

Redwall

Study Guide

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For the novel by Brian Jacques



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Synopsis

It is the summer of the late rose in Mossflower Woods. As the animals gather at Redwall Abbey to feast in celebration of Abbot Mortimer's Golden Jubilee, the dark clouds of war gather on the horizon. The evil, one-eyed rat, Cluny the Scourge, and his band of marauders have arrived in Mossflower country. Securing the church of St. Ninian's as his base of operations, Cluny seeks to conquer Redwall Abbey and take it as his own.

Preparing the residents of Redwall to face this cruel rodent of legendary fame and his henchrats are Abbot Mortimer, the religious leader of the abbey; Constance, a fierce and battle-wise badger; and Matthias, an eager but clumsy mouse, as yet untried in battle. Rising to a position of leadership, Matthias finds inspiration and encouragement in the tale of Martin the Warrior, in the wise counsel of Abbot Mortimer, in the battle skill of Constance the badger, and in the admiration of Cornflower, a young female mouse.

The survival of Redwall Abbey will touch not only the inhabitants within its stronghold, but also the fate of hundreds of citizens living far beyond its walls. Author Brian Jacques captures all the evil of the villains and heroism of the noble defenders in this epic animal fantasy.

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Dialect:

Each of the sentences below is spoken by Basil Stag Hare. To help clarify what Basil means, try *paraphrasing* the dialect given below in your own words.

1. “Capital camouflage. You just try lying down anywhere in the shadows. Believe you me, you’d have trouble finding yourself.
2. “Top hole-cover, absolutely!”
3. “Never let it be said in the mess that Basil Stag Hare was backward in coming forward.”
4. “. . . munching at the old nosebag.”

Questions:

1. Why is it difficult for Ragear to think for himself when he becomes separated from Cluny?
2. What conditions does Matthias find when he enters the church? What does Cluny’s treatment of the church tell us about him?

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3. What does Matthias realize when he discovers that there are no rats in the church?

4. Matthias is concerned that he is not with Constance at a time of danger. He wonders whether the defenders will hold out, and he hopes that Constance is organizing the retaliation correctly without him. Contrast Matthias's thoughts about Constance to Cheesethief's thoughts about Scragg.

5. Why could Abbot Mortimer say with confidence of Matthias, "Well, wherever he is . . . I'm certain that he is helping our cause . . ."?

Thinking About the Story:

6. Authors often include a humorous character or characters in a story at a dramatic or tragic point to provide *comic relief*, or a break from the tension of the plot. Basil Stag Hare is an example of *comic relief*. List three or more examples of what he does or says that makes him amusing.

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7. Why did Basil Stag Hare choose “Stag” as a part of his name? Do you think that he will live up to the name? Why or why not?

8. In literature, a *quest* is a type of story in which the hero/main character is on a search or pilgrimage of some sort. This quest may be to find something valuable, to get rid of an object that has caused trouble, or to arrive at a certain location. By the end of Book One of *Redwall*, what seems to be the quest that will occupy the characters? Which character is emerging as the one that will be taking on this quest?

Dig Deeper:

9. *Paradox* is a statement that seems to contradict itself, yet is true. For example: in 2 Corinthians, Paul says, “For when I am weak, then I am strong.” Chapter 17 of *Redwall* begins with Ragear being lost. What is *paradoxical* about Ragear’s behavior?

10. In his focus on himself, Ragear takes his mind off of what he should be doing and is captured by Matthias. Read Romans 12:3. What does this verse tell us about being too self-focused?

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11. When Cluny the Scourge orders Shadow to steal the image of Martin the Warrior from the tapestry, the residents of Redwall are upset, disappointed, and broken-hearted. However, what do they discover as a direct result of the hole in the tapestry?

Read Genesis 50:15–20. How had good results come from this bad situation?

Read Romans 8:28. What does God promise us?

Creative Writing:

Write an interview with Basil Stag Hare after his success in rescuing the Vole family. Use this to write a newspaper article about his adventure. Remember to include the “5 Ws” of basic journalism: who, what, where, when, and why. Study some good newspaper articles to spark your creativity.

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3. Constance appears on a parapet and kicks away the plank that the rats had been attempting to cross from the tree.
 4. Abbot Mortimer believes in “tempering triumph with mercy.” He hates death and injury to any living creature, even an enemy.
 5. The author writes that “fear of [Cluny’s] legendary powers was too strong.” Redtooth even wonders if Cluny is faking his injuries as a test or a trap for his own captains.
 6. Sela has no loyalty to anyone but herself. The citizens of Redwall are loyal to and take care of each other.
 7. Cluny draws up plans for attacking Redwall that are dependent on using a battering ram on the Abbey’s main gates. He allows Sela to see him making these plans, knowing she will attempt to sell the information to the Abbey mice. He hopes the mice will then fortify the main gates while he and his horde of rats tunnel under the wall.
 8. Constance, g; Cornflower, c; Alf, b; Methuselah, a; Ambrose, d; Basil, e; Foremole, f
- Thinking About the Story:*
9. a. Answers will vary but should include something related to problems being solved over time. This tells the reader that Mortimer is patient and willing to wait to discover answers; b. Answers will vary but should include not ridiculing something that is not understood. This tells the reader that Methuselah is not judgmental and is warning others not to criticize too quickly; c. She is boasting about her ability to deceive and be stealthy; d. Matthias is accepting both the duty and responsibility that has been given him by Martin. He asserts that Methuselah will share the honor of the moment.
 10. Though Matthias is young, he has earned Methuselah’s trust and respect and has shown himself capable of leadership. Methuselah also knows that Matthias has a keen interest in discovering the location of Martin’s sword.
 11. Methuselah is reluctant to enter the tomb because the rhyme states that Matthias (“am that is”) alone should enter. Answers may vary. In a sense, Martin has given this authority to Matthias. Matthias has accepted the role chosen for him by Martin. He has bravely met danger and survived on his own, and this has given him confidence.
 12. Answers may vary. Perhaps Martin wanted to be remembered as a person of peace instead of a warrior.

Dig Deeper:

13. These verses from Romans 12 address the individual’s responsibility to God and the use of gifts and talents in the accomplishment of things that benefit the kingdom of God and the Christian community. Similarly, the people of Redwall Abbey, each with very different gifts, were working together to benefit their community.

Book 2: The Quest, Chapters 9–15

Vocabulary:

Part One:

1. b; 2. j; 3. c; 4. i; 5. f; 6. g; 7. d; 8. h; 9. e; 10. a

Part Two:

Sentences will vary.