

The Tale of Despereaux

by Kate DiCamillo

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Chapters 1 to 5

A. Vocabulary

Make sure you understand the meaning of these words before you start to read. Use a dictionary if necessary.

tragedy brilliance speculation adhere siblings
scurrying indignant conform captivating

B. Read Chapters 1 to 5.

C. Understanding the Novel.

Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Refer to the novel for help if you need it.

1. Despereaux was quite different from his siblings. Why?
2. Something unusual happened when Merlot took Despereaux to the library to learn to nibble paper. What was this?
3. What happened when Despereaux heard the King playing his guitar and singing?
4. At first the King didn't want to play and sing for a mouse. Why not?
5. What did Furlough think when he saw Despereaux sitting with the King and Princess Pea?

D. Thinking About the Novel

These questions ask for your ideas and opinions. Therefore there are no correct or incorrect answers. You must, however, give reasons and justify your answers.

1. What *genre* is this novel? How do you know this?
2. In real life how do most mother animals care for their young?
Based on this fact, comment on Mrs. Tilling's attitude towards Despereaux.

True or False? - Chapters 1 - 5

Read each statement and decide if it is True or False.

1. Despereaux's family were delighted when he was born. _____
2. Despereaux was different from his siblings. _____
3. Furlough was successful in teaching Despereaux to act like a normal mouse. _____
4. Merlot enjoyed nibbling on the books in the library. _____
5. Despereaux was able to read the books in the library. _____
6. Despereaux read a story about a princess and a brave knight. _____
7. There were many rats in the dungeon below the castle. _____
8. Mice do not like to reveal themselves to humans. _____
9. Despereaux ran away when he heard the King singing. _____
10. The King thought Despereaux was a bug. _____
11. Princess Pea was afraid of Despereaux. _____
12. Princess Pea smiled at Despereaux. _____
13. Despereaux fell in love with the Princess when she smiled at him. _____
14. Furlough was happy to see Despereaux with the King and Princess. _____
15. Furlough thought Despereaux was crazy when he saw him with the King and Princess Pea. _____

Creative Writing - 1

At the end of the novel, the author tells us that Despereaux and Princess Pea had many other adventures.



Write another adventure that they might have had.

You must use Despereaux and the princess in the story, but you may also introduce new characters if you wish.

Creative Writing - 2

Choose one of the events from the novel and rewrite it in the form of a script for a play.



Remember to include stage directions. These tell the characters how to say the words and also what you want them to do.

Examples:

Despereaux (whispering) Who is there?

Mig (waving the knife in the air) I'll cut off your head.

Notice that the stage directions are written in parentheses.

Integrated Activities - 1

Design a cover for *The Tale of Despereaux*.

Your cover should include the title, author and an interesting illustration.

Draw your cover design on a sheet of plain paper.

You may color it using colored pencils or paint.



Integrated Activities - 2

For Creative Writing Activity - 2 you wrote a script for a play.

Choose two or three friends to help you present your play.

You do not need to learn the dialogue, you can read them, but you will have to practice until people put the right expression into the dialogue and are familiar with the movements and actions necessary.

You may add simple costumes and props if you wish.

Present your play to the class or a group of students.

