

# Man Gets Bashed By Visiting FIL For 'Scolding' The Monsters Under His Child's Bed

*Darja Zinina and Monika Pašukonytė*



Raise your hand if you were also afraid of those under-the-bed monsters! What an oddly universal fear, eh?

Now, it's no big news that every kid needs a specific approach, hence why different things work for different children. The author of today's post, for instance, came up with one that worked for his 4-year-old – however, one time, when the in-laws were in town, his wife's father decided that it'd be appropriate to blast his parenting choices.

# ***AITA for scolding the monster under my daughter's bed?***

via [Reddit](#) - 04/3/2023

*My wife (54F) and I (40M) are the proud parents of "Mary" (4F).*

*Like most little kids, Mary is a little scared of the dark and believes there might be a monster under her bed. Whenever Mary has a nightmare, she makes her way from her room to ours, quietly wakes either me or my wife, and says the monster gave her bad dreams. I then walk Mary back to her room, tuck her in again, and reassure her that the monster can't hurt her. Just to prove it, I'll lean down to peek under her bed and "scold" the monster for scaring her. My wife thinks it's sweet and Mary feels safer.*

*Last weekend, my in-laws were in town and staying with us in the guest room (next to Mary's). Mary had a nightmare and we did our typical pattern described above. Apparently my FIL (75M) heard me "scolding" the monster and stopped me in the hall as I was heading back to bed. He told me Mary needs to learn "monsters aren't real" and "it's time Mary learned how to fight her own bad dreams." I was angry, marched past FIL, and told my wife what he'd said. The next morning, before Mary got up, I told my FIL he had no right to tell me how to raise my daughter and my wife backed me up, saying MIL had done the same for her as a kid. FIL thinks we're over-reacting, but I disagree. AITA?*

## ***Update to my AITA post.***

via [Reddit](#) - 04/5/2023

*Well, the judgement on my [r/AmITheAsshole](#) post has made it clear that the answer is NOT the asshole.*

*However, as my name suggests, this is a throwaway account. So, first and foremost, I have something I'd like to say: hi everyone. I'm "Mary" from the story. Let me explain.*

*My family just lost my grandfather's brother (my great uncle) and after losing his own dad last year, my father has begun to realize how little time he might have left with our older loved ones. On their way back from my great uncle's funeral, my parents called me just to talk (I'm at college and really busy with schoolwork this time of year [big papers and tests suck] so I couldn't go). After a bit, my dad asked my mom and I if we remembered when he'd scold the monsters and the story was brought up. He felt like, even though it's been 16 years, he should apologize to my grandpa for yelling at him back then "while he still has time." Mom and I told him that was sweet but stupid, and I told him I'd prove he'd been being a good parent. All he had to do was tell me what to write. So I made a throwaway account and wrote what he told me, fact-checking with my mom. However, none of us knew how upset people would get about the monster that once lived under my bed and my grandpa's reaction.*

*Y'all, I don't even know how to thank you for all the kind words you gave. My dad and I have read every single comment, and he feels a lot more confident in having made the decisions he did. Thank you so much.*

"AITA for scolding the monster under my daughter's bed?" – this internet user took to one of Reddit's most honorable communities to ask its members if his father-in-law is indeed correct for lecturing him about the 'anti-monster technique' that he uses on his 4-year-old when she's scared. The post managed to garner over 2.3K upvotes as well as 491 comments discussing the matter.

People love to give out unsolicited parenting advice left, right, and center, and chances are, if you're a parent yourself, you've heard it all a gazillion times, both from your own family members and random strangers.

For some bizarre reason, half of the world's population believes that they know how to raise your own offspring better than you do, but while telling a person who you'll never see again off for their unwelcomed suggestions is an effortless and almost dare I say, satisfying job, telling your wife's dad to get lost might cost you your life.

Even though the author's story is soon to be two decades old, the whole altercation has been eating him up since he realized how little time he might have left with his older loved ones. So, thanks to "Mary," together they decided to take it to a place where you're bound to receive a legitimate judgment no matter what, and, oh man, did the people deliver!

Most online community members, if not all, single-handedly decided that "scolding" the monster was not only a stunning way to help the 4-year-old tackle her fears, but it was also rather creative! People ought to remember that when you're dealing with a child, in order to make things work, whether it has something to do with the so-called monster or not, you have to look at it from their perspective, and that's exactly what the netizen did.

While we might bring up generational differences and whatnot, one thing every parent needs to remember is that nobody knows your kid like you do. So, stand your ground and don't let anybody question your parenting choices!



Now, to better understand the situation, Bored Panda decided to reach out to a couple of professionals. Our first expert is Dr. Gordon Neufeld, the author of *Hold On To Your Kids*, and the founder of the Neufeld Institute – a Canadian non-profit society and registered charitable organization whose mission is to use developmental science to make sense of kids for the adults responsible for them using Neufeld’s attachment-based, developmental approach: “I’m Dr. Gordon Neufeld, a 76-year-old clinical and developmental psychologist from Vancouver with five kids and seven grandchildren, most of whom have had monsters in their bedrooms or in their life from time to time as young children. Never was I able to convince such a child that monsters did not exist.”

“First of all, it is absolutely normal for there to be monsters under the bed, or in the closet, or outside the window, or in the shadows. When children are alarmed and not aware of why they are alarmed, their immature brains do the best they can do, displace the alarm to some hidden monsters that are out to get them in some way,” said Dr. Neufeld when we pondered whether it’s

normal for kids to be afraid of monsters in closets, under beds, etc.

Last but certainly not least, the professional added: "The monsters won't disappear until the child develops mixed feelings, usually between five and seven years old if all unfolds as it should. Attempting to bring reality into the equation for a four-year-old just won't work. Even so, the monsters are still there for the millions of adults who believe there is something out there trying to get them. Anyone who has tried to reason with these adults will know how futile this is. And even when a child or adult can be convinced that monsters don't really exist, the alarm will just be displaced to something else. There are plenty of hooks for displaced alarm."

"What I would add to this scenario is some insight on the parents' part that the child is facing more separation than they can handle at this point. This is almost always the main source of alarm for children. Making sure you find ways of preserving the connection when she is apart from you, perhaps by focusing on sameness and belonging, will help. And always make sure you bridge all separations, especially at bedtime, by focusing on what stays the same (e.g., I'll always be your daddy) and the next point of connection. These are always the best practices in dealing with separation alarm."



Our next expert is Charlotte Reznick, Ph.D., who specializes in helping children and adolescents develop the emotional skills necessary for a happy and successful life. She is the author of the Los Angeles Times bestseller, *The Power of Your Child's Imagination: How to Transform Stress and Anxiety into Joy and Success*, and contributing author of the chapter "Imagery as a Therapeutic Tool with Children" in *Transformational Imagery: Cultivating Imagination for Healing, Change, and Growth*. "Take your child seriously. Take them at face value. Don't say things like: 'There is no such thing as monsters;' 'Don't be silly;' 'Stop making things up.' You will make better progress entering into their fantasy world and letting them know you are there to protect them. Do stay calm and ask what they need. Pick them up and hug them, letting them know it will be okay. You've dealt with this situation before. Maybe one boy wants you to rid his room of monsters, while another girl wants to somehow make friends with them. Many kids want to get away from the monsters and sleep with their parents at these moments of terror, but you might get traction by using that 'monster spray' or

'scolding the monster,' telling them firmly to go away and that it's not okay to scare you, Emma or Jimmy. I love the idea that one parent proposed about a stuffie animal protecting his daughter. One adorable book out there addresses how monsters are afraid of humans and might be shaking in fear under the bed. It's good to ask what kind of monster your child thinks is hiding."

"These fears can last a long time. An 11-year-old girl that was in my care was terrified monsters or bad people would break into her house, so she couldn't close her eyes to fall asleep. They even had a guard dog, an alarm system, and they lived in a safe neighborhood. Her big imagination scared her but it also was able to help her. When asked what could help her, she conjured up a huge white dragon wrapped around her bed to protect her and put a tiger by her door to keep the monsters/bad people out. That helped her calm herself enough to close her eyes and listen to a soothing meditation to fall asleep more easily. She realized 'My fears come from my imagination, so I have to go into that realm to fix them,'" Charlotte Reznick responded when we asked her how to help a child who's afraid.

Lastly, the specialist said: "Please trust your intuition as parents, remember what it was like when you were that age – or imagine what that's like – and be creative entering into your child's world to help them. Have fun with it, at the same time taking your child's concerns to heart."

What is your take on the story? Do you agree with the author's approach? Don't hesitate to share your own tricks in the comments if you've ever had to deal with monsters under the bed!