

December 30, 2015

Kate DiCamillo
c/o Candlewick Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Kate,

Once upon a time there was a girl who loved to read. Reading made her soul grow large and light inside of her; she read, and read, and one day she came upon a book that inspired her. It was the story of a mouse, a princess, some soup, and a spool of thread....

Your book, *The Tale of Despereaux*, inspired me because of the way you combined poetry and literature into one story. You told an incredible story through poetry; it is almost like an epic poem. I was inspired by this because I love to read and write. My dream is to be an English teacher, and you combined two of the most prominent elements of English. I am also an aspiring writer and poet. I often find it easier to write poetry than a story, but in this book you showed me that a beautiful story, even a very long story, can be told through a poem.

I also was inspired by the story itself: the story of a mouse who thinks differently than all the other mice. Despereaux does not start the story welel; his mother names him Despereaux, the French word for despair. All the other mice are skeptical of him. They think he is sick in some way. He reveals himself to the Princess Pea, and the mice basically condemn him to death; they send him to the dungeon to be eaten by rats. But in the end Despereaux changes the lives of Miggery Sow, Chiaroscuro, Princess Pea, and the King. He changes the lives of all the people in the kingdom.

Despereaux loves to read the stories in the boioks instead of chewing them up like the other mice; the stories inspire him. Despereaux especially loves the phrase "*Once upon a time....*" I've always wanted to be able to write things that would inspire others just as you have inspired me. What was a book that inspired you before you became a writer?

I am fourteen years old and I love poetry and writing so much that I have already decided that I want to be an English teacher so that I can inspire other to love language and writing also. How old were you when you decided to become a writer? English is my best school subject but I'm not at all good at math. Did you ever have trouble with math in school?

I think you have given children and teenagers everywhere a love of reading and writing, inspired others to love language in all its complications, and I hope you continue to write, and inspire others just as you have inspired me.

Sincerely yours,

Maeve Daley