

Book Review

I didn't think I'd like the tale of a large-eared, wide-eyed mouse hero. But Kate DiCamillo's Newbery Award-winning *The Tale of Despereaux* made a believer out of me! Because he never gives up. Despereaux teaches readers the importance of being themselves. His quest to save a human princess is the backdrop. For mystery, intrigue, and excitement. The book has a lot of adventure. And I enjoyed reading about this unlikely hero.

Camouflage

Although some animals run quickly to get away from predators, others stay right where they are and hide. How do they hide? Many animals hide with camouflage. Looking just like a twig, a walking stick can blend in with other leafless plants. If you look closely at a tree, that leaf that you think you see might not be a leaf but a leaf katydid! Leaf katydids look like big round leaves. Instead of looking like their surroundings, some animals make camouflage by getting together. It's harder for predators to pick out just one butterfly fish when so many are in a group!

Hatchet Review

Gary Paulsen's novel *Hatchet* is the story of Brian, a thirteen-year-old boy who is flying to see his dad in the Canadian oil fields. Before he leaves on his trip, his mother gives him a very important gift, a hatchet. During the flight, the pilot has a heart attack. Brian steadies the plane and crash lands it into a lake. As soon as he lands, he finds some things he needs. The hatchet becomes very important to Brian's survival.

Jackie Robinson

Before Jackie Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1946, there were no African American players in Major League Baseball. Black players played in the Negro Leagues, and white players played in the Majors. After Robinson became a Major League player, his family got threats from fans. Some of his teammates were unhappy that Robinson was on their team, too. Robinson showed everyone what a great player he was. During his first year in the major leagues, Robinson hit 12 home runs! He led the National League in stolen bases, too. Robinson was Rookie of the Year.

Wear Your Helmet!

Imagine yourself enjoying a bike ride on a sunny afternoon. Can you feel the breeze on your face? It feels amazing and free! Friends are smiling and waving from the corner. But one of them has a concerned look on her face all of a sudden. Watch out! SCREECH! You hear the sound of squealing tires as a car stops, just short of hitting you. What if the car hadn't stopped? Because you aren't wearing a helmet, you may have been injured or even killed. Wear a helmet to protect your head—and your life! We just never know what's coming around the corner.

Nighttime Intruders

Yawning and peering at the clock, I wondered what woke me up at 3:00 a.m. Noises—but what were they? I heard them as I focused. Jangling, rattling, pinging sounds—right under our pop-up trailer! Shivering, I reached for the flashlight and crept toward the door. Squeaking and chattering, the noises of the animals greeted me as I slowly peeked outside. The flashlight illuminated the intruders. Three raccoons were using their sharp, piercing claws to puncture some cans of soda before guzzling it all down! I had interrupted a party.

GPS

On a short trip or a long one, a global positioning system (GPS) can help you find your way. A GPS works with earth-orbiting satellites. At any time of the day or night, your GPS can find these satellites and figure out the distance between them and you! According to the GPS readings, the system then calculates your position on Earth.

How Does Your Ear Work?

Take a look in the mirror. Do you see your ears sticking out from the side of your head? You might think that's your whole ear. There is a lot more of your ear inside your head than out of it! The outer ear has a big job—to collect the sound waves and send them into your ear so they can be processed. The middle ear turns sound waves into vibrations. A drum makes vibrations when you hit it. The eardrum makes vibrations when sound waves hit it. The vibrations hit three small bones in the middle ear: the malleus, the incus, and the stapes. As a result, the vibrations can go all the way into the inner ear, into your cochlea. Now your brain can hear sounds!

Deer in the City

I had to stop rubbing my eyes to be sure I'd seen it correctly. It was a deer! No, wait—there were two deer standing in my backyard! Their heads were bent down toward the grass. We called animal control.

Heading to White Pines

Hurry, Dad! Drive faster! As I sank into the back seat, I closed my eyes and remembered the smell of the fire as we held marshmallows over the flame. The sound of the rushing water of the creek we waded in. The sight of the towering pines overhead as we hiked on a carpet of needles. Finally, we rounded the last corner, and the cabins came into view. They were just as I remembered them. I was so excited for our week at White Pines!

Simple Machines

Simple machines like wedges, pulleys, levers, and screws make work easier for us by helping us push or pull things over long distances.

What do a tooth, a fork, a doorstop, and an axe have in common? They are all wedges, triangular-shaped simple machines. Wedges like axes help us split things. Wheels and axels help us move loads. Every wedge has at least one slanting side.

A lever changes our effort by helping us move the load. A seesaw is a lever, and a pair of scissors is made of two levers. A pulley helps us move things with grooved wheels and ropes.

View From Our Window

I love where we live! From our apartment window, we can see a pond surrounded by cattails and tall grasses. Lily pads dot the top of the water, and fish swim toward the surface to gulp the insects that skate across the top. Every once in a while, I see a raccoon shoving its little paws into the water to grasp a slippery and tasty fish. The pond is alive with the sounds of frogs croaking, mayflies buzzing, and crickets chirping.

The American Revolution

All in all, the American Revolution didn't have just one cause—it had many. In the beginning, many of the colonists wanted religious freedom. But the British government got more and more involved in taxing the colonists and making laws. In conclusion, the colonists were finally pushed to fight for their freedom.