

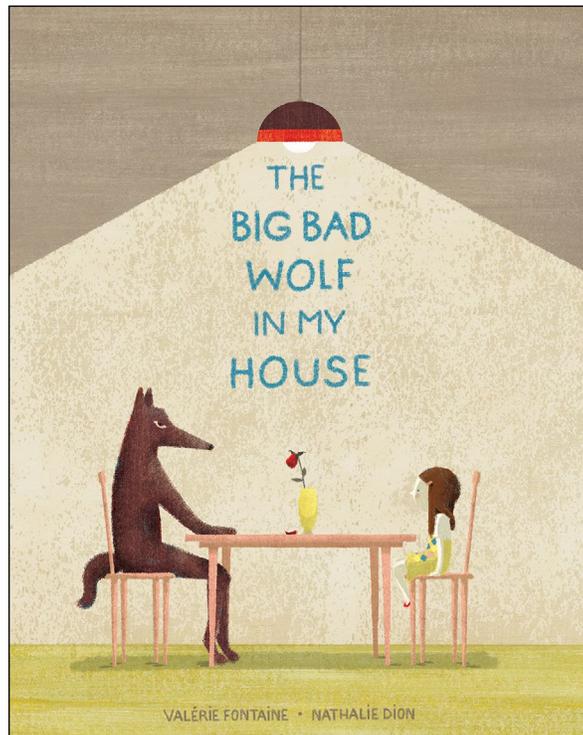


GROUNDWOOD STUDY GUIDES

The Big Bad Wolf in My House

Written by Valérie Fontaine

Illustrated by Nathalie Dion



A young girl describes what it's like when her mom's new friend comes to stay — a moving story about domestic violence that ends on a hopeful note.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Ages 4 to 8 / Grades K to 3

JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Physical & Emotional Abuse / Health and Physical Education / Language / Social Studies

Full-color illustrations / 8.6 x 11 / 32 pages

Hardcover with jacket / \$18.95 / 978-1-77306-501-4

Ebook / \$16.95 / 978-1-77306-502-1

groundwoodbooks.com



BOOK DESCRIPTION

The Big Bad Wolf in My House figuratively tackles the subject of domestic violence, recasting fairy-tale tropes and characters that young readers will recognize.

▮ Warning: As you may not be aware of the family history of your audience, it is very important to be on the lookout for the slightest sign of a child's unease during the reading of this story: the need to leave the group, sadness, fear, worry or erratic behavior.

Adult readers should offer children a safety net by stopping the reading when needed, answering questions, or inviting children experiencing strong feelings to move closer physically or to leave the room for a break.

In some cases, professional assistance may be required, and you should not hesitate to direct children to the appropriate persons and take any necessary further steps. Some emergency resources are provided at the end of this guide.

Audience: Ages 4 – 8; Adult guidance recommended.

BEFORE READING

PRESENTING THE COVER

In addition to introducing the author, the illustrator and the publisher, it is worth taking the time to analyze the front cover with children:

- What emotions do you experience when you look at this picture?
- How would you feel if the Big Bad Wolf were in your house?
- Which fairy tale does the rose on the table refer to? Why do you think the illustrator, Nathalie, drew a wilted flower?

We would invite you to read the story on your own first, to ensure that the story is suitable for your audience. Then you can read it through entirely to allow listeners to take in the text quietly and interpret it in their own way. Finally, you can read the book again for a deeper analysis of the story, the illustrations and the many layers of symbolism that add meaning.

Following the reading, we recommend that you take the time to answer students' questions and let them discuss the story. Possible discussion questions relating to each two-page spread can be found below.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PAGES 2 AND 3

From the very first page of the story, which fairy tale is the author referring to in her text? (*The Three Little Pigs*)

Notice the color of the mother's dress, which fairy-tale character do you think this represents? (Little Red Riding Hood)

What other fairy tales include wolf characters?

Why didn't the wolf have to blow to enter the child's house?

PAGES 4 AND 5

When do we use the expression "honeymoon"? Why would the author compare an expression that sounds sweet with something sour, "like lemons"?

Which details of the illustration foreshadow the danger of the wolf? (His eye and his shadow)

PAGES 6 AND 7

At the end of the story, you can ask your students at what moment the violence increases. It is here, when the mother is late.



PAGES 8 AND 9

Find the signs of violence in the words and pictures. Explain that verbal abuse is a form of violence. (Mean words, sputtering and screaming, the threatening posture of the wolf)

PAGES 10 AND 11

Notice the mother's drooping posture. How do you think she is feeling?

Notice the child's posture. Is it the responsibility of children to support adults?

PAGES 12 AND 13

Why does the little girl become so mild and obliging?

What is the relationship of a lamb to a wolf?

PAGES 14 AND 15

Notice the escalation of violence: the attacking of objects.

Notice the differences in the postures of the wolf, the mother and the little girl.



PAGES 16 AND 17

Have you ever seen a movie that showed a wolf howling at the moon? What impression did that scene make on you?

On this page, is the little girl still holding up her mother?

PAGES 18 AND 19

Notice the escalation of violence: physical abuse.

PAGES 20 TO 23

Over the next few pages, the author refers to straw, wood and bricks. Which fairy tale is she referring to? And how were these materials used?

PAGES 24 AND 25

What do you think the author means when she writes, “I closed my eyes and kept them closed, even on the days when the sun came out again”?

If you build a wall around your heart to stop feeling negative emotions, what might happen to your other emotions?



PAGES 26 AND 27

The mother now wears a gray dress and red shoes. That is all that is left of Little Red Riding Hood. Why is this character disappearing?

Who is Gilbert?

PAGES 28 AND 29

The little girl and the mother are taken in at a women's shelter. These are safe and discreet places where mothers and children receive the support of professionals in times of crisis.

Although the woods outside are dark, inside the shelter is brightly lit. What do you think is meant by this contrast?

PAGES 30 AND 31

Why do you think the wolf's huffing and puffing will no longer work? How do you think this makes the child feel?

PAGE 32

In the last vignette, Gilbert is now accompanied by a new friend. Compare this to the image on the title page.

Who is this new friend? Can you find him in the story and imagine what he represents for the future of the little girl? (Bear is found on page 28)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you are experiencing or witness situations involving family violence, do not hesitate to reach out to these resources, available 24/7:

Sheltersafe.ca (in Canada)

Online map to find nearest women’s shelters, plus a listing of provincial/territorial crisis lines

Kids Help Phone (in Canada)

kidshelpphone.ca

1-800-668-6868 or text 686868

National Domestic Violence Hotline (in the US)

thehotline.org

1-800-799-7233 or text LOVEIS to 1-866-331-9474



AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR BIOGRAPHIES



Valérie Fontaine has published more than thirty-five books for young people. She frequently visits schools to share her inspiring work with children and teachers, and she reads stories to hundreds of children live on Facebook every week. Valérie loves writing books as much as she loves reading and talking about them. She lives in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec.



Nathalie Dion is an illustrator living in Montreal who studied Design Arts at Concordia University. Her other children's books include *I Found Hope in a Cherry Tree* by Jean E. Pendziwol, *The Biggest Puddle in the World* by Mark Lee and *What's in Your Purse?* by Abigail Samoun. Nathalie has received a number of awards for her illustration and has exhibited her work in Montreal galleries.