

BBFC Education classroom resource: A MONSTER CALLS (2016)

Director: J.A. Bayona



SYNOPSIS

Conor is dealing with far more than other boys his age. His beloved and devoted mother is ill, he has little in common with his meddling grandmother and his father has resettled thousands of miles away. But Conor finds a most unlikely ally when the Monster appears at his bedroom window one night. Ancient, wild, and relentless, the Monster guides Conor on a journey of courage, faith, and truth that powerfully fuses imagination and reality.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE FILM: BBFC AGE RATING

The BBFC rated the film 12A for 'moderate threat, scenes of emotional distress'.

insight

THREAT

There are scenes of moderate threat as a huge tree comes to life and appears to directly threaten a boy. There are also repeated images, in dream sequences, of a collapsing building and crumbling ground which leaves the boy's mother clinging to a ledge above a chasm.

THEME

There are scenes of emotional distress in which a boy has to come to terms with his mother's condition.

There is a theme of terminal illness and bereavement. There are scenes of bullying in a school setting.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- The film is rated 12A. How do you think a child of 12 (or maybe even younger) might respond to the story?
- Could the film have worked as a PG? Or should we have further considered a 15? Why?
- Did you enjoy the film? What was your favourite part? Your favourite character?
- How about the parts and characters you liked least? Why do you think this might have been?
- Did you learn anything from the film? If so, what?
- Who do you think the film might appeal to? Who would be likely to choose to watch this film? Think about the cast, the subject matter, the poster.

- Would you recommend this film to a friend? Why? How would you describe the film's themes and storyline to a friend or to a member of the public who might not have heard of it?
- What impact do you think the film might have on the audience?
- The film is based on the book of the same title by Patrick Ness. Have you read it? Do you think it makes a difference if you have or haven't?
- What do you think the Monster represents to Conor? How does it help him to deal with his mother's illness?
- Why do none of the adults in the film tell Conor his mum's going to die? What are they trying to achieve? Do you think they are right not to tell him?
- The Monster's stories have unconventional endings. Why do you think the Monster plays with Conor's expectations? What are the stories trying to teach him?

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