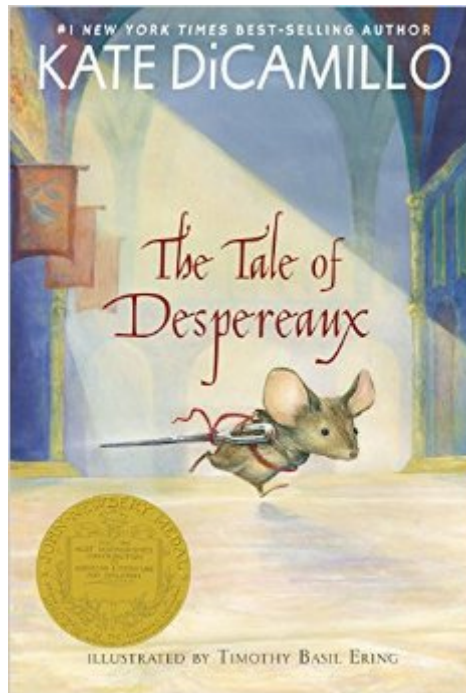


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# The Tale Of Despereaux: Being The Story Of A Mouse, A Princess, Some Soup, And A Spool Of Thread



## Synopsis

A brave mouse, a covetous rat, a wishful serving girl, and a princess named Pea come together in Kate DiCamillo's Newbery Medal-winning tale. Welcome to the story of Despereaux Tilling, a mouse who is in love with music, stories, and a princess named Pea. It is also the story of a rat called Roscuro, who lives in the darkness and covets a world filled with light. And it is the story of Miggery Sow, a slow-witted serving girl who harbors a simple, impossible wish. These three characters are about to embark on a journey that will lead them down into a horrible dungeon, up into a glittering castle, and, ultimately, into each other's lives. What happens then? As Kate DiCamillo would say: Reader, it is your destiny to find out. With black-and-white illustrations and a refreshed cover by Timothy Basil Ering.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

## Customer Reviews

My 6-year-old son and I love the complexity of the plot and the mouse and rat characters. But I want to issue a word of warning to parents of younger children. The abandonment and beating of the 6-year-old girl is brutal, and my son was quite upset by it. I'm not saying we should shield our children from all that is bad in the world, but the descriptions are so vivid, and the girl's world so bleak, that I was stunned as I read it aloud. My son was near tears. He had never known that adults exist who treat children so brutally, and I'm not sure I wanted him to know that at the tender age of

6. I am a writer myself, and I strongly believe in reality in literature, but we will continue reading the book only if he is sure he wants us to. I suggest reading these parts yourself before deciding to read this to your child.

I just finished reading this one out loud to my daughter (5 years old) and it was a HUGE hit, even though I think it was really meant for older kids who can read it on their own. It is the story of a lonely little mouse, rejected by his family, who falls in love with the young Princess who rules the castles in which he lives. Here are some reasons we really liked the book: 1) DiCamillo is a true romantic; Despereaux the mouse loves Pea the Princess with a love that is overwhelming and courtly (like a medieval knight), a love that makes him want to be a better person. At the same time, the author is not afraid to toss in some real Adventure and even Peril - the mouse must brave the dungeon, its murderous clan of rats, and a sad but frightening orphan girl named Miggery Sow who means to kidnap the princess and take her place. Scary enough to be exciting but not scary enough for nightmares. 2) Although DiCamillo's writing style is highly sophisticated, she stops along the way to explain the unusual and interesting words she uses ("perfidy," for one), so the book is comprehensible even to kids too young to read it themselves. 3) The illustrations are charming and many, to keep younger listeners/readers entertained. The chapters are also short enough to make good bed-time stories by themselves. One caution though - although my 9-year-old son would have been able to tackle this on his own, the heavy romantic nature of the story (even though it's between a mouse and a girl) put him off. It's probably a much more appealing book to girls than boys. But even for some boys, the adventure will make it worth the while.

A few months ago, I read a little blurb about this novel, and I couldn't wait to read it. Then, it won the Newberry Award, and I finally got hold of a copy. It didn't disappoint. The Tale of Despereaux is one of the most enchanting little stories I've ever read, and I have a feeling it's going to go down as a true children's classic. The story is so entrancing. It centers around a mouse named Despereaux who just doesn't fit in with the other mice. He is born with his eyes opened. He sees a beautiful world that the others are blind to, and he is shunned because of it. He is able to hear music, and he is able to love creatures of other races. For instance, this tiny mouse falls in love with the human Princess Pea, and that begins quite a chain of events. Of course, not everything in the story is happy. There is also a dark world that the novel doesn't hide from. There are characters who have had little chance in life and have been harmed because of it. There are characters here who have lead dark lives and are trying to destroy Princess Pea and Despereaux. But, ultimately, this isn't a

dark novel but one proclaiming a message about love and hope and the possibility of redemption. It is a beautiful little novel about having the courage to bring some light into the world. The Tale of Despereaux is an amazing novel for people of every age which will be read for an oftly long time.

"Love is ridiculous. But love is also wonderful. And powerful." That's what Ms. Dicamillo intended to deliver in her book "The Tale of Despereaux". Unfortunately, this message starts to blur as the plot unfolds gradually, and finally the story leaves the reader in a fog of sadness, disappointment and confusion. Despereaux, a lovable, courageous mouse who ridiculously fell in love with a beautiful princess, was unintentionally overshadowed by the poor, tragic girl, Miggery Sow. She was abandoned and sold by her father "for a tablecloth, a hen, and a handful of cigarettes"; she was so badly abused by her buyer "Uncle" so frequently that her painful ears "became about as useful to her as pieces of cauliflower"; miserably, under the author's pen, she was also fat, lazy and "her head stayed small". All of these didn't seem horrible enough to her, the author abused her further by keeping ridiculing her ruthlessly through the demeaning narration with details in a sweet tone. How could she?! What's the purpose of all such cruelty to the poor girl? Serving as entertainment? I can't believe it. Oh, if the world is dark, as Ms. Dicamillo said in her book, I would rather sit with my daughter outside watching the stars in the sky.

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