

QUICK CARD: *THE TALE OF DESPEREAUX*



Reference	<i>The Tale of Despereaux</i> . Kate DiCamillo. (2003) ISBN: 978-0763680893
Plot	A mouse named Despereaux falls in love with the Princess Pea and is exiled to the dungeon for “unmouselike” behavior. There he meets a rat who is strangely attracted to the light and a serving girl who wants to be a princess herself. He overhears their evil plans to capture Pea and escapes the dungeon so that he can return and rescue her.
Setting	The story takes place in a kingdom where soup has been outlawed due to the unusual circumstances surrounding the recent queen’s death (a rat named Roscuro and a bowl of soup being involved). The plot takes place in various locations throughout the King’s palace: the upstairs mice-kingdom, the dungeon lair of the rats, and the kitchens and dining rooms.
Characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despereaux: an unusually small mouse who loves to read and listen to music, thus displaying perfectly “un-mouselike” behavior. • Chiaroscuro: a rat who became enamoured with the light and longs to escape the darkness of the dungeon. • Mig: a near-deaf serving girl, whose ears are “like cauliflower stuck to her head” after years of abuse. • Princess Pea: the daughter of the king and an embodiment of light. • Gregory: the jailer, a friend to mice, who saves Despereaux during his first trip to the dungeon
Conflict	<p>Man vs Man: Despereaux struggles against the rats to save the princess.</p> <p>Man vs Self: Despereaux, Pea, and Roscuro struggle against the evil within themselves to find forgiveness and grace for their enemies.</p>
Theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courage • Overcoming one’s inner darkness • Empathy • Forgiveness and Vengeance • <i>Chiaroscuro</i>: the relationship between light and dark, good and evil

Literary Devices

- Juxtaposition
- Symbolism
- Direct address