***The Witches***

***Chapter 12***

***Bruno***

***Summary:***

* Life as a mouse isn't half bad, it turns out. To our narrator's surprise, he can still talk (in his own human voice). Plus, mice don't have to worry about a lot of the things little boys do (like school and people not liking them).
* Most importantly, he's pretty sure his Grandmamma will love him, no matter who, or what, he is.
* He starts to look for Bruno, the other boy who was turned into a mouse. The narrator finds him nibbling away on some food – surprise, surprise.
* Bruno, not the sharpest tool in the shed, doesn't even realize he's a mouse, and our narrator has to be the one to break the news. Once he does, he's also able to convince Bruno that it's not a bad life – at the very least, he can definitely keep eating.
* Our narrator asks Bruno how he thinks his parents will react. Bruno knows his mom hates mice, and his dad certainly won't be happy either.
* Our favorite narrator-mouse decides it will be best to check in with his Grandmamma to ask her advice. He and Bruno plan to run like crazy through the hotel in order to get to her.

***Brief Synopsis:***

The boy (as a mouse) stays silent until all the witches have gone. Then, he calls out for Bruno; he is surprised to hear that his voice sounds exactly the same as when he was a boy. He thinks to himself that it is not so bad being a mouse, especially because many of the bad things about being a human such as exams and wars don't happen to mice. He wanders around the floor until he finds Bruno in the audience eating a piece of bread.

The boy tries to make a plan with Bruno, who is surprised to realize that he is a mouse; he had been so focused on food that he hadn't even noticed his transformation. Bruno is quite upset at the thought of being a mouse, since he thinks it will prevent him from eating leftovers from his fridge at night. He also thinks that his parents won't like him being a mouse. The boy promises that his grandmother will understand what happened to them and makes a plan for them to get up to his grandmother's room to work things out further. He tells Bruno that they will go out into the corridor and run close to the wall all the way to his grandmother's room; they will just have to hope that nobody sees them.

***Critical Analysis(Ch 8-12):***

One question a reader might ask is why Dahl chose to make Bruno Jenkins, the first child the witches turn into a mouse, such a negative character. Bruno is depicted as constantly eating, and the reader also learns that he is a rich and spoiled child. Dahl often pairs greed and gluttony in his depictions of bad children (such as Veruca Salt and Violet Bauregarde in Dahl's classic [Charlie and the Chocolate Factory](https://www.gradesaver.com/charlie-and-the-chocolate-factory)). Dahl may have done this to further set the narrator of the story away from other children, making him special in his likability, or simply for comic relief.

Dahl describes the process of turning into a mouse at three points in the story (twice in this section): when Bruno turns into one, when the boy turns into one, and, later, when the witches themselves turn into a mass of mice writhing around the long table in the Dining Room. In two of these cases, the boy witnesses a series of emotions and sensations occurring in others over the 26 seconds of transformation. The most detailed account of transformation, however, stretching the description to over a page, comes when the boy experiences this same sequence of feelings. This starts with a prick, moving on to the stretching and shrinking of skin, and finishes with the odd sensation of growing fur. Dahl uses vivid and figurative language to express these feelings so that the reader is fully engaged by the fantastical event.

In the chapter title "Metamorphosis," Dahl makes a high-level allusion geared mostly toward adults. "[The Metamorphosis](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-metamorphosis)" is a famous novella written by Franz Kafka in 1915 in which a man turns into a giant cockroach, causing problems with his job and his family. Were Dahl not making a reference to this work, he likely would not choose such a long and high-level vocabulary word for the chapter title, so it can be assumed that the author desired the reader to make connections between the works. By juxtaposing the works, Dahl calls attention to how calm and even happy the boy is with his transformation. In comparison to Gregor Samsa of "The Metamorphosis," who struggles against his transformation and eventually dies a gruesome death, the boy contemplates how life might be better as a mouse than as a human.

This deep thinking that the boy does regarding life as a mouse or a human is surprising and even ironic in itself. A reader might initially assume that the boy will be upset by being turned into a mouse; this was certainly The Grand High Witch's intent, at the very least. However, when the boy thinks it over further, he realizes that mice don't have to deal with many of the negative things that characterize life as a human, such as school and war. Ironically, then, he is quite happy with his situation. This seemingly mature thinking returns at the end of the novel when the boy confesses that he is happy to have a shortened life span so that he won't have to live without his grandmother.

Bruno's response to becoming a mouse, especially in contrast to the narrator's, is quite humorous and ironic as well. When the boy finally gets Bruno to stop eating and look at himself, the spoiled child remarks, "I am a mouse! You wait till my father hears about this!" (114). Bruno Jenkins lashes out against his new state as a mouse in the only way he knows how—by threatening to call upon his parents, who provide him with wealth and security. In parallel to this, Bruno Jenkins's father threatens to call his lawyers when he finally accepts that his son has turned into a mouse (176). In short: like father, like son.