

Matilda by Roald Dahl

“It is the Headmistress’s custom,” Miss Honey went on, “to take over the class for one period each week. She does this with every class in the school and each class has a fixed day and a fixed time. Ours is always two o’clock on Thursday afternoons, immediately after lunch. So tomorrow at two o’clock Miss Trunchbull will be taking over from me for one lesson. I shall be here as well, of course, but only as a silent witness. Is that understood?”

“Yes, Miss Honey,” they chirruped.

“A word of warning to you all,” Miss Honey said. “The Headmistress is very strict about everything. Make sure your clothes are clean, your faces are clean and your hands are clean. Speak only when spoken to. When she asks you a question, stand up at once before you answer it. Never argue with her. Never answer back. Never try to be funny. If you do, you will make her angry, and when the Headmistress gets angry you had better watch out.”

“You can say that again,” Lavender murmured.

The Tale of Despereaux by Kate DiCamillo

Despereaux Tilling lived.

But his existence was cause for much speculation in the mouse community.

“He’s the smallest mouse I’ve ever seen,” said his aunt Florence. “It’s ridiculous. No mouse has ever, ever been this small. Not even a Tilling.” She looked at Despereaux through narrowed eyes as if she expected him to disappear entirely. “No mouse,” she said again. “Ever.”

Despereaux, his tail wrapped around his feet, stared back at her.

“Those are some big ears he’s got, too,” observed his uncle Alfred. “They look more like donkey ears, if you ask me.”

“They are obscenely large ears,” said Aunt Florence.

Despereaux wiggled his ears.

His aunt Florence gasped.

“They say he was born with his eyes open,” whispered Uncle Alfred.

Despereaux stared hard at his uncle.

“Impossible,” said Aunt Florence. “No mouse, no matter how small or obscenely large-eared, is ever born with his eyes open. It simply isn’t done.”

***A Bear Called Paddington*, by Michael Bond**

“A *bear*? On Paddington station?” Mrs. Brown looked at her husband in amazement. “Don’t be silly, Henry. There can’t be!”

Mr. Brown adjusted his glasses. “But there is,” he insisted. “I distinctly saw it. Over there – near the bicycle rack. It was wearing a funny kind of hat.”

Without waiting for a reply he caught hold of his wife’s arm and pushed her through the crowd, round a trolley laden with chocolate and cups of tea, past a bookstall, and through a gap in a pile of suitcases towards the Lost Property Office.

“There you are,” he announced triumphantly, pointing towards a dark corner, “I told you so!”

Mrs. Brown followed the direction of his arm and dimly made out a small, furry object in the shadows. It seemed to be sitting on some kind of suitcase and around its neck there was a label with some writing on it. The suitcase was old and battered and on the side, in large letters, were the words WANTED ON VOYAGE.

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day, by Judith Viorst

I went to sleep with gum in my mouth and now there's gum in my hair and when I got out of bed this morning I tripped on the skateboard and by mistake I dropped my sweater in the sink while the water was running and I could tell it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

At breakfast Anthony found a Corvette Sting Ray car kit in his breakfast cereal box and Nick found a Junior Undercover Agent code ring in his breakfast cereal box but in my breakfast cereal box all I found was breakfast cereal.

I think I'll move to Australia.

In the car pool Mrs. Gibson let Becky have a seat by the window. Audrey and Elliott got seats by the window too. I said I was being crunched. I said I was being smushed. I said, if I don't get a seat by the window I am going to be carsick. No one even answered. I could tell it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

The Talented Clementine, by Sara Pennypacker

All the kids in the room made sounds as if they thought a talent show was exciting news. Except me, because it was N-O-T, *not*.

But okay, fine, it wasn't boring, either...

"First, we'll need a cooperative group to make some posters...." my teacher said.

And that's when the worried feeling – as if somebody were scribbling with a big black crayon – started up in my brains.

My teacher kept on going with the cooperative group list. The scribbling got harder and faster and spread down into my stomach. I knew what this meant.

I raised my hand.

"Yes, Clementine? Would you like to be in the cooperative group for refreshments?"

"No, thank you," I said, extra politely. "What I'd like is to go to Mrs. Rice's office."

"Clementine, you don't need to go see the principal," my teacher said. "You're not in any trouble."

"Well, it's just a matter of time," I told him.

