



The Mouse and the Motorcycle Chapter Summaries

Families: Here is a summary of each of the chapters in *The Mouse and The Motorcycle*. Please talk to your children about each chapter and use the guide to prompt discussion.

Enjoy!

Make Predictions

Before starting *The Mouse and The Motorcycle*, discuss expectations for the story. Ask your children what, why, who, where, and how questions. Spark their imagination and set time aside to talk about the setting, characters, plot and the moral of the story.

Chapter 1: The New Guests

A boy named Keith and his parents have been travelling across the United States on a three-week trip. After five days of travel, they have just arrived in California from Ohio. They check into an older hotel named the Mountain View Inn where Keith luckily gets his own room. Once in the room, Keith begins to play with his toy cars and motorcycle. While he plays and eats an apple, he does not know that he is being observed.

Discussion Questions:

- Would you like to travel across country?
- What states (places) would you like to visit?
- How many miles are between California and Ohio?
- Do you like staying (or would you like to stay) in a hotel?
- Why do you think Keith wants the hotel to have mice?

Chapter 2: The Motorcycle

Ralph the mouse watches Keith play in Room 215 from his mouse hole. He is excited to see the apple core but becomes disappointed when Keith's mom throws it out. Ralph is also excited to see the row of toy cars Keith left in the room. He is especially excited to see the motorcycle! Ralph decides to leave the safety of his mouse hole and climb on to the motorcycle. Just when he sits on it, the phone rings and scares Ralph! He and the motorcycle fall into the trash basket.

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think of Ralph?
- What do you think will happen next?
- Why did Ralph's mother worry about him?
- What happened to Ralph's father?
- What words, phrases, or items in the room let you know that this story was written many years ago?

Chapter 3: Trapped

Ralph cannot get out of the wastebasket. He tries to think of ways to get out but cannot. He is upset but decides to eat some of the apple core in the trash. He feels a little better after he eats and falls asleep.

Discussion Questions:

- What can Ralph do to get out of the waste bin?
- What would you do if you were Ralph?
- Why did the author tell the readers about Uncle Victor's dilemma?
- What do you think will happen next?
- What do you think of the story?
- Do you think the illustrations enhance the story?

Chapter 4: Keith

Keith returns to Room 215 and discovers that his motorcycle is missing. He looks for it and discovers both the motorcycle and Ralph in the wastebasket. They talk for a while and then Keith tips Ralph out of the wastebasket. Keith encourages Ralph to try taking the motorcycle for a ride...and he does!

Discussion Questions:

- Were you surprised at how the motorcycle operates?
- Instead of a motorcycle, how would a car sound? A fire truck? A dump truck? An Ambulance?
- Why does Keith feel envious of Ralph?
- Should Ralph be more cautious? Why?

Chapter 5: Adventure in the Night

Ralph convinces Keith to let him ride around the second floor of the hotel on the motorcycle. He encounters his Aunt Sissy, another hotel guest and a dog, and Matt the bellboy on his adventure. Unfortunately, when he tried to return to Room 215, the door was closed and he had no way to open it. Thankfully, Matt the bellboy helps him...only to be discovered by Keith's mother!

Discussion Questions:

- Based on the dialog between Ralph and Keith, what do we know about Ralph's personality and character?
- Based on Ralph's actions, what do we know about Ralph's personality and character?
- What are some of Keith's character traits?
- Why do you think Ralph feels bad for his Aunt Sissy?
- Ralph wonders about different areas of the hotel. Do you think he should venture farther on the motorcycle?

Chapter 6: A Peanut-Butter Sandwich

Keith reprimands Ralph about being out on the motorcycle so long. Ralph explained how he got stuck behind the door. Keith offers to order breakfast for Ralph and Ralph requests a peanut-butter sandwich. When Ralph tells his mother that Keith would leave them a sandwich, she scolds him for trusting people. Keith leaves the motorcycle under the bed for Ralph to use after dark. While Ralph was looking at the motorcycle under the bed, the maid starts cleaning the room and the head housekeeper tells her to be extra thorough. Ralph is terrified when he hears her start up the vacuum.

Discussion Questions:

- Why does Keith scold Ralph?
- Why do you think Ralph's mother scolds him?
- Do you think Ralph is mature enough to be trusted going downstairs to explore alone?
- How old do you think you have to be to go somewhere alone?
- Why is important that Ralph keep his promise to Keith?
- How will Ralph escape from his hiding place under the bed?

Chapter 7: The Vacuum Cleaner

In this chapter, Ralph sees the maid's white sneakers as she vacuums the room. Suddenly, he can't avoid the suction of the vacuum and his tail is pulled in. Grabbing the motorcycle, Ralph pulls himself onto the machine and drives away from the vacuum and straight into a pillowcase headed for the laundry. He is trapped again! When the maid gathers up the laundry and drops him in the laundry room, Ralph has no choice but to leave the motorcycle behind and to chew his way out of the sheets to save himself.

Discussion Questions:

- Should Ralph have broken his promise to Keith about riding the motorcycle?
- Was there any other way Ralph could have escaped?
- Should he have left the motorcycle in the wash?
- What do you think Keith will say when he discovers his motorcycle is gone?
- What do you think will happen to the motorcycle?

Chapter 8: A Family Reunion

Ralph's mother wakes Ralph up to come eat the food left by Keith. She explains that they are having a family reunion since there is enough food for all of their family members. Ralph feels terrible about breaking his promise to Keith and doesn't feel like celebrating with them. When he explains that he lost the motorcycle to his family and to Keith, they are very disappointed in him.

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think of Ralph's actions?
- Do you think Ralph could have done something different to have a different outcome?
- What character traits does Keith seem to possess?
- What do you think will happen next?
- Will Keith and Ralph stay friends? Would you stay friends with someone who lost your favorite toy?

Chapter 9: Ralph Takes Command

Ralph is sad and spends the night on Keith's windowsill thinking about what he did. When Keith wakes up, the two talk about what happened. Ralph is amazed that Keith still wants to be friends with him. Keith explains that everyone makes mistakes and sometimes we don't think before we act. Keith offers to bring Ralph food again. When Ralph goes back to the knothole, his family is frantic. The housekeepers discovered the sheets Ralph had nibbled through to get out of the laundry. The cleaning people were going to try everything to get rid of the mice – traps, poisons, and more! Ralph comes up with a plan to save the mice and everyone agrees to hide out in the nest through the long weekend.

Discussion Questions:

- How did Keith and Ralph resolve their conflict?
- Talk about mistakes you made in the past and how you learned from them.
- Think about good friends you have and what qualities they have.
- What can you learn from Keith and Ralph?
- What do you think of Ralph's plan to avoid the housekeepers?

Chapter 10: An Anxious Night

The mice hide in the mouse hole and conserve the food. They are worried because they are running out of food. Meanwhile, Keith feels sick and goes to bed early. During the night, his mother checks on him and he has a fever. They do not have any aspirin to give him and Keith's father checks with the front desk but they don't have any either. Ralph is determined to find Keith an aspirin so that he will feel better.

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think will happen next?
- What will the mice do if Keith doesn't provide them with food?
- How will Ralph find an aspirin?
- Do you think Ralph has is learning to be less selfish? Cite evidence from text.

Chapter 11: The Search

Ralph ventures out into the hallway and searches the hotel rooms for an aspirin for Keith. Unfortunately, in the last room, a teacher staying in the hotel captures Ralph. She and her fellow teacher think about bringing Ralph back to be a classroom pet. Finally, they decide to set him free – outside the hotel.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you think Ralph will be successful in finding an aspirin?
- Do you think Ralph is being brave or foolish searching for the aspirin?
- If you captured a mouse in your room, what would you do with it?
- Do you think mice are pests or pets?
- How will Ralph get back in the hotel?

Chapter 12: An Errand of Mercy

Ralph climbs a vine down from the second floor to a first story window that was left open. In that room, Ralph finds an aspirin. He manages to push the pill out of the room and through the lobby. It is very hard for him to carry and he decides to go back to Keith's room to get a vehicle to transport it. Keith agrees to lend him his toy ambulance and Ralph rides back down to retrieve the aspirin. Using the elevator, Ralph drives the ambulance back upstairs to Keith.

Discussion Questions:

- How did you feel during Ralph's trip with the aspirin?
- What other ways could Ralph have transported the aspirin?
- Why do you think the dog can see Ralph but not the man?
- Why is Ralph going to so much trouble and putting his life in danger for Keith?

Chapter 13: A Subject for Composition

Keith rests in bed and is feeling better. Keith orders room service and the bellman, Matt, brings food, Keith's ambulance *and* Keith's motorcycle back to him. Matt found the motorcycle when the housekeepers were talking about the holes in the linens. Keith and Ralph talk about growing up and how growing up involves more than just getting taller. Keith allows Ralph to ride the motorcycle and offers to take Ralph with him back to his home in Ohio. Ralph decides to stay with his family in the Mountain View Inn. Keith gives Ralph the motorcycle to keep and Ralph is thrilled.

Discussion Questions:

- How does Keith know he can trust Ralph with his motorcycle again?
- What does it mean to be a grown-up?
- How long do you think it will take for you to grow up?
- Do wishes always come true?
- How do you handle it when you can't get everything you want?
- Were you happy/sad/surprised/upset by the ending?
- How could you improve the ending of this story?
- Would you like to read the next book in the series? What do you think it will be about?