costumes through the show.



Here is Al as **Fox!**

Fox is a bit of a 'wheeler dealer' and tries to trick Mouse into coming into his lair so that he can eat her for his lunch!



Here is Al as **Owl!**

Owl is an eccentric old pilot! He likes to eat mice and tries to get Mouse to come to his treetop house for dinner!!



Here is Al as **Snake!**

Snake is a maraca-shaking party animal!! He likes to sing, dance and be the centre of attention. He likes eating mice too and tries his best to hypnotise Mouse so that he can eat her!

The Set

When you arrive in the theatre auditorium you will see a green, brown and orange woodland scene on stage, closely referencing the colour palette in the book. There will be no actors on stage until Mouse enters at the start of the show. The stage lighting will be down low with the sound of birds tweeting in the background.

Three of the trees are on wheels and will be moved around by the actors during the show. One of the trees has a door in it, through which Fox will travel – this is his den!



The Lighting

Different lights are used to create daytime and nighttime lighting during the show. At the beginning of the show there is a quick change from the golden wood to dark blue lighting and back again.

During Snake's scene, some fairy lights will turn on decorating his log pile house.

Towards the end, after the Mouse finds the nut, the stage will go to pitch black. There is no strobe lighting or flash photography in this production.

At the end of the show the lights in the auditorium will fade up and there is a finale to clap and sing along too.

For relaxed performances, we will keep some of the house lights on at a low level so that the auditorium will not be in complete darkness.

The Sound

The show contains recorded music, live singing and woodland sound effects that help set the scene. Mouse has some high-pitched squeaks during the show. The Gruffalo will roar loudly at times. There is one very loud roar with an echo just before the Gruffalo makes his big entrance.

Through the show the Narrators will make high pitched 'ping' noises when describing the nut.

For relaxed performances, we will turn the overall level of the sound down so that it is not too loud during the performance.

Songs from the show include:

1. Mouse's Dream (The Nut)
2. A Hole / New World (The Wood)
3. 1-2-3-4-5 (Fox's song)
4. Owl's Song
5. When I Have a Party (Snake Song)
6. G-G-G-Gruffalo
7. What Gruffalos Do

If you would like to listen to the songs again after the show, they are available to listen to on our Songs of the Show CD. This can be purchased via our website www.tallstories.org.uk/shop.