



Scared Is Scared

A young director uses a recorded conversation she had with a 6-year-old as the narrative basis for this heartfelt, charming short film about dealing with fear and change.



Recommended for all ages

Themes: coming of age; friendship

Director(s): Bianca Giae ver | **8 min** | **Live Action & Animation** | **2013** | **Country:** United States | **Language:** English

Official film website: www.biancagiae ver.com/work/scared

SET THE STAGE | THOUGHT-STARTERS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A student on the verge of graduating from college asked a 6-year-old's advice about what kind of story/movie he would make. She then used it as the basis for her final video project. In working with the young child, the director was given valuable advice on the story itself as well as a new perspective on how she should treat her own fears about graduating.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Sync-Sound (Synchronized Sound):** Sound recorded at the same time the action is filmed so the image track and soundtrack fit seamlessly together.
- **Voice-Over:** A piece of narration in a movie or broadcast, not accompanied by an image of the speaker.

For more film terms, refer to the PCFF Film Glossary (pcf fri.org/FilmHub).

TALK ABOUT IT | DISCUSSION

- Often, when children are scared or fearful of something, they go to adults for help. By making this film, how does the director turn this concept on its head? How has Asa, the child narrator, helped the director with her own fear? What advice does he give her? Is it good advice? What do you think are some valuable lessons adults can learn from kids? Do you think adults should listen to kids more?
- Live-action actors wearing costumes play the characters, Asa-Bear and Toby-Mouse. How would the film change if it were made with animated characters? Why do you think the director chose to use live actors?
- There are several humorous moments in this film, especially ones created by editing and visuals that compliment Asa's narration. Give some examples of moments in the film that you found funny, and how you think that humor was effectively created.
- The narrator (Asa) changes his mind several times in the film while he speaks. Explain how the director takes this child's narration and turns it into something that is both artistic and humorous. What are your favorite examples?
- Film is a visual medium meant to rely mostly on what people see rather than just text or sound (although they can be necessary components). Many films can be watched without sound and still be understood. How is this film different? What specific characteristics of the narration are so important in telling this story? How would it be different if it were an adult narrating the Asa's thoughts?
- This film is seemingly separated into two parts: Asa's story of Asa-Bear and Toby-Mouse and then the aftermath of their conversation. What do we learn from these two parts?



Pay attention while watching

Clues and Cues

- Notice when the director chooses to put words in text on the screen. Think about why particular words or phrases are highlighted this way.

GET CREATIVE | EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



For Activity Reel details, downloadable storyboard template and more, visit the the Film Hub website: www.pcffri.org/FilmHub

• Writing Prompt

Sometimes advice on how we should act or feel, especially when dealing with a hardship in life, comes from strange and unexpected places. Think of a time when you got valuable advice from an unexpected person. Write a journal entry that explains what you were going through, who gave you the advice, and how it helped you.

• How do you scare the Scare?

Materials: Paper and pencil

Being scared or fearful of something and then finding a way to overcome it is an important aspect of the film. At one point Asa explains to the director that when he was afraid of a monster in his room, he thought of pizza, and a cookie, and milk to ease his fear. Fold a piece of paper and make a list of things that you are fearful of on one side, and specific ways to overcome them on the other. Think about the most difficult fears to get over and come up with at least one strategy to combat that fear. Illustrate the fears and the solutions on either side of the paper. Share your drawings and ideas.

Modification for middle/high school students:

Create a booklet of illustrated fears and strategies to share and distribute with elementary school children.

• Voice-Over Video

Materials: Camera or voice recorder, video clips (or you can do a low-tech version without cameras)

Rather than providing “sync-sound” in this film, the director chooses to use the recorded conversation between her and 6-year-old Asa as the basis, even having the actors lip-sync to Asa’s storytelling. Using a DVD at home, voice-over narration and commentary. To take it a step further, using any camera you have access to, record a video of people talking and supply the narration. You can also try recording a conversation just like Asa and the director did, telling your own story around it. Have fun with it and see what you come up with. If you don’t have cameras available, then write a script of your own about a problem you have faced and some clever ways to make yourself feel better. Think about difficulties like feeling alone, being frustrated, or wanting something you can’t have. Then work with a partner to combine your “voice-over” with acting and perform your play for the class.

MAKE CONNECTIONS | ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources complement the film and inspire further discussion or programming.

BOOKS

• Brave Irene

by William Steig

Steig tells of a brave girl who gets through a difficult journey with determination story.

• Ira Sleeps Over

by Bernard Waber

Ira is excited for his first sleepover, but scared of sleeping without his teddy bear, and afraid his friend will laugh at him if he brings it. Ira has supportive parents and a realistic older sister, and the dilemma is resolved in a satisfying way.

• How to Animate Film Cartoons

by Preston Blair

Walter Foster’s classic How to Draw and Paint series provides aspiring artists with an exceptional array of art instruction books featuring all subject areas and media. Each title includes easy step-by-step exercises as well as finished illustrations or paintings that will inspire artistic talent in anyone.

FILMS

• Just Breathe (2014)

This short film captures kids defining how anger makes them feel and how they know a way to make it go away.

• The Fly (La Mosca) (2015)

This short film combines live action and animation. Carlotta is asked to draw an animal whose names begin with the letter M. She has writer’s block until the she decides on what she thinks is the perfect animal!

• Indicates PCFF festival selection

BEYOND THE FILM | RELATED INTERNET LINKS

• 5 Pieces of Advice Learned from Scared is Scared:

www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/12/the-scared-is-scared-video_n_2664554.html

• Commentary on Scared is Scared:

www.usatoday.com/story/popcandy/2013/02/13/scared-is-scared/1915887/

• Life Advice from a 6-year-old:

www.theatlantic.com/video/archive/2013/02/good-life-advice-from-a-6-year-old-is-even-better-when-taken-literally/272970/