

Teacher Guide

Grades 3–4

The Mouse and the Motorcycle

Beverly Cleary

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THE MOUSE AND THE MOTORCYCLE

by
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Teacher Guide

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Note

The Avon Camelot paperback edition of the book was used to prepare this guide. The page references may differ in the hardcover or other paperback editions.

Please note: Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with your class.

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, decision-making, categorizing

Literary Elements

Story elements, genre, details, characterization, titling, word choice

Listening/Speaking

Role play, drama

Vocabulary

Synonyms/antonyms, word mapping

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing, cause/effect

Writing

Journaling

- How did Ralph lose his nerve and have the accident? (Page 26, *The phone rang and he forgot to drag his heels to stop the motorcycle; Ralph fell into the wastebasket.*)
- Begin charting how Ralph learned to cope with fear. (See Activity Sheet on the following page.)

Prediction:

How will Ralph get out of the basket? List the class responses on the bulletin board.

Writing Activity:

If you were Ralph, what would you do? How would you feel? Write a few thoughts that might be going through Ralph's head. Share your ideas with a classmate.

Chapter 10 "Trapped!" —Pages 28-34

Vocabulary

- | | | | |
|------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| intact 29 | incinerator 32 | remorseful 29 | ventilate 32 |
| bruised 32 | zoo backup 32 | predicament 32 | exhausted 34 |

Discussion Questions and Activities:

- Begin attributing the characteristics of Ralph and Kevin. (See pages 14-15 of this guide.)
- What happened to Uncle Victor? (Page 29, *He landed in a wastebasket and was dumped in the incinerator.*)
- How did Ralph try to get out of the basket? (Page 32, *He tried to leap up the sides of the basket and tried to lift the apple core up to the seat of the motorcycle and then climb out.*)
- If you were facing a certain death, like Ralph, would you eat a good meal and go to sleep? Why or why not? Was Ralph wise to do this?

Prediction:

The author gives certain clues as to what might happen at the end of the chapter. What character probably holds the key to Ralph's survival? (The mouse.)

Activity Sheet

A major theme of the story is how Ralph learned to cope with fear. Have students graph the degree of Ralph's fear after each chapter in the story.

Chapter	Not at All Afraid	Learning to Be Brave	Trying to Be Brave	Afraid	Terrified
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					

Discussion Questions and Activities:

1. How was Ralph's family reunion like your family's? Compare using a T-diagram.

	Ralph's Family Reunion	My Family Reunion
Who attended:		
Purpose:		
Food:		
Fun:		
Remarks of Relatives:		

2. What does the expression "as quiet as mice" mean? (page 71) Where do you think this expression came from? What other words could you substitute for mice?
3. What present did Keith bring Ralph? (page 93, *a crash helmet*) Why was this a good present?
4. What did Keith say that hurt Ralph? (page 94, "I guess I should have known you weren't old enough to be trusted with a motorcycle.") Has anyone ever said something like that to you?
5. Ralph made a decision to ride in the daytime. Certain consequences resulted from his broken promise. Ralph made a series of bad decisions. List these bad decisions. Make a list of alternatives for Ralph.
6. Why was the decision to tell Keith the truth the smartest thing Ralph did? What does this say about his character? What can you add to his attribute web?

Prediction:

Will the motorcycle be recovered? How?

Writing Activity:

Both Ralph and Keith have lost a prized possession on the motorcycle. Describe a precious possession you've lost to someone who has never seen it. Explain why it was special to you.

Drama Activity:

With a classmate, act out the scene where Ralph told Keith the truth about the missing motorcycle.

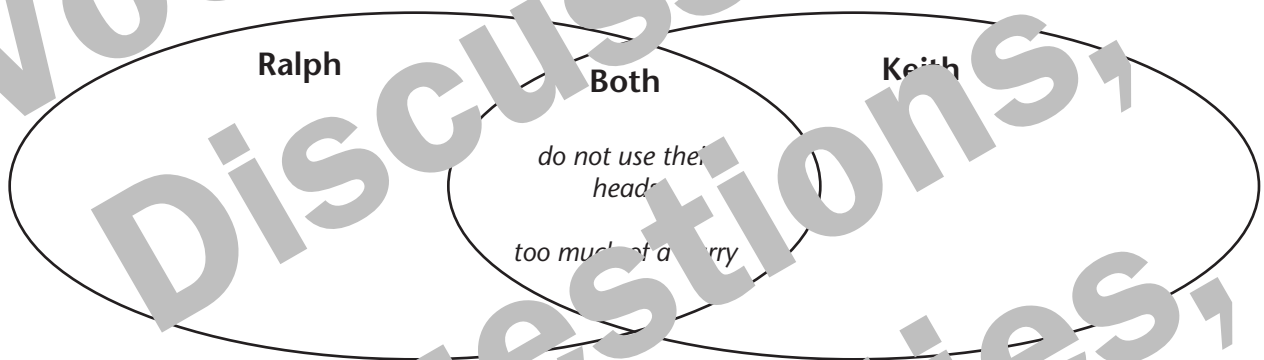
Chapter 9: "Ralph Takes Command" – Pages 95-105

Vocabulary:

envied 96 entitled 99 pandemonium 99 agitated 100
exterminator 101 assured 101

Discussion Questions and Activities:

1. How was Ralph like Keith? (Page 98, He didn't use his head. He was in too much of a hurry. He didn't have time to do things properly. He wanted to be grown-up.) Make a Venn diagram comparing Keith and Ralph.



2. Why didn't Keith see a mouse at all? (Pages 97-98, Because he got into messes too.) What does this say about Keith's character? What words can be added to his attribute web?
3. How did Ralph cause the war on mice? (Page 100-101) The teacher develops the sequence of events with the class and then what caused each effect. The class will work out codes for "cause" and for "effect." (See the following page.)

Events to list:

- a) Ralph rode the motorcycle in the daytime.
- b) Ralph rode into the sheets.
- c) Ralph chewed his way out of the sheets.
- d) Ralph made holes in the sheets.
- e) The housekeeper declared war on the mice.
- f) The mice decided they had to eat.
- g) Ralph took command.

Vocabulary, Discussions, Questions, Activities, Worksheets

