

Redwall Study Guide

Redwall by Brian Jacques

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Plot Summary

Redwall by Brian Jacques pits a horde of savage rats against the peace-loving mice of Redwall Abbey and the flock of woodland refugees whom the mice take in. Novice Matthias searches for the lost Sword of Martin the Warrior to save the day.

Redwall by Brian Jacques opens with a joyous celebration of Abbot Mortimer's jubilee. Creatures from the surrounding woods attend. The clumsy young novice Matthias is accompanying guests home when a wagon full of savage-looking rats careens by. Led by Cluny the Scourge, this Horde takes over abandoned St. Ninian's Church down the road and makes plans to take over Redwall Abbey. Threatened woodland creatures who accept sanctuary all offer their distinctive services to the common defense. Matthias shows promise as a military leader, much like the legendary Martin the Warrior, whose picture the rats steal from the Abbey. The bare spot on the wall where it had hung reveals clues to the whereabouts of Martin's Sword.

Advised by elderly Brother Methuselah, Matthias begins a quest for the legendary weapon. Cluny, meanwhile, tries a variety of approaches to conquer the Abbey by force, but one-by-one these are turned back. Matthias is briefly held prisoner under the roof eaves by ferocious sparrows who nest there, led by King Bull Sparra. There Matthias picks up additional clues about the sword. Escaping death, Matthias sneaks out of the Abbey to follow the sword, and thus misses most of the siege. He is befriended by a troop of quarrelsome shrews and advised by a cat and owl at an abandoned Farm not to dare to enter the sandstone quarry where Asmodeus, a dreaded giant adder, has hidden the Sword. With Martin's inspiration, Matthias finds the trophy, beheads the snake, and races back to the Abbey, hoping that he is not too late.

Backed by a huge relief army of sparrows and shrews, Matthias arrives after Cluny has by trickery gotten inside and is at the point of executing the inhabitants. In the midst of a great battle, Matthias and Cluny fight to the death. Cluny is the stronger and is close to overpowering Matthias, but Matthias leaps away and cuts the rope holding up the Abbey's great Joseph Bell. It crushes the evil rat leader. Abbot Mortimer, however, has been mortally wounded. His dying order is that Matthias become the Abbey's permanent Champion and marry Cornflower, with whom he is in love. A year after the so-called Late Rose Summer Wars, the Abbey holds another celebration of the restoration of peace and prosperity.



Book 1, The Wall, Chapters 1-8

Book 1, The Wall, Chapters 1-8 Summary

Matthias, a clumsy novice at Redwall Abbey stumbles into Abbot Mortimer, who takes him aside to explain that the age of warriors is past. A tapestry portrays the early history of the Abbey, including the heroic Martin the Warrior, an early champion of the Abbey, whom Matthias wants to imitate. Mortimer sends him fishing with Brother Alf to provide for his jubilee dinner that evening. Meanwhile, in Chapter 2 Cluny the Scourge, a tough, one-eyed, long-tailed rat with a vicious temper, charges toward the Abbey in a hay cart filled with his army of 500 rats.

In Chapter 3 the Great Hall of Redwall hosts a high-spirited dinner attended by woodland creatures. Matthias sits with beautiful young Cornflower. In Chapter 4 Cluny is in a foul mood as the horse collapses, exhausted, and is indifferent when the rat that he sends to frighten the beast back to its feet is trampled. In Chapter 5, Mortimer assigns Matthias as bodyguard to the cart that Constance Badger pulls, sparing guests a long walk home. Halfway to St. Ninian's, Constance on a hunch plunges off the road, just in time to avoid colliding with Cluny's hay cart. Constance turns back to warn the Abbot.

In Chapter 6 the rats' cart wrecks near St. Ninian's. Cluny orders lieutenants to scout the big building that they have passed, to draft local vermin into his army, to forage for supplies, and to secure the church as a headquarters. In Chapter 7 Mortimer calls a Council of Elders meeting to hear eyewitness reports about the head rat whose description matches legends of the dreaded Cluny. When many scoff at the possibility, Constance silences them so Brother Methuselah can quote the official Chronicle about Cluny's steady southward movement, inflicting destruction and death. Matthias demands that they be ready to fight. In Chapter 8 Cluny suffers a nightmare in which he is pursued by a warrior mouse with a great sword. He is about to be killed when the Abbey's Great Joseph Bell awakens him. Foragers Ragear and Mangefur bring nothing suitable to eat but recruiters Frogblood and Scumnose present a hundred draftees, who are warned that if they fail to fight well, they will die horribly at Cluny's hand.

Book 1, The Wall, Chapters 1-8 Analysis

The first third of Book 1 establishes the setting of the novel, introduces the major characters, and sketches the great conflict around which the novel is built. Redwall Abbey is a monastic community for mice, dedicated to healing and hospitality. One of the novices is a clumsy young orphaned field mouse, Matthias, who dreams of being a heroic warrior in times of peace and prosperity. Abbot Mortimer tries gently to dissuade him, telling him the legend of Martin the Warrior, the Abbey's earliest champion. Martin is portrayed on a tapestry that hangs in the Great Hall. After his victory, Martin lays down his famed sword and becomes a peace-loving brother. The tapestry is destined to play a key role in the novel and hapless Matthias will become, as it were, Martin's



reincarnation as a warrior. Martin and/or Matthias appears frequently with the sword in terrible nightmares suffered by the novel's antagonist, Cluny the Scourge. The first dream occurs at the end of this introductory section.

Parallel with a gala celebration of Mortimer's jubilee as Abbot, in which Matthias proudly plays two prominent roles, Cluny and his Horde of 500 rats are shown drawing nearer to the Abbey. Cluny has been wreaking havoc for years in a steady southward procession. He is invoked by parents wanting their children to behave. As the mice and woodland guests celebrate, Cluny's coldheartedness is illustrated repeatedly. The two story lines run parallel until the party breaks up and the Abbey wagon is dispatched to take two families home, sparing them a long walk. Constance Badger, introduced as a strong but slow-thinking creature pulls the wagon, while Matthias, armed with a staff, provides bodyguard. Mortimer chooses Matthias because he has seen that Matthias and Cornflower Fieldmouse have become enamored of one another. Halfway to their destination, Constance gets a premonition and plunges off the road, just in time to avoid collision with Cluny's out-of-control hay cart. It is clear that as they careen along, Cluny is unaware that he is bearing down on the Abbey. Only when he passes it and scouts discover its existence does he decide that he must conquer it.

As the travelers turn back to report what they have seen, Cluny's cart overturns in a ditch near St. Ninian's. Cluny gives orders to set up a temporary headquarters in the church, to scavenge for food, to draft more soldiers, and to arm. The scavengers do poorly, inciting Cluny's anger, but a number of rats and other vermin are rounded up and read Articles that make clear that they will die unless they fight adequately. Parallel with this, Mortimer calls a Council of Elders to hear the travelers' report. The mice do not want to believe that the legendary Cluny is close-by and try to shout down the eye-witness descriptions. Unexpectedly, Constance assumes a kind of sergeant-at-arms role and Matthias emerges as a voice of courage. Ancient Brother Methuselah is introduced as the official chronicler, who attests to Cluny's record of violence. Methuselah in the coming chapters becomes Matthias' mentor, further indoctrinating him into the legend of Martin and his sword. In Cluny's concluding nightmare vision, a great mouse warrior, who could be either Matthias or Martin, relentlessly hunts Cluny down. At the end of the novel, Cluny will die at Matthias' hand. Through much of the novel, Matthias goes on a quest for the lost sword and, although he fights bravely, requires an act of dishonesty to prevail. Many key characters will by then be dead.



Book 1, The Wall, Chapters 9-16

Book 1, The Wall, Chapters 9-16 Summary

As Mortimer and Constance consider the bounties of nature that have sustained the Abbey, she worries that Cluny's threat cannot be averted without heroic deeds of old - or a miracle. Matthias has matured overnight. He knows that the defenders cannot show weakness. Wishing that he were young enough to fight, Methuselah tells about Martin being a young, impulsive, natural leader like Matthias. The conversation ends when guards report that an evil-looking rat has sought admittance, claiming injury and seeking help for his comrades, but refused to put down his arms and run away, warning that Cluny is coming. Believing himself invulnerable, Ambrose Spike goes out to invite the woodlanders to sanctuary. With Mortimer's approval, Matthias outlines defense plans and the refugees pledge their special talents. Sentries are mounted. The sounds of birds and insects cease as Cluny's Horde approaches the gates.

In Chapter 10 Cluny and Redtooth are admitted to speak with the Abbot, but disarmed. As the warlord sizes up his future Castle Cluny and frightens the mice, Matthias blushes. While Redtooth is reading articles of unconditional surrender, Matthias rips the parchment and the Abbot declares that they will not give up. Cluny states that all will be horribly slaughtered. Noticing in the tapestry the warrior mouse of his nightmares, Cluny leaves the Abbey in a daze. In Chapter 11 Ambrose collapses outside the gates and is retrieved by tunneling moles. He comes around and tells how the rats have captured the Vole family. Constance rejects the idea of a foolhardy rescue mission but Matthias cannot give up the Voles. Cornflower finds him weeping before the image of Martin, declares him to be a warrior, and gives him her headband as battle colors. Matthias thanks Martin for showing him the way through Cornflower.

In Chapter 12 a crazed Cluny summons Shadow, his long-time companion, a master of stealth, and orders him to enter the Abbey, cut out the image of Martin, and bring it to him. He tells his lieutenants that losing this symbol will demoralize the mice. In Chapter 13 the Abbey prepares for a siege, organizing supplies, training to use weapons, and stocking rocks on the parapet. Matthias warns that they must fight as savagely as Cluny's Horde. Over lunch, Methuselah tells Matthias about once hearing that ferocious sparrows have stolen something from the Abbey to their nest. In Chapter 14 Cluny, Ragear, and Shadow approach the wall at midnight and Shadow makes the impossible climb, gets past sleeping sentries, finds the tapestry, and begins chewing out Martin's portion. Meanwhile, Martin's voice summons Matthias to the Great Hall. As Matthias raises the alarm, Shadow knocks him unconscious and stabs Mr. Fieldmouse before being pushed over the parapet by Constance. Cluny claims the picture and flees. Still, Shadow loyally taunts Matthias before dying. In Chapter 15 Mortimer scolds the guards for sleeping. Although he silently agrees that with Martin gone, they are defeated, Matthias rallies the mice to hope and zeal. Feigning a need to rest in his room, Matthias arms himself with Shadow's dagger and climbing rope and sets out to settle the score



with Cluny. In Chapter 16 Cluny's Horde prepares for war and marches out with Martin's picture as Cluny's battle flag.

Book 1, The Wall, Chapters 9-16 Analysis

The second portion of Book 1 shows the two camps preparing for battle. Matthias is shown as having matured overnight and possessing the powers of Martin the Warrior. Folklore is inconclusive about Martin's resting place, where, presumably, the sword also lies. Methuselah has one promising lead: that sparrows - flying mice - have stolen the sword and hidden it in their nest. Methuselah intimates that Matthias will have to undertake a quest for this relic, which forms the focus in Book 2. In the meantime, Matthias takes the lead in teaching peaceful creatures to fight and keeping up morale. Scrappy Constance coordinates hand-to-hand combat but has few takers. Weapons are primitive and match the defenders' diminutive size. Meanwhile, in the enemy camp, weapons are larger and more ominous. The rats have long experience with killing and are repeatedly warned that if they fail to fight to the death they will be brutally slain by Cluny. Matthias must rally the defenders to an even greater level of motivation.

Preliminaries are gotten out of the way: a rat tries to get inside the gates by pleading for mercy for the wounded, Ambrose Spike is wounded while summoning the woodlanders to sanctuary. Finally, Cluny and his lieutenant, Redtooth, come for a conference with the Abbot, to demand unconditional surrender. Cluny admires the defenders' caution in having him bind his tail around his waist, lest he unleash his most potent weapon. Cluny has his moments of frenzy but is at bottom a seasoned campaigner and master of tactics and strategy. During the long siege he will be frustrated and defeated many times, but by circumstances beyond his control. Sizing up the Abbey's interior, Cluny is at first frightened by the image of Martin, who terrorizes his dreams, but then realizes that if he were to capture this powerful symbol, the mice would be psychologically destroyed. Cluny assigns to Shadow the task of obtaining this icon.

Shadow's darkness and mystery are described in a particularly rich variety of metaphors. A master of stealth, Shadow climbs an unclimbable wall, sometimes hanging by a single claw as he finds his next crack. Although he is one of the bad guys, it is hard not to root for him. Shadow sneers at the sleeping, amateur sentries and finds his way to the tapestry. As he finishes gnawing out Martin's portion, Martin's spirit calls out to Matthias and Matthias raises the alarm. Shadow deals easily with the mice that cross his path but is knocked over the wall by Constance. Note how Cluny cares no more for the dying Shadow, his companion for years, than for the rank-and-file rat that he sends to his death early in the novel. Anyone who is not currently useful to Cluny has no value. Matthias quietly takes Shadow's dagger and climbing rope as he prepares single-handedly to rescue the Voles. This puts him away from the Abbey as the first rat assault begins. Matthias will consistently be absent without leave for most of the novel, but the Abbot and his generals always assume that it is for good and valiant cause.



Book 1, The Wall, Chapters 17-20

Book 1, The Wall, Chapters 17-20 Summary

Ragear wanders into Mossflower Wood exhausted. Seeing Matthias, he decides that capturing him will please Cluny and improve his status. Instead, Matthias knocks him out, ties him to a tree, and continues to the large clearing around St. Ninian's. There are a dozen guards and little cover for crossing. Basil Stag Hare startles Matthias, introducing himself as an expert scout, fighter, and camouflagist. Matthias finds him an odd, old-fashioned creature, but amiable. Basil teaches Matthias to bob and weave across open ground and volunteers to act as a decoy. Finding the church empty, Matthias realizes that the Horde is attacking the Abbey. Leaving, he frees the Voles and orders them to follow - directly to the rat sentries, who have tired of chasing Basil.

In Chapter 18 Cluny masses his forces in the roadside ditch while remaining safe in the meadow. The mice annoy the rats with tiny arrows, while the rats lack archers to return fire. A hail of rocks, however, makes the mice take cover as the rats throw grappling hooks and begin climbing the wall. The mice wait until they are near the top before tumbling piles of rubble on them, creating chaos. Ordering barrages of arrows and rocks, Cluny plots a new strategy. Meanwhile, tied to a tree, Ragear hears the distant sounds of battle, chews through the ropes, and dies instantly as a great adder strikes, hissing Asmodeus. Cluny shifts his attack to the Mossflower approach, planning to throw a plank across from a tall tree to the parapet, come nightfall. His scouts, Cheesethief and Killconey return in a panic at having found Ragear's bloated body being dragged into the underbrush by a huge snake. Killconey knows that Asmodeus is the Devil's own name and that one must not look it in the eye. Scragg's report of finding a suitable tree pleases Cluny.

In Chapter 19 Matthias and Basil liberate the Vole family and skillfully fight the rats. Basil takes charge of the refugees while Matthias returns to the Abbey. Tired and hungry, however, Matthias falls asleep by a stream. In Chapter 20 each of Cluny's lieutenants plots how to become his new chief assistant while, happy for a lull in fighting, the Abbey organizes for the next round. Winifred Otter and some moles use a children's seesaw to lob a heavy bolder into the crowded ditch and the battle resumes. The rats invent a new weapon, pieces of iron grave railings from the churchyard, slung by lengths of cord. Constance proves more deadly, hurling them back. Too old to fight, Methuselah wracks his brain for a clue to the sword's whereabouts. On the wall, behind the missing piece of tapestry, he finds a vital clue written.

Book 1, The Wall, Chapters 17-20 Analysis

Book 1 concludes with descriptions of the initial skirmishes in the Late Rose Summer Wars. The rats have superior arms but are at a disadvantage of elevation. They initially attack from the Meadow west of the Abbey, with the officers safe at a distance and the



soldiers in the same ditch in which their cart had wrecked. It offers little protection from missiles fired from the parapet. The plan is to storm the walls with climbing ropes. They are thwarted when the defenders shove building rubble over the side on them. Cluny resolves to shift to the southwest corner, using the surrounding trees of the Mossflower Woods and a plank scavenged from the church. It is stressed that rats are bad climbers. Tension is relieved as Cluny waits for nightfall to attack.

A new character destined to play a major role is introduced: Asmodeus Bloodyteeth, an enormous and sinister adder (viper: snake). Asmodeus hisses his own name constantly and his stare is hypnotic. This is illustrated when he kills and drags away hapless Ragear, who gets separated from Cluny during Shadow's mission. Like the other lieutenants, Ragear looks constantly for a way to impress Cluny. Seeing Matthias in Mossflower Wood, Ragear figures to capture him, but is knocked out and tied to a tree. Asmodeus appreciates Ragear chewing his way out of the ropes, because it makes dragging him off so much easier. Scouts witness this and are thrown into panic. Killconey, a weasel in contention for high command, relates the lore of Asmodeus, which he says is the Devil's own name. Killconey speaks in a brogue.

Coming to the clear, flat land surrounding St. Ninian's, Matthias meets another new and important character. Basil Stag Hare is the epitome of the old officer corp, striking military poses and speaking in an odd, old-fashioned manner. He teaches Matthias how to bob and weave across open ground and shows his physical prowess by keeping busy a dozen rats as Matthias explores the ransacked church. Realizing that the Horde has attacked the Abbey in his absence, Matthias feels guilty about slipping away. He succeeds in liberating the hapless Voles, but nearly gets himself and them captured. Basil helps them all escape. They plan on rendezvousing at the Abbey. Basil will provide key professional leadership in the coming chapters. Part 1 concludes with old Methuselah discovering a message written behind the tapestry. It had been hidden by the portrait of Martin. Book 2's Quest can now begin.



Book 2, The Quest, Chapters 1-8

Book 2, The Quest, Chapters 1-8 Summary

Awakening at dusk, Matthias realizes that he is lost and feels guilty about abandoning his comrades. Hearing a rustling, he draws Shadow's dagger, only to find that he faces a baby red squirrel sucking its paw. Without a word, it leads him to the Abbey. In Chapter 2 Methuselah observes that an old elm tree near the wall is not swaying properly in the wind. Mortimer dispatches Constance and a few others to investigate secretly. Cluny orders Scragg to take over from clumsy Cheesethief the operation of securing the plank. As the rats cross over, Constance kicks it off, plunging the invaders from a dizzying height. Cheesethief pushes rival Scragg off. The defenders believe that Cluny is among the casualties, but Constance has just seen him in the Meadow. She speculates that this might be a diversion and the defenders return to the gatehouse wall. On the ground, the survivors loot the casualties and Cheesethief organizes removing Cluny's battered body on the plank before secretly murdering Scragg. Matthias and the baby squirrel, Silent Sam, arrive to witness this. Sam climbs the tree and leaps to the parapet and moments later a side door is opened for Matthias, who is ushered to the main gate to help cheer Cluny's retreat. Redtooth continues his masquerade to cover up Cluny's injury. The Abbot bucks popular sentiment to forbid firing on them. The Abbey has many wounded and dead for whom to care. Matthias and Sam join the morning war council. Constance is elated to learn that Basil has helped liberate the Voles. The Abbot doubts that the rats will return, but Constance disagrees: Cluny will recover and cannot risk losing face over this defeat. The Abbot turns over military command and dedicates himself to aiding the injured and feeding the hungry.

In Chapter 3 Cluny lies in bed, suffering injuries that would have killed any other rat. His lieutenants fear him too much to finish him off. The Horde does nothing to reorganize. Cluny's nightmares now include new terrifying elements besides the looming sword towards which he falls from the plank. Awakening, he orders new draftees found. Killroy identifies a local healer, Sela the Vixen. Cluny orders her and her son Chickenhound fetched instantly. Redtooth is sent out to find a suitable battering ram. The Abbey mice will pay for what they have done to Cluny. In Chapter 4 Methuselah and Matthias clean the wall lettering to make it more readable and then study the riddle-poem, verse-by-verse. Realizing that the refrain "I—am that is" is Matthias' name in mixed-up order, Methuselah realizes that Martin lives on in Matthias and is buried between Great Hall and Cavern Hole. Carefully examining the seven steps between, they deduce that they should excavate beneath the fourth. Moles are called in and a downward flight of stairs is discovered.

In Chapter 5 Sela mutters charms and dances about, not fooling Cluny, but also applies useful poultices and salves and gives him a painkiller and sleeping potion. She says that he will need three weeks' rest. Cluny knows that he owes Sela his life but wonders what she expects to get from the Abbey when it is conquered. Always playing sides off against one another, Sela sends to the Abbot a note indicating that she has information



about Cluny's future plans for sale. Her son must deliver it, because Sela is forbidden to leave camp. In Chapter 6 Cornflower is amazed at how much the Squirrel and Vole families and Basil in particular can eat. Meanwhile, Matthias and Methuselah enter the secret staircase and winding corridor. At the end is a great door with another riddle, which Matthias breaks. He insists that Methuselah enter with him. They discover Martin's tomb, topped by an effigy that closely resembles Matthias. Matthias buckles on Martin's sword belt and takes up his shield. It feels familiar. There is a final message: to wait in Martin's threshold space and reunite his sword with him. Matthias is to protect Redwall. The friends climb back to the light.

In Chapter 7 Chickenhound approaches the Abbey under a white flag, demanding to see the Abbot. Constance will accept his scroll, but not admit him. Without bothering the Abbot, Constance sets up a forest meeting to deal with the traitor Sela in two days. Matthias is preoccupied with the new riddle at lunch until Mortimer warns him not to be rude to guests. Basil gives Sam a tiny dagger and asks Matthias if he realizes how Cornflower looks at him and then plies Cornflower with stories. Methuselah, meanwhile, tells Matthias that he has discovered the threshold in a translation of an ancient blueprint. They must watch for a sign in the north at 1 AM atop the main gatehouse. First they must with the moles' help clear away the rock and rubble used in defense. They find a design that perfectly fits Martin's shield, including the arm holds. Constance interprets thirteen circles as the cycle of full moons and declares that June's full moon is the next night.

In Chapter 8 Cluny pretends to sleep while watching Sela. To catch her in her treachery, he draws a detailed battle plan centering on the battering ram and hides it under his pillow, its corner in plain view. He then talks about the battering ram in front of Sela, asks for a stronger sleep potion, and lets the officers get drunk. As Cluny pretends to sleep, Sela takes the bait. Knowing that she will make a copy and return the original, he sleeps for real. While the mice are diverted to the main gate, he will tunnel under the southwest corner.

Book 2, The Quest, Chapters 1-8 Analysis

The first third of Book 2 introduces more new characters, shows how Cluny is laid up for three weeks but refuses to give up on conquering the Abbey, and offers a series of riddles to old Methuselah and young Matthias about Martin the Warrior's tomb and lost sword. The analysis of the riddles is gradual and laborious, allowing the reader to join in. In the end, the key is an anagram on Matthias' name. "I—am that is" ("Matthias" rearranged) declares that Martin had foreseen living on some day in Matthias, a rather mystical thought.

The first new character is a mute baby red squirrel whom Matthias meets while lost in the woods. Silent Sam knows the woods like the back of his paw, one of which he continually sucks. The noise helps Matthias follow him. Sam and his parents become refugees and Sam plays a significant role going forward. Without a word, it leads him to the Abbey. The second and third new characters are Sela the Vixen and her son



Chickenhound. These foxes are stereotyped as shifty, self-serving characters. Cluny summons Sela, a locally-renowned healer to treat his serious wounds, realizes that she will sell him out to the Abbot if the price is right, and uses her as a conduit for providing false battle plans to the defenders to divert them from his newest scheme. Sela is as charming as her son is annoying. At the Abbey, Constance dismisses Chickenhound's demand for a meeting with the Abbot and plans to deal with the foxes herself. Neither fox seems destined to live long.

On the battle front, Methuselah alerts the defenders to Cluny's new tactic when he observes that an old elm tree is not swaying naturally in the wind and wonders what might be interfering with it. Constance leads the small group that arrives just as the rats cross the plank and her swift paw-sweep sends more rats to a plunging death. Cluny's lieutenants' competition to succeed Ragear has been developing as a secondary theme. It turns bloody as the second attempt to invade the Abbey fails. Cheesethief's cold-blooded murder of the injured Scragg shocks Matthias and Sam, who arrive at the Abbey at this point. Note the touch of racism as the rats cannot believe that Cluny might advance another species to leadership over them. Cluny's earlier analogy that the mice would be as lost without the Martin picture as the horde would be without him proves half-true: Matthias is motivated to recover the picture, while the rats simply lie down and wait to see if Cluny will recover. They are too afraid to finish him off, as has been seen to be common practice among them; it could be that this is simply a test of their loyalty. Cluny has, after all, been dressing Redtooth in his armor as a decoy. Faking injuries would not be far-fetched.

Cluny is, however, seriously injured and, in fact, incapacitated for weeks. Some of the Abbey defenders believe that they have seen Cluny among the fatalities at the base of the wall, but the consensus is that he is too tough to have died in this manner. The Abbot, ever optimistic, believes that Cluny will simply move on southward, while others see him needing to remove this stain from his reputation. Writhing in bed, Cluny makes it clear that he intends to get revenge. The Abbot, wisely, leaves military matters to those better suited than himself.

The quest for Martin's sword gets underway as Methuselah and Matthias study the message behind the tapestry, follow its clues to Martin's burial chamber, and more clues to a pointer that Martin has set specifically for Matthias to find the sword. Recall that Methuselah, who complains about the pains of aging and his eyesight in particular, has spotted two vital items: the swaying tree and the writing on the wall. He and Matthias are giddy with excitement as they slowly discover the meaning of the clues. In general terms, Matthias is growing more perceptive than his mentor but much of the discovery process depends on luck: a chance combination of words that brings a revelation of something previously unseen. The moles who recover Ambrose Spike's body are summoned to excavate a hidden entranceway to the Abbey's deep underground. Their dialect is again used to lighten the mood. Matthias insists that even if Martin's clues specify that he enter the burial chamber alone, Methuselah has earned the right to go along. Strapping on Martin's armor, Matthias takes on more of the Warrior's strength and persona. Methuselah observes that Matthias even resembles Martin's effigy. Methuselah finds in ancient documents the final key to the search but falls asleep,



annoying Matthias who, to hold down his temper, fiddles with a pile of rubble. Seeing something interesting beneath it, he summons the moles again, who clear away a circular space the size and exact contours of Matthias' new shield. Constance, like any good mole, recognizes symbols of the thirteen full moons in the year and pins down when they must gather to keep vigil for the final sign: at 1 AM atop the main gatehouse, looking northward.



Book 2, The Quest, Chapters 9-16

Book 2, The Quest, Chapters 9-16 Summary

The Abbot hosts a late-night dinner to honor Matthias and Methuselah and wish them well on their quest. At 12:45 AM Matthias, Methuselah, and Constance are on the roof with the shield in its niche. Joseph Bell booms once at the day's first hour. The shield reflects moonlight onto the weather vane above the roof. Surely the sword must be attached to it, but it is far too high to reach for anyone but an expert climber. Jess Squirrel (Silent Sam's mother) happily volunteers. The annals record no one having made this climb before. The early ascent is easy, but Jess slows in the second stage. The slate roof is treacherous but Jess reaches the weather vane. She is returning, presumably carrying the sword, when sparrows attack her. Archers try to drive them off. A stray arrow hits a young bird, whom Constance rescues and imprisons in a basket. Hailed for her bravery, Jess reports seeing where the sword had been attached, but it is gone. Later, as he broods about this failure, Matthias hears the bad-tempered sparrow, Warbeak, demand to be set free and threaten to kill him.

In Chapter 10 Sela assures Cluny that she is looking forward to her share of plunder from the Abbey in an attempt to double-cross him. Cluny allows her, accompanied by Redtooth and Fangburn, to search for herbs, knowing that she will smuggle the false plans to the Abbot. As the guards fall to fighting, Sela heads to the designated stump, where Constance steals the plans, alerts the guards, and kills Redtooth, but only after being wounded. Fangburn and Sela concoct something to tell Cluny. In Chapter 11 the Abbot admits that Cluny will not give up the fight and leaves the Abbey's salvation up to his generals. Matthias and Methuselah lament the sword's trail has gone cold. Methuselah observes that sparrows bother no one until Jess invades their space. The sword could be hidden in the roof. Matthias understands from Warbeak's routine threats that King Bill Sparra has a big sword.

In Chapter 12 Cluny is amused by Fangburn and Sela's conflicting tales and by how well his own plans are going. In the forest, Asmodeus gratefully collects another rat corpse. In Chapter 13 Matthias leads Warbeak about like a convict on a leash with a brick tied to her leg, and feeds her candied chestnut pieces when she behaves. Having found in old documents an inside route to the roof, Methuselah draws Matthias a map. Well-equipped but still tense with one another, Matthias and Warbeak begin the climb, while Basil uses his military experience to supervise reinforcing the gateway entrance with earthworks. Despite his bluster, Basil works as hard as anyone.

The climbers enter a gap in the wall that takes them halfway up the Great Hall and then up a series of ledges to a second, undocumented loft door. That puts them beneath the attic. Only once does Warbeak attack Matthias and only once does he threaten to throw her to her death. Realizing that the brick prevents her flying, she vows to be peaceful and Matthias accepts her word. He contemplates how he is learning the warrior's way. Meanwhile, Cluny considers filling three empty officer's slots, which soldiers covet both



for the prestige and for the added booty. Cheesethief, Killconey the ferret, and Darkclaw are the popular favorites, but there is no democracy in the Horde. In no hurry to decide, Cluny summons Killconey and Darkclaw to discuss tunneling. Killconey is sent to collect a team of ferrets, stoats, and weasels, while Darkclaw is promised a good reward for work to be decided on later. Later, as Cluny confers with the tunnelers, Sela and Chickenhound are caught eavesdropping and Cluny orders them executed immediately.

In Chapter 14 Matthias removes the brick but ties back Warbeak's wings to prevent her flying. The climbing is difficult and the drop terrifying. When Matthias loses his dagger, which he is using as a climbing tool, Warbeak saves his life. When he cannot open a hatchway, Warbeak vows not to escape if he unbinds her wings, and dutifully flies up and looses the latch. Matthias then removes the collar and they become friends. Warbeak discovers the final trapdoor. Entering, Matthias is surrounded by sparrows and faces crazy-eyed King Bull Sparra. In Chapter 15 the foxes' executioners throw their bodies into a ditch. Sela is dead, atop Chickenhound, who though badly wounded has successfully played dead. Showing no sense of loss, Chickenhound wobbles to the Abbey to sell his information. Dismayed by Chickenhound's condition, the Abbot keeps vigil until he regains consciousness. Amazed that the mice would care for him without payment, Chickenhound blurts out that the battering ram is a decoy for tunneling. Left alone, Chickenhound plots how to loot the Abbey's treasures, now that he is inside.

In Chapter 16 Warbeak's widowed mother, Dunwing, who is King Bull Sparra's sister, is grateful to have her daughter back. Matthias boldly claims credit, seeing that the King is determined to kill him. Matthias fights off the swarming soldiers, but realizes that he is hopelessly outnumbered. Warbeak and Dunwing plead Matthias' cause. Finding and confiscating Matthias' delicious candied chestnuts, the King provisionally spares the mouse's life. Clamping Matthias into the collar and leash, the King turns him over to Warbeak with orders to work him hard and to kick him often. To placate the made King, Matthias begins playing the dancing, rhyming fool, a non-threat.

Dunwing provides many insights into the chaotic nature of sparrow life and the story of how her brother has forgotten his promise to care for her after she is widowed in his defense. Despite the speed with which they speak, Matthias learns to get by in Sparra. Seeing Martin's Sword nowhere, Matthias assumes that it must be in the King's private chamber to which only Dunwing has access. Finding more candied chestnuts, Matthias accompanies her to offer them as a gift to the King. He eats them greedily and demands more - quickly. Realizing that Dunwing suspects that he has an agenda, Matthias tells his full story and Dunwing tells him that the scabbard matches his belt. She also relates the true story of how her show-off brother gets her brave husband, Greytail, killed by Asmodeus, who now owns the sword. The scabbard now hangs from the King's chair. Although he has never seen a snake, Matthias has heard how terrible they are, perhaps worse than Cluny. When the King remembers Matthias' belt, he summons him. Matthias wisely gives it up, asking in exchange for his freedom. He denies knowing about the sword and claims that he will die unless he goes home. Matthias is returned to Warbeak's care, happy to have survived and planning to steal back the belt when he grabs the scabbard.



Book 2, The Quest, Chapters 9-16 Analysis

The second part of Book 2 reveals where the Sword of Martin had once been hidden, that it no longer hangs there and is, thus, still lost, and sends Matthias on a quest to one more possible, highly dangerous location. That also turns up nothing but points to another, more hazardous location. It develops the character of Sam's mother, Jess Squirrel, shows a number of characters (most notably colorful Basil) in new lights, and introduces a new species: the sparrow.

Setting Matthias' new shield in the niche that they have found and cleared causes a beam of light to be reflected to the weather vane high above the roof. Recovery requires an expert climber and Jess undertakes the hazardous task happily. The climb turns from easy to difficult as the surfaces with which she deals change and the spectators are shown cringing in fear for her life. The writing is particularly tense. She is seen at the weather vane and is presumed to be carrying the sword as she returns, when masses of sparrows launch an attack. A stray arrow fired to drive the attackers away brings down a young bird, who is treated and held captive. It turns out to be a very important sparrow, Warbeak, niece of King Bull Sparra. "Sparra" designates both the bird's fast-paced language and their name for themselves. Methuselah, an accomplished linguist, is amazed that Matthias can so easily communicate with Warbeak. He continues learning and eventually becomes quite competent. The dialect can best be characterized as closely resembling that of Jar Jar in Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace. That Matthias' description of filthy, crowded, violent, chaotic life brilliantly captures the species' habits can be attested by anyone whose eaves have been commandeered by nesting sparrows. Ever observant, Methuselah realizes that the sparrows roosting in the Abbey eaves have never been troublesome until their space is invaded. This suggests that they are hiding something valuable up there.

Matthias and Warbeak are linked while this hypothesis is tested. Warbeak is at first Matthias' prisoner, wearing a collar and leash and trailing a brick to prevent her flying. Later the brick is removed but her wings are pinioned (tied to prevent the flight feathers from functioning). Finally, she is sufficiently trusted to be set free on her word. Swearing by one's mother's egg is a particularly solemn sparrow oath. The two become friends. Reaching the nest by another harrowing tale of climbing, the roles reverse: Matthias is put into the collar and leash and put in Warbeak's charge. She is too fearful to remove the collar but refrains from making him work and kicking him as the King orders. Matthias learns first-hand the humiliation of slavery. He learns from Warbeak's mother where the sword may currently reside. It had, indeed, hung from the weather vane, but been removed and lost by the King when he had been playing with it. Asmodeus now has it. Matthias has heard the name but never seen a snake. He knows the rumors about hypnotic eyes and lethal bite. Finding Martin's empty scabbard, Matthias determines to steal it whenever King Bull Sparra deigns to release him.

In other developments, Constance eliminates another of Cluny's key henchrats, Redtooth with whom she had tangled at the initial contact with the rats, and sets up Fangburn and Sela to disappoint Cluny. In fact, Cluny engineers everything to get the



false plans to the Abbot as he begins work on the tunnel through which his forces will enter the Abbey. When Sela and her son try to eavesdrop on this planning, they are eliminated - although Chickenhound miraculously survives and gains sanctuary. Claiming to want vengeance for his slain mother, Chickenhound gives up the tunneling plan, providing the defenders time to deflect it, but also to gain time inside the Abbey to loot its treasures at his convenience. Note the intense competition among Cluny's closest followers to attain officer status and his nonchalance about making anything official. He keeps everyone beholden to him personally, as any good despot does.



Book 2, The Quest, Chapters 17-23

Book 2, The Quest, Chapters 17-23 Summary

Basil and Jess conspire secretly to recover Martin's picture, thus shifting morale in both camps. They watch from the edge of Mossflower Woods as Cluny tyrannically drills his troops into shape and blames Darkclaw and Killconey for all of the trainees' mistakes. There is such a contrast with the good order inside the Abbey. As Cluny lashes out with his tail at incompetents, Basil appears and censures him for such bad form in an officer. Amazed, Cluny demands Basil's head but his entire mob cannot catch him. Watching, Basil bob, weave, and taunt, Jess giggles.

Cluny plays into Basil's hand by facing him one-on-one, using the war banner and his tail. Basil dodges both, only to trip in a pothole and goes down. As Cluny strikes but misses, Jess seizes Martin's picture and helps Basil limp into the woods. As they part, Basil takes the original back to the Abbey while Jess takes a crude replica (an old dishrag) with which to taunt Cluny. He wants her taken alive. Jess stays in the trees above the rats' climbing range, buying time for Basil to escape. Cluny offers to spare her loved ones inside the Abbey if she surrenders the trophy. Jess pretends to grow emotional while asking for Cluny's solemn promise before dropping the scrap. Cluny's excitement turns to fury as he realizes that he has been duped. Before any spears can be thrown, Jess escapes into the top of the trees. Reaching the Abbey wall, Jess realizes from sounds of joy that the original has arrived. She and Basil are hailed as heroes. Basil plays up his old war wound and Jess jokes about losing a dishrag. Methuselah begins sewing Martin back in place.

In Chapter 18 Matthias sleeps in Dunwing's nest, homesick for his own bed. Dunwing outlines an escape plan. The way they enter is blocked and Matthias is too heavy for sparrows to carry, so Warbeak will arrange for Jess to climb up with enough rope to lower Matthias. As a diversion, Dunwing spreads a big lie about Asmodeus dying, making it possible to reclaim the sword. Matthias must steal the belt and scabbard and be on the roof at noon. Dunwing's rumor spreads quickly. King Bull and his warriors race off, including Warbeak, who removes Matthias' collar and hopes to meet again. Matthias gets dizzy in the howling wind, but Dunwing forces him to be brave and, using his old climbing rope, helps him creep down the roof. At the edge, the stone gives way and Matthias falls the length of the rope. Dunwing loses her footing but hitches the rope into a niche long enough for Matthias to grab a gutter and drag himself up. Although exhausted, they race to the base of the weather vane, where Dunwing turns back to the court. As Jess approaches, hampered in the high wind by her large tail, King Bull swoops down, angry at finding nothing and - he now realizes - at being duped. The King bites Matthias' shoulder and claws him badly, but Matthias fights back with the scabbard, knocking the King unconscious. They topple together into space.

In Chapter 19 Chickenhound roams the Abbey, collecting valuables into a sack and destroying anything he dislikes. He laughs at Cluny arriving, only to find that the choice



items are gone. Racing through the kitchen, he bowls over Friar Hugo and heads into Cavern Hole with Hugo pursuing. He next sees Methuselah, just finishing his repair work on the tapestry. As Methuselah blocks his path and admonishes him for ingratitude, Chickenhound swings the heavy sack more heavily than he intends, and Methuselah falls instantly dead. Chickenhound escapes into the woods and runs headlong as he hears Joseph Bell toll. He hides his booty beneath a log, climbs in after it, and fearfully watches Constance and Ambrose race by. Chickenhound swells with pride and daydreams of a solo career in robbing. While considering appropriate names for himself, he hears Asmodeus' hiss.

Joseph Bell tolls again and the Abbey community gathers to mourn Methuselah and Matthias, whose body has not been found. Cornflower disagrees with the Abbot's characterization of young Matthias' death as a waste. Both had died heroes in the defense of the Abbey. As the mourners disperse, Constance and Brother Alf walk to the Pond, reminiscing. Alf spots King Bull Sparra's half-submerged body and summons the otters to search for Matthias. He is found in some rushes. The Abbot begins resuscitation as everyone crowds around. Seeing signs of life, Constance races Matthias to the infirmary. Joseph Bell tolls joyfully.

In Chapter 20 Cluny sees none of the beauty of dawn as he prepares for a hot day of combat. He warns that everyone must fight tooth-and-nail. Anyone who retreats or disobeys an order will die horribly. They face peaceful mice and the potential reward is great. Cluny makes an instant example of a wounded rat who murmurs about how the leader always stays safe behind them. The Horde marches noisily with the battering ram and Killconey's thundering drum. In Chapter 21 Methuselah says goodbye to Matthias in a feverish dream and commends him to Martin. Matthias next sees a hissing creature without arms or legs and runs toward it, but is restrained by a phantom Martin. The pain of Martin's grip changes into that of the Abbot's removing the tip of King Bull Sparrow's beak from his shoulder. Cornflower tells Matthias how lucky he is to be alive. Basil is in the next bed, playing up his war wound. The Abbot asks everyone to leave while he tells Matthias about Methuselah. Basil assures Matthias that his old friend would disapprove of the self-pity into which the news plunges him. Matthias apologizes. Greatly amused, Cornflower delivers the massive meal that Basil orders.

As they eat, Matthias asks Basil about vipers/adders in the local Woods. Basil believes they are extinct, but jumps when Matthias mentions the name Asmodeus. Matthias relates what he has learned from the sparrows about the sword and begs help for the sake of Methuselah, whose life's mission had been recovering it. Refusing Methuselah's company on his quest, Matthias accepts directions to the old sandstone quarry, where he should find the deadly Captain Snow. Basil unpins a campaign medal that Snow had once given him for saving his life. Basil falls asleep and at noon Matthias sneaks out, carrying food, dagger, and stout pole.

In Chapter 22 Matthias believes he may be nearing Snow's territory when a short, odd-looking mouse blocks his path. It is a shrew - and a hooligan - named Guosim. That is short for Guerrilla Union of Shrews in Mossflower. Fifty comrades surround Matthias, all with colorful headbands and swords, wanting to do him harm. An older shrew, Log-a-



Log, explains that to speak, one must hold a special black pebble. Shrews debate every statement made. Matthias takes it and tells about the tradition that Redwall mice may pass anywhere in peace. He next tells of the threat posed by Cluny and his quest to reclaim from Asmodeus the Sword of Martin, which will defeat Cluny. He needs to find Captain Snow. The shrews hide in terror of both names. Matthias assures them that he wants no help in the fighting, simply directions. He spends the night with some 400 of these masters of camouflage. They accompany him in the morning to the edge of the Woods and point out the abandoned barn where Snow may be napping. Matthias uses Basil's tactics to approach and, while climbing hay bails to search for the owl, stumbles into the open mouth of a huge marmalade cat.

In Chapter 23 the Abbey is already agitated by Matthias' latest disappearance. They cannot mount a search party, because everyone is needed to fight Cluny's Horde. Constance rejects a last call to surrender and the defenders fight off a first attack, taking advantage of the fact that the Horde is facing into the sun. While the enemy occupies the ditch and the meadow, out of range, Jess steals Killconey's abandoned drum. Cluny sits in a makeshift tent and orders the battering of the main gate to commence. The defenders arrows rain down but are outclassed by stronger rat archers. Cluny orders Killconey to begin tunnel digging from the ditch wall, under the road, and under the Abbey wall. By evening the battering has caused only light damage. Sam wonders how to use his mother's captured drum.

Book 2, The Quest, Chapters 17-23 Analysis

In the final portion of The Quest, the contrast in the two armed camps is again emphasized, Basil emerges as a key figure, Matthias escapes the sparrows and is nearly killed, and Brother Methuselah is, indeed, killed. Methuselah becomes Asmodeus' latest victim and it is strongly suggested that Asmodeus and Matthias must soon fight to the death.

Basil and Jess, both adventurous spirits and evasion experts, bond as friends and conspire to rescue Martin's picture from Cluny's clutches. They arrive at the edge of the woods in time to watch incredibly inept military drilling that provides light moments and illustrates Cluny's tyrannical style. When he insists on fighting Basil one-on-one, he is no match for the fast-hopping hare. When he strikes with his staff, the Martin portrait that hangs as a battle flag on it comes within Jess' reach and she makes off with it. The Horde's actions are generally slapstick, while Jess and Basil's are heroic. There is a hint that Jess might be taken in by Cluny's offer to spare her loved ones when he seizes the Abbey, but it is at most instantaneous. It suggests Asmodeus' nearly-irresistible fatal charm, which is soon to be seen more clearly than ever.

More details are given about how Asmodeus comes to possess Martin's sword and how Dunwing's husband dies in his service. That death gives her a personal stake in Matthias' escaping to slay the evil creature. Asmodeus and snakes in general are at this point viewed with awe and horror as near-mythical creatures. Dunwing reveals herself as a master of trickery and sparrows as a rumor-loving species. King Bull demands that



all of his warriors follow him on his quest for the sword and leaves them behind when nothing is immediately found. He is as tyrannical and disorganized as Cluny but far more naïve and headstrong. Returning angry, King Bull sees Matthias escaping and goes berserk. Matthias displays his growing warrior skills and defeats him essentially unarmed - using his scabbard as a club. The two plunge from the high roof, and the close of Chapter 18 strongly suggests that Matthias has died.

This impression carries over into the next chapter, showing the Abbey mourning the loss of two key leaders, one exceedingly old and one all too young. Cornflower, apparently widowed before she weds, corrects the Abbot on the value of lives well lived, long or short. Matthias is, of course, found barely alive and resuscitated and secretly resumes his quest. A large part of his motivation is the fact that Methuselah has died. The emotional narrative makes clear that Chickenhound does not kill the old man intentionally and rather regrets the accident, but he shows no remorse. Methuselah, like Chickenhound's own mother, had been in the wrong place at the wrong time. Having a keen survival instinct and knowing which fearsome member of the Abbey is likely to track him, Chickenhound flees into the woods, where he fittingly falls victim to Asmodeus. Pride comes before the fall, as Chickenhound is daydreaming about setting himself up as a leader of thieves beholden only to himself.

Matthias' sallying forth is prefaced by a rather mystical anointment scene. Methuselah comes in a dream to Matthias as he lies on the operating table, having King Bull's beak tip removed from his shoulder. He sees the future - the hissing Asmodeus - and the past - a phantom Martin, restraining him. Methuselah hands his ward over to the Warrior's care. Note the depth of Matthias' mourning as he learns that Methuselah is dead. Basil rather conventionally challenges Matthias to keep a stiff upper lip for Methuselah's sake. It is rare that the text turns this cliché. Basil tells Matthias how to get to the old quarry and provides an introduction to an old comrade-in-arms who, he warns, is as likely instantly to devour a young field mouse as to help with his quest.

Preparatory to Matthias' final battles, he meets an army of shrews, whose penchant for democratic debate is described at some length. However attractive it might seem in contrast to Cluny's and King Bull's dictatorial ways, the shrews' system results in stalemate and inaction until finally set aside in Book 3. As Matthias reaches the abandoned farm, the Abbey's main gate comes under sustained attack. Note that Jess steals Killconey's abandoned drum on the assumption that it can somehow be used as a weapon. It will, indeed, thanks to Silent Sam's innovation. As Book 2 ends, moles and other digging creatures occupy center stage both on offense and defense, while the pounding on the gate offers the drama.



Book 3, The Warrior, Chapters 1-8

Book 3, The Warrior, Chapters 1-8 Summary

As the battering continues rhythmically and other fighting is sporadic, Cluny inspects the tunnel and demands that it be dug faster and better or the diggers will die. He suggests that he will promote Cheesethief, which makes the battering team work even harder. On the wall, experienced Basil gives an honest but gloomy assessment, setting everyone to thinking about how to stop the ramming. Jess and Sam produce a method: a drum full of hornets to push over the side. It is followed by oil to make the ram too slick to pick up again. The Horde is so demoralized that Cluny dares not let his temper flare. He lets them recover while going to his tent to plan. Carpenters and smiths are lowered to repair the gate and Constance constructs a giant bow with which to assassinate Cluny at long range in his tent. Cluny, however, helped by 30 rats retrieves the hay wagon and circles into the woods, leaving Cheesethief in charge. The ambitious rat puts on the warlord's cloak and is studying maps when the fatal shot arrives.

In Chapter 2 Matthias screams from the cat's mouth but is quickly spat out. Squire Julian Gingivere speaks with contempt about Snow, his former barn mate but a terrible barbarian whom he has driven out. As he takes Matthias to see Snow in a hollow tree nearby, Julian says that if they refrain from arguing, the shrews may visit his barn for provisions. If gluttonous Snow apologizes, he may also come home. As soon as Julian leaves, Snow attacks, but Matthias dodges and shows Basil's medal. Snow fights hard not to eat Matthias before asking why he has come. Snow laughs at the idea of Matthias fighting Asmodeus and admits that he would not want to try. They bet the medal against a promise never again to eat mice or shrews and an apology to Julian. Snow points Matthias to the quarry across the river. He must explore the passages and hope not to be found by the speedy adder. Snow is still mocking Matthias as he rejoins the quarreling shrews. Blaming them for not warning him about the cat and telling of Snow's promise never to eat shrews again, Matthias demands that they lead him to the quarry. As Log-a-Log and Guosim fight over whether to obey rules that forbid crossing the river, Matthias angrily storms away.

In Chapter 3 Constance realizes that they have failed to kill Cluny, who claims that Cheesethief is a traitor whom he has set up to be eliminated by the defenders. The Horde rejoices in killing two birds with one stone, as Cluny jokes. Cluny hears about progress digging and about the capture of some 20 pacifist dormice. Their leader, Plumpen, stands up to Cluny, but is told to obey or die. Cluny considers a devious way to use them to get inside the Abbey. Meanwhile, Jess observes to Ambrose that the Horde seems to have slacked off and Cluny is missing. Winifred Otter agrees: there must be an unknown plot under way. The moles believe that the enemy will surface in the southwest corner. The Abbot wonders why Matthias is missing the battle.

In Chapter 4 Matthias awakens in the cold dawn to find that the shrews have returned. They have voted to help him. Reaching the river that separates the woods from the



quarry, Guosim explains that Log-a-Log will ferry them across on a large floating tree trunk. It is a hereditary appointment. Asmodeus tracks in the mud show that he has gone hunting. The shrews spread out along the shore hiding, to watch for his return. They need to watch how he enters the quarry. As nightfalls they find Guosim incoherent., having seen Asmodeus drag off Mingo. The band follows the snake's trail into the desolate quarry. Matthias, Guosim, and Log-a-Log alone enter. Figuring to find the snake sleeping off his recent meals, they draw their rapiers and begin searching and poking. Guosim accidentally slips down the hole.

In Chapter 5 Cluny waits for nightfall to make use of the siege tower built under Killconey's supervision. He shows them how to use fulcrums and leverage, block and tackle, to get the wrecked hay cart out of the ditch and into the woods. It then becomes the base for a cumbersome tower that Cluny himself helps haul into position at the southeast corner of the Abbey, ready for select fighters to enter, kill the defenders, and open the Abbey, while Fangburn wastes many soldiers in creating a diversion at the main gate. Bringing soup to the defenders, Cornflower is first to see the platform appear with a villainous rat atop it. Her shriek makes Brother Rufus spill his mug into the attacker's face; Cornflower follows up by hurling a lantern at the tower, setting it ablaze. Some 30 rats who are in the process of climbing, ignore orders to continue, and scatter. Cluny is pulled off just before the rig collapses. He returns to the ditch, muttering incomprehensibly. Some wonder if he has lost his mind. Fortunately for the Abbey, the fire does not spread to the Woods. Cornflower, the heroine, wonders what Matthias would think.

In Chapter 6 Matthias and the shrews enter a high, broad tunnel whose sides are covered with reptilian symbols. There are side tunnels and chambers. At a fork, they split up, marking their way so they can get back. Matthias shudders, finding himself amidst discarded snake skins, before emerging into a vast cavern. In the middle is a shimmering lake. Hearing the hiss echo, Matthias fights off panic. Heartened to see Guosim sitting by the pool, he runs over - only to see her topple, dead. Matthias stumbles away and resumes his search. Entering a narrow tunnel he comes face-to-face with the sleeping adder. On the far wall hangs Martin's Sword. Matthias inches tensely past, once thinking that Asmodeus wakes up. He lifts the sword down with reverence and feels reborn as he holds it. There is no room to swing it, so Matthias must sneak back past Asmodeus into the main cavern. Having just seen Guosim's body, Log-a-Log cries out in terror. Asmodeus wakes up.

In Chapter 7 everyone turns to Constance for leadership. She turns to Foremole to stave off the tunneling attack. Cluny sits, staring, in his tent. When Killconey reports that the tunnel is ready, he is indifferent. His lieutenants rally to lead the charge, lest the army desert. The tunnel is shored up for safety. Meanwhile, inside the Abbey, a mole overhears everything. The defenders mark off the path of the underground excavation and assemble on both sides to wait. Two huge cauldrons of boiling water stand by. As Cluny dreams about all of his dead lieutenants, the diggers break through and Darkclaw climbs out. He cannot move before the cauldrons are tipped, filling the tunnel like a tidal wave. The defenders leap into the marked lines and collapse the earth. A heap of stones seals it. Battered rats escape and flee.



In Chapter 8 Asmodeus in a fury moves to reclaim his sword. Matthias and Log-a-Log plunge into the first small passage they see. It is a dead-end. Matthias frantically hacks at the soft sandstone, digging around a tree root, as Asmodeus, advancing slowly, taunts them. They scramble through at the last second into a small chamber. Asmodeus nearly hypnotizes his victims before Martin appears and orders Matthias to behead the adder.

Book 3, The Warrior, Chapters 1-8 Analysis

The first half of Book 3 follows the battle for the Abbey as well as Matthias' quest to reclaim the Sword of Martin. The two threads interweave, coordinating what is happening in each locale at the same time. The cat, owl, and shrews introduced at the end of Book 2 are sketch in greater detail, Matthias faces deadly Asmodeus, and races to the Abbey, hoping that he is not too late for the final confrontation.

The defenders attempt to assassinate Cluny, killing his assistant who has pridefully put on his battle gear, knock out the battering ram threat by an imaginative twist on Greek Fire, using hornets to deliver the fiery pain and oil to make further pounding impossible. Credit goes to Silent Sam. They also by pure luck spot Cluny's siege tower, a variant on the tree-and-plank fiasco and burn it to the ground, inflicting heavy casualties. By the time that the defenders detect and route the tunneling operation by boiling water - note that the lion's share of unfair fighting is done by the defenders - Cluny is on the brink of a nervous breakdown. He recovers, however, and enforces a third plan, which relies on coercion rather than brute force or subtlety, both of which have failed him. He convinces a gentle mouse whose family he holds captive that he either infiltrates the Abbey and lets the Horde in or loses his family. Cluny thus takes the Abbey and is about to kill the defeated as he had promised from the beginning when they refuse to surrender peacefully, when Matthias returns. The two story lines merge.

During his quest, Matthias meets Squire Julian Gingivere, the cat into whose mouth he plunges at the end of Book 2. An aristocrat who has fallen on bad times, Julian lives alone in the abandoned farm, ever since his barn mate, the unmannered Captain Snow leaves. A vegetarian, Julian cannot abide Snow's barbaric eating habits and claims to want no reconciliation. In the end, this is proved to be on both their sides bluff and bluster and they make up, forced by the bet they make with Matthias that he cannot kill Asmodeus. Snow is depicted with the aggressive nature of an owl whose very genes tell him to eat Matthias than guide him to Asmodeus' lair. There are some interesting observations about inborn traits. Asmodeus' hunting nature receives no such consideration. He is played as a quintessentially evil being. In a novel void of religion there is no allusion to the Temptation scene in the Book of Genesis, but the name Asmodeus refers to a character in Jewish mythology.

Before Matthias comes face-to-face with Asmodeus, the adder kills a shrew and, for shock value, leaves the body propped up to be found. When they meet, Asmodeus is charming and hypnotic. Like Cluny he offers the enticement of a fast, painless death rather than prolonged suffering. Cluny is able to deliver either; it is hard to see how a



poisonous reptile could torture a victim for a long time. At any rate, the temptation is great and it takes another apparition of Martin to snap Matthias' mind free. He promptly kills Asmodeus. Note Matthias' philosophizing about how unlikely it is that evil could dwell in as beautiful a setting as the quarry with all of its strata of rich colors.



Book 3, The Warrior, Chapters 9-15

Book 3, The Warrior, Chapters 9-15 Summary

Next morning, Matthias informs Julian that he has conquered and reminds him of his vow to the shrews and to Snow. Admiring the sword, Julian warns against becoming too ambitious, and using the sword only for good - and wisely. Snow and Julian agree to share blame for their breakup and return together to the barn. Newly-confident, Matthias laughs for the first time in days and everyone joins in. Meanwhile, Cluny is also renewed. He gives them a day to recuperate, during which the defenders make repairs and collect rubble to drop on the enemy when it attacks again. Cluny rejoices that they are making his future castle stronger. He summons the dormice prisoners, explains to Plumpen how to sneak into the Abbey and open the door. Otherwise his family perishes. Dressed in a habit, Plumpen blends in with the workforce, curses his fate at having to betray these wonderful mice, and, as the Abbey sleeps, greases the bolts on the north door and signals.

In Chapter 11 Matthias and the shrews celebrate before Matthias and Log-a-Log go to seek the sparrows' help. Warbeak and Matthias reunite joyfully but she worries that Cluny is nearly inside the Abbey. Log-a-Log without a vote orders the 500 shrews to force-march to the Abbey. In Chapter 12 the Abbot and his generals awaken as prisoners of the rats Cluny orders the Abbot's throne placed on a dais in the yard and the ringleaders, bound, brought before him. He changes the names of the Abby and its facilities. The Abbot orders everyone to be calm in the face of the Horde's advantage. In Chapter 13 Warbeak and Log-a-Log force Matthias to rest. The sparrows open all of the doors for the Guerrilla Shrews to enter and are ready, 1,000 strong, for battle.

In Chapter 14 Cluny in battle gear strides through the ranks of prisoners and takes his seat. The Abbot refuses to kneel before him. Basil lectures Cluny on what a worthless commander he is. Cluny is renewing his threat to kill everyone for opposing him when the Warrior Mouse emerges from the Great Hall. Cluny is taken aback. Matthias advances on the cowering rat, declaring that he will kill any invader who moves. As Joseph Bell tolls, the sky fills with Sparra warriors and the grounds teem with Guerrilla Shrews as the final conflict begins. Matthias kills Killconey and advances on Cluny, who repeatedly swings his barbed tail at him, hurls his chair, grabs a pike, and attacks. Around them, as they lock in combat, the rats are slaughtered.

Cluny is far stronger and fights dirty. He dashes into the Great Hall and Matthias follows. Each badly wounds the other and ignores his own pain. Matthias cuts off the deadly tip of Cluny's tail, but it remains a formidable weapon. Cluny backs Matthias to where he can overpower him, but at the last moment, Matthias flees up the belfry. Cluny threatens to kill Friar Hugo unless Matthias drops the sword and comes down. Instead, Matthias cuts the rope holding Joseph Bell. It drops, crushing Cluny, dead. Redwall is saved, but Abbot Mortimer lies dying, a victim of Cluny's barb. The Abbot declares death a part of life and is ready to go. He appoints Brother Alf to succeed him, welcomes the shrews to



use the Abbey's services whenever needed, orders Matthias to forget about becoming a brother but to serve as the Abbey's Champion. Matthias and Cornflower are to marry. Mortimer dies, advising his friends never to cease wondering at the goodness of life.

Chapter 15, penned by John Churchmouse, the Abbey's new Recorder, summarizes the year that has passed since Mortimer's death. It is his first anniversary and a banquet is being held. Silent Sam has begun talking and has attached to Matthias and Constance's baby, Mattimeo. Shattered Joseph Bell has been recast into two smaller bells, Matthias and Methuselah. The crops and orchard are doing well. The gatehouse has been expanded into a cottage for Matthias and Constance. John breaks off writing to join the festivities. He invites readers to visit whenever they are nearby.

Book 3, The Warrior, Chapters 9-15 Analysis

Hard on the heels of his first victory using the Sword of Martin, Matthias makes Julian and Snow reconcile as they had promised. Julian delivers an oration on excessive ambition and the need to be wise to use the sword for good rather than evil. He denies that the sword contains magic powers as the myth suggests. It is morally neutral, although its only purpose is to kill. Matthias is surprised that the cat quotes Methuselah's words. The story grows a little muddled as Matthias reunites with Warbeak and she rallies her warriors to the cause. The shrews are drafted by their leader who is finally fed up with debating and voting. They head to the Abbey as fast as possible. One wonders why the cat and/or owl is not pressed into service to get them there faster, but it would probably ruin the suspense.

Poor Plumpen infiltrates the Abbey, admits the Horde, and is hit in the head for his troubles. He recovers and is rescued by sparrows, who use the same methodology to open the remaining minor gates for Matthias and his relief army of 1,500 skilled fighters, Sparra warriors and Guerrilla Shrews. They far outnumber the Horde, who have proven rather mediocre soldiers, disillusioned and probably hungry. They get an emotional lift by the successful infiltration and prospects of treasure, but prove no match for the sparrows and shrews - or the civilians of the Abbey once they are liberated. For a while, however, it appears that Cluny has prevailed. He adopts the pomp of a Roman conqueror, seating himself on a judgment throne, weighing the lives of the defeated in his paw. Several of the generals and Jess lash out verbally and/or physically, but the Abbot advises acceptance. He refuses to bow to Cluny, however, unless it will spare innocent lives.

As judgment is about to fall, Matthias emerges dramatically from the Great Hall, looking as though he has just stepped out of the tapestry and proclaiming, "I am that is!" (pg. 324). This is, of course, the anagram of Matthias' name and seemingly a reference to Yahweh, the name God gives to himself at the Burning Bush in the Book of Exodus. Both wreak vengeance after declaring the essence of their nature. Matthias and Cluny lock in deadly combat, which sweeps from the courtyard into the Great Hall in classic swashbuckling style. Only by deception does Matthias slay the stronger Cluny. There is



no magic in the sword. Matthias is quick to justify his lie about dropping his sword and coming down. He comes down after crashing the great bell down on the rat leader.

This second climax ended, the novel quickly and mournfully wraps up with the death of Abbot Mortimer, a victim of Cluny's poisoned barb. The Abbot delivers a soliloquy on death being a part of life and arranges the legacy he wants to leave: Brother Alf as his successor and Matthias as the Abbey's champion. Matthias and Cornflower to marry. Chapter 15 functions as an epilogue, set a year later, showing what has happened to many of the characters. All is well in the Abbey. A second banquet, whose preparation is detailed, balances out the opening one. The first had marked Mortimer's jubilee as Abbot; this one marks the first anniversary of his death. The rose had bloomed on the last day of Mortimer's life. John Churchmouse, the Abbey's new Recorder, who succeeds Brother Methuselah, breaks off his narrative sharply in order to join the festivities.



Characters

Matthias

The protagonist of the novel *Redwall*, Matthias is at the beginning an orphaned young field mouse, taken in at Redwall Abbey as a novice and preparing to enter the Order of Redwall. Matthias is naturally clumsy, tripping over over-sized sandals as he goes about his chores. Kindly old Abbot Mortimer takes a special interest in him. When Cluny the Scourge and his band of 500 rats take over nearby St. Ninian's Church and warn the inhabitants of the Abbey must choose between surrender and death, Matthias becomes filled with the spirit of Martin the Warrior, the Abbey's founder, whose legend he gradually learns, thanks to Brother Methuselah, the aged Recorder and Gatekeeper of Redwall Abbey. Methuselah becomes Matthias' mentor.

In the course of their joint quest for Martin's Sword, Matthias finds Martin's belt and learns that there is a matching sword and scabbard. A riddle carved into stone beneath the tapestry that depicts the Abbey's history reveals that Matthias is "I—Am That Is," an anagram of his name that suggests almighty power. Matthias sets off to find the missing items. At the same time, Matthias gradually falls in love with beautiful Cornflower Fieldmouse, a refugee, whom he marries after the climactic battle and together they become the parents of a son Mattimeo. At the time of Methuelah's brutal death, Matthias has just escaped from the claws of King Bull Sparra, whose subjects roost in the Abbey's roof. Fighting Bull, Matthias plunges from the high roof into the Abbey Pond, but miraculously survives. Matthias secretly carries on the quest.

While a prisoner of King Bull Sparra, Matthias recovers the scabbard and learns that the sword has been stolen by a feared adder, Asmodeus Poisontooth. He learns from a band of shrews that Asmodeus has his lair in a nearby Quarry. Matthias recovers the sword, is pursued by the snake, and nearly hypnotized into accepting a swift, painless death. Martin's spirit appears to him and breaks the spell.

Having beheaded Asmodeus, Matthias races to the Abbey at the head of some 500 Guerrilla Shrews, who are augmented by 1,000 sparrow warriors, led by King Bull's niece, Warbeak, with whom he had become close friends during his imprisonment. They arrive too late to prevent the inhabitants from being captured and threatened with death, but in time to confront Cluny, who has been suffering nightmares about Martin/Matthias and the sword. Cluny comes close to defeating Matthias, but the young warrior outsmarts him. The dying Abbot Mortimer instructs Matthias to renounce plans to join the order and instead to become the Abbey's Champion. Matthias obediently - and gladly - marries Cornflower and they set up housekeeping in the expanded guardhouse at the main gates. A year later, they become parents of a son, Mattimeo, whose name is a contraction of Matthias, Mortimer, and Methuselah.



Cluny the Scourge

The novel's chief antagonist, Cluny is a war-battered rat who fears no one. He covers a missing eye with a patch and swings an unusually long tail as a whip. Some say that Cluny is a bilge rat, others that he is a Portuguese rat. Cluny's battle armor consists of a black cloak made of bat wings that is fastened at his throat with a mole skull. He adds a poisoned barb to his savage tail and the horns of a stag beetle to his battle helmet. Cluny's second-in-command carries his standard: a pole with a ferret's skull fixed atop. Later, Cluny adds to it the portrait of Martin the Warrior, which he orders cut out of the Redwall Abbey's prized tapestry. This taunt inspires the defenders of the Abbey to fight.

Cluny leads a horde of 500 rats - sewer, tavern, water, and dockside - to the environs of Redwall Abbey after establishing a reputation for ferocity. His name is used to frighten children into behaving. His stated goal is to turn Redwall Abbey into "Cluny's Castle," and after multiple failures (including direct attack, battering ram, siege tower, and tunneling) he succeeds, for a single night, after forcing a dormouse to betray the inhabitants by threatening his family. Cluny's horde swarms in and captures the key leaders. Cluny claims the Abbot's throne and renames all of the Abbey's features, and is on the point of ordering mass executions when Matthias the Warrior appears with an army of shrews and sparrows.

Cluny has been suffering nightmares about the legendary Martin the Warrior, founder of the Abbey, and his magical sword, which Matthias has recovered. A final dream indicates that Cluny defeats the dream warrior, so he confronts Matthias with overconfidence. Cluny's horde is systematically defeated as Cluny and Matthias face off, one-on-one. Matthias cuts off the tip of Cluny's tail, eliminating the poison barb, and wounds him grievously, but is no match for his physical strength. When Matthias flees up the steeple, Cluny takes Friar Hugo prisoner, but releases him on Matthias' promise to come down and accept his fate. Instead, Matthias cuts the rope holding up the great Joseph Bell and Cluny is crushed to death beneath its massive weight.

Cluny's Horde consists of four captains, all of whom are killed during the novel: Darkclaw, Redtooth, Cheesethief, and Killconey. Killconey, a ferret, is the only non-rat officer. He augments his force by drafting various vermin living in the area of the Abbey, warning that they face horrible death at his hands if they do not fight valiantly. Having survived assassination and seen his diverse plans thwarted, Cluny is close to a nervous breakdown. When all else fails, he forces a hapless doormouse to sneak in and open the gates for the Horde. Perhaps his most heartless deed is kicking and leaving to die his old colleague, Shadow, after Shadow steals for him the portrait of Martin. Other named members of the Horde include Fangburn, Mangefur, Scumnose, Skullface, Frogblood, Ragear, Scragg, and Wormtail.

Brother Methuselah

One of the oldest members of Redwall Abbey, Methuselah has spent his life learning the languages of all animals and the history of the surrounding countryside. As the



Recorder and Gatekeeper of Redwall Abbey, Methuselah entertains travelers of all sorts and collects and records their tales. Recalling only three summers in which the young rosebuds in the garden had remained dormant so late into June, Methuselah dubs it the "Summer of the Late Rose" (pg. 19). He does not live to see the flowering.

Methuselah, who wears glasses to read and has lost a bit of short-term memory, confirms from his Chronicle the reality of a ferocious warlord, Cluny the Scourge. He interests a clumsy young novice, Matthias, in the legend of of Martin the Warrior, founder of the Abbey and sees in Matthias a reincarnation of the hero. Methuselah relates how Martin arrives at the Abbey at Matthias' age, impulsive, but a natural leader.

Methuselah and Matthias begin a long quest for Martin's lost and supposedly magical sword. Following arcane clues and deciphering a series of riddles, the pair discovers Martin's long-lost tomb deep beneath the Abbey. He becomes childlike with glee but also acknowledges that Matthias is gaining wisdom so rapidly that he has surpassed him. There is not a hint of jealousy.

Methuselah is meticulously stitching a portrait of Martin back into the tapestry from which it has been stolen and blasphemously used as Cluny the Scourge's battle flag when he is struck dead by a young fox, Chickenhound, who has looted the Abbey and is fleeing. Methuselah bravely blocks the bandit's path and is struck in the head by the bag of loot. Chickenhound had not intended to hit him so hard, but is unrepentant. Methuselah dies in Friar Hugo's arms. His loss is deeply mourned by the community, along with young Matthias, who is at that point believed to be dead. All agree that heroism is not limited to any particular age group. Methuselah's spirit appears to a gravely-wounded Matthias to give him over to the direction of Martin's spirit. When Matthias slays the great adder, Asmodeus Poisonteeth, it is partly in honor of Methuselah.

At the end of the novel, Methuselah is succeeded as Recorder by John Churchmouse, a refugee and his crowded office in the Gatehouse is remodeled into a home for Matthias and his bride. One of the bells cast from the remnants of the great Joseph Bell is named in honor of Methuselah, and Matthias and Cornflower name their first-born baby, Mattimeo, a contraction of Matthias, Mortimer, and Methuselah's names.

Ambrose Spike

A hedgehog introduced as a trivial character, entertaining with slight-of-hand tricks during Abbot Mortimer's jubilee celebration, Ambrose proves himself a valiant and effective warrior during the Late Rose Summer Wars. Ambrose goes out into the woods and meadow to summon all creatures to sanctuary in the Abby, depending on his spiky hide to protect him from the enemy. When put upon by armed rats, Ambrose sustains a serious wound, but crawls back almost to the gates before collapsing. He is rescued by a team of burrowing moles. Copious amounts of October's nutbrown ale restore him enough to report on the capture of the Vole family. Ambrose often occupies key positions in the subsequent fighting, which results in the liberation of the Abbey.



Brother Alf (Abbot Mordalfus)

A great fisherman and a mouse brother of Redwall Abbey, Alf and the clumsy novice Matthias caught a huge grayling (game fish) to grace the table at Abbot Mortimer's jubilee dinner. Alf appears sporadically throughout the novel until the climax, when Mortimer, while dying, names Alf as his successor. He dislikes having to take the official name of Abbot Mordalfus. He calls for another great feast to celebrate the first anniversary of Mortimer's death.

Asmodeus Poisonteeth

A giant adder who lives in an ancient sandstone quarry northeast of Redwall Abbey, Asmodeus is feared by all of the woodland creatures in the Mossflower Woods, which lies south of there. His eyes are said to hypnotize victims before his poison dispatches them instantly. Wherever he goes, he hisses his name, even in his sleep. Years before the novel opens, Asmodeus steals the Sword of Martin from King Bull Sparra and kills the king's brother-in-law. Protagonist Matthias the Warrior learns this story and tracks down the fearsome adder in its lair. Asmodeus by then has already killed and dragged off several of Cluny the Scourge's officers, so fear of him is spreading. Matthias and the shrews track Asmodeus to a narrow cave, where he sleeps off a day of successful hunting. Behind Asmodeus hangs the sword. Matthias retrieves it and flees to a more open area of the system of caves, where he can swing the sword freely. Asmodeus awakens, heads him off, but is too bulky to get past an obstacle. Asmodeus nearly hypnotizes the invaders, telling Matthias how he can give him entry into peaceful death, but the spirit of Martin the Warrior appears to Matthias and breaks the spell. Matthias beheads Asmodeus.

Constance Badger

A female badger, Constance is considered slow of thought and is assigned purely physical tasks at Redwall Abbey, like pulling around the cart. She is doing so on the night that Cluny the Scourge and his Horde arrives riding an out-of-control hay cart. Plunging off the road to avoid a collision, Constance takes charge, returning her charges to the Abbey safely and reporting seeing 500 armed rats led by the Devil himself heading their way. Constance quickly emerges as the Abbey's most consistent and effective fighters during the siege.

Constant is both an effective military planner and an imposing physical force, lifting the massive abbey table and threatening to hurl it at Cluny if he does not leave after an initial consultation under a white flag. When Cluny sneaks into the Abbey by night, one of his priorities is to immobilize Constance under a net. Once freed, she fights valiantly and effectively until victory is won.



The Churchmouse Family

John Churchmouse is a proud but poor mouse, the fourth generation Churchmouse to live in the ruins of St. Ninian's Church, together with his unnamed wife and their twin children, Tim and Tess. At the conclusion of Abbot Mortimer's jubilee celebration, the kindly Abbot directs that leftover food be provided the family secretly, to prevent embarrassment. Mortimer assigns Matthias, who with Cornflower Fieldmouse has enjoyed playing with the twins, to accompany the family home, to spare them a long walk. Constance Badger pulls the cart. The family is forced to abandon its home when Cluny the Scourge seizes St. Ninian's. After the Abbey's successful defense, John Churchmouse becomes its new Recorder, succeeding Brother Methuselah. John writes the final words of the novel, summarizing events of the year following the siege. He breaks off his narrative sharply in order to join the festivities.

Cornflower Fieldmouse

Cornflower is a kind and pretty young field mouse whose long eyelashes, bright eyes, soft fur, and white teeth attract the young protagonist Matthias, a novice in Redwall Abbey. She lives with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fieldmouse, who take refuge in Redwall Abbey when Cluny the Scourge occupies the countryside. Finding Matthias weeping before the tapestry image of Martin the Warrior, Cornflower declares that Matthias is also a true warrior and ties her favorite headband around his sword arm as a token of his bravery.

During the siege, Cornflower with calm and efficiency prepares and delivers food and drink to the sentries to help them stay awake. During one delivery, she swiftly reacts to the sight of a siege tower rising on the southwest corner of the Abbey. She throws boiling hot soup at the first rat who comes over the wall and then a lantern, which burns the siege tower to the ground. Cornflower is hailed as a hero, but finds the recognition embarrassing. At the end of the novel, Cornflower and Matthias marry and set up housekeeping in the expanded guardhouse at the main gates. A year later, they are parents of a son, Mattimeo.

Foremole

A title said to have been first bestowed by Martin the Warrior on the greatest of the digging creatures, Foremole serves thereafter as a personal name for the incumbent. Moles like to be on or under the ground rather than high atop the walls of Redwall Abbey as they take part in its defense against Cluny the Scourge's Horde. Foremole and his team are shown digging tunnels to retrieve the gravely-wounded Ambrose Spike from the open field outside the walls and rapidly sealing the trench that Cluny's henchmen dig for him. They also excavate the middle step between the Great Hall and Cavern Hole for Matthias and Brother Methuselah, uncovering Martin the Warrior's long-lost burial site. Walt and Doby perform this secret task. Moles speak a "countrified" dialect (pg. 287) that is difficult to decipher but humorous once the effort is made.



Basil Stag Hare

A veteran member of the Forty-seventh Hare Border Rangers, Basil is an expert in camouflage and a voracious eater. By choice he lives alone as a bachelor in Mossflower Woods until he meets and becomes close friends with a novice of Redwall Abbey, Matthias, who is on his way to becoming a legendary warrior. Basil distracts Cluny's Horde while Matthias sneaks into the St. Ninian's Church to steal back the tapestry of Martin the Warrior, which Cluny the Scourge is blasphemously using as his battle flag. Basil is slightly injured during the skirmish and maximizes the emotional effect when he returns to the Abbey. During Cluny's siege, Basil strikes dashing military poses and helps organize the defenders. Although he acts like an officer, he describes himself to Cornflower as a "lancejack" (lance corporal; pg. 138). He lends Matthias a medal once bestowed on him by an owl, Captain Snow, as an introduction and request that Snow help Matthias in his quest for Martin the Warrior's lost sword. Basil's first name is given to him by his mother; Hare is his surname. He gives himself the middle name Stag because he so admires that noble species.

Friar Hugo

Redwall Abbey's cook, a huge, fat, dimple-cheeked, enthusiastic mouse, Hugo is in his glory at Abbot Mortimer's Jubilee celebration dinner, producing a perfectly-baked Grayling à la Redwall. Later, he witnesses the death (unpremeditated but vicious) of Brother Methuselah by Chickenhound, who while fleeing the Abbey carrying a heavy sack of loot. He bowls Hugo over and escapes the Abbey, leaving Methuselah to die in Hugo's arms. During the siege of the Abbey, Hugo is kept busy providing food and drink for the defenders atop the walls.

Martin the Warrior

An heroic figure who, long before the novel opens, arrives at Redwall Abbey during the winter when the Founders are under attack by foxes, vermin, and wildcats. He is impulsive and a natural leader, superior to those older and more experienced than himself. Martin fights off the enemy, single-pawed. Seriously wounded, he is carried to the Abbey and miraculously saved, but then sets aside his sword and becomes a brother, under vow to heal and help the unfortunate. Legends surround Martin's Sword, which is subsequently lost without a trace. An old brother, Methuselah, and young novice, Matthias, go on a quest, assembling obscure clues and eventually finding Martin's tomb deep beneath the Abbey. The effigy strongly resembles Matthias. Martin's spirit haunts the antagonist, Cluny the Scourge during vivid nightmares and encourages Matthias to be a warrior like himself. Matthias finds Martin's Sword in the lair of the great adder, Asmodeus Poisontooth and Martin appears to Matthias to snap him out of a hypnotic trance and kill the snake. Matthias becomes virtually inseparable from Martin in the climactic battle.



Abbot Mortimer

The stern-looking but kind-hearted leader of Redwall Abbey, Mortimer, a mouse, watches over the development of a clumsy novice, Matthias, as the novel opens and by the end of the novel sees that Matthias is destined to be the Abbey's official Champion. Mortimer's jubilee (fiftieth anniversary) is celebrated on the day that Cluny the Scourge arrives and declares his intentions to take over the Abbey. A pacifist at heart, Mortimer wisely leaves the defense of the Abbey to his militant colleagues, working assiduously throughout the Late Rose Summer Wars to care for the wounded and to assure that a large number of refugees are fed. Standing bound before victorious Cluny, Mortimer refuses to bow his knee, unless it will save the innocent. Dying of poison inflicted by a barb attached to Cluny's tail, Mortimer makes final arrangements: Matthias is to marry Cornflower Fieldmouse and become the Champion. Brother Alf is to be his successor. Mortimer dies happy in what he has seen and accomplished in life. The novel ends with another great feast, celebrating the first anniversary of Mortimer's passing.

Plumpen

The spokesman for a group of timid dormice captured in the woods by Cluny the Scourge's Horde, Plumpen is a bedraggled little creature who dares stand up to Cluny by declaring that his kind do not believe in violence. Cluny blackmails Plumpen into sneaking inside the Abbey disguised as a worker and opening the doors for his army. Otherwise all twenty of his companions will be executed. Plumpen is knocked unconscious after he completes his mission, but is rescued by sparrow warriors. His companions are liberated.

Sela the Vixen and Chickenhound

A renowned healer in the Mossflower Woods, Sela is captured by Cluny the Scourge's Horde and forced to treat the gravely wounded warlord. When Cluny rightly suspects that Sela is double-crossing him, he sets a trap and orders her killed, along with her son, Chickehound, whom she has used as an intermediary on missions to the Abbey.

Chickenhound survives the sloppy execution and makes his way, gravely wounded, to Redwall Abbey, where he ingratiates himself. While everyone is distracted by defending the Abbey, Chickenhound goes around systematically, stuffing items that he likes into a bag and vandalizing everything else. Priding himself on being the "Foxprince of Thieves" (pg. 223), Chickenhound is blocked during his escape by the ancient Brother Methuselah, whom he plows down, killing him unintentionally. Having avoided detection in the woods by the pursuing Constance Badger and Ambrose Spike, Chickenhound is contemplating a solo career in thievery when he is bitten by the adder Asmodeus Poisontooth. Chickenhound had wanted to rename himself Mousedeath.



Shadow

A rat or weasel or combination of the both, Shadow is antagonist Cluny the Scourge's long-time companion. Shadow is lithe and wiry, with fur blacker than a moonless night. His black eyes are lifeless and his voice makes Cluny's lieutenants shiver. Trained in the arts of stealth, Shadow climbs the supposedly unclimbable walls of Redwall Abbey, avoids detection by the sentries, and gnaws away an image of Martin the Warrior from the revered tapestry. When Matthias raises the alarm, Shadow knocks him unconscious and twice stabs Mr. Fieldmouse in the stomach before being clubbed over the high parapet by Constance Badger's mighty paw. Cluny coldly takes the shred of tapestry from Shadow, who lies near death, kicks him, and departs. When Matthias then arrives to claim the relic, Shadow taunts him and dies.

Captain Snow and Squire Julian Gingivere

A snowy owl and marmalade cat respectively, Snow and Julian live on an abandoned farm east of Redwall Abbey. Snow is an old army comrade of Basil Stag Hare, who provides the protagonist, Matthias the Warrior, an introduction and a warning to avoid the fierce hunter's talons and beak. Basil also gives Matthias a medal that Snow had bestowed on him years before for saving his life. Matthias knows only to look in the farm for Snow. Starting in the barn, Matthias stumbles into Julian - quite literally: into his open mouth, when he loses his footing in the hay bails. Julian reluctantly leads him to Snow, who for some time has lived in a tree. They no longer share living space because Julian, an aristocrat, cannot endure the owl's barbaric table manners. Snow tells Matthias where to find Martin the Warrior's sword, but is so certain that the current owner, Asmodeus Poisonteeth, a gigantic adder, will kill and eat Matthias, that he promises never to eat another mouse or shrew and to reconcile with Gingivere if Matthias returns. When Matthias does, Snow is as good as his word and returns to the barn with Gingivere. Each accuses himself for the break-up and they agree to share blame. Julian lectures Matthias on how swords can be used for good or evil and admonishes him to do only good for the Abbey.

King Bull Sparra

The undisputed ruler of the Sparra (sparrows) that nest inside Redwall Abbey's roof spaces, Bull has a quick-temper and short-memory. He preserves in his private nest area the scabbard of Martin the Warrior's sword, but has lost the sword itself to the adder Asmodeus Poisonteeth. Bull's subjects know enough to laugh at his every joke, even when it is not funny. When Matthias, a young novice in the Abbey arrives seeking the sword, accompanied by Bull's young niece, Warbeak, Bull spares his life but puts him in irons. He demands candied chestnut treats from the little mouse. Needing insanely to recover the sword, Bull sallies forth with all of his warriors when his sister Dunwing spreads a rumor about Asmodeus dying. Finding nothing, Bull returns to the nesting area angry, only to see Matthias escaping across the roof. In close battle he wounds Matthias but is himself knocked unconscious. They fall, locked together, into the



Abbey Pond. Bull dies, while Matthias survives and continues his quest. Warbeak succeeds her uncle and becomes an enlightened Queen.

Dunwing Sparra

The mother of young Queen Warbeak and sister to Warbeak's predecessor, King Bull Sparra, Dunwing is the widow of Greytail, the sparrow who some time before the novel opens dies trying to recover Martin the Warrior's sword from the adder Asmodeus Poisontooth. Dunwing befriends protagonist Matthias the Warrior when Matthias returns her daughter to her and is threatened with death by King Bull for his troubles. Dunwing helps Matthias to escape by spreading rumors about Asmodeus and the sword that are irresistible to her brother. When King Bull dies, Dunwing yields the throne to her daughter.

Queen Warbeak Sparra

Introduced as a vicious young sparrow warrior who is shot down while attacking Jess Squirrel, who has invaded the sparrows' territory atop Redwall Abbey, Warbeak turns out to be the best sparrow for the mice to capture. Initially she fights beak and nail with protagonist Matthias the Warrior, who is then but a clumsy novice. He is on a quest to find the the legendary lost Sword of Martin that is presumed to be in the sparrows' nesting area. Against her will, Matthias takes Warbeak on the search. They grapple and quarrel only once before Matthias shows how easy it would be to kill her and she agrees to a truce. Warbeak emphasizes how solemn a sparrow's word is by swearing on her mother's egg. The two become friends. Warbeak and her mother Dunwing protect Matthias from the tyrannical King Bull Sparra, Warbeak's uncle, who eventually dies trying to prevent Matthias' escape. Warbeak, who is of the royal blood, succeeds as Queen and leads the sparrows against Cluny the Scourge's Horde in alliance with the Guosim (Guerrilla Union of Shrews in Mossflower).

Jess Squirrel

Jess is a nimble, intelligent squirrel who lives with her unnamed husband and infant son, Silent Sam, in Mossflower Woods until the arrival of Cluny the Scourge. They then join the population of refugees inside Redwall Abbey. Jess volunteers her legendary climbing skills to scale the Abbey to its very pinnacle to retrieve the Sword of Martin the Warrior that is believed to be hidden on the the weather vane. The climb is harrowing - and unsuccessful. It has been removed. She is attacked by sparrows on the way down. Later, Jess allies with Basil Stag Hare to retrieve a piece of tapestry depicting Martin that Cluny has stolen and is using blasphemously as a battle flag. They substitute an old dishrag for the flag and flee. While Basil dodges and weaves, Jess races through the treetops, delivering the true image to the Abbey. Jess later retraces her climb to the rooftop to help Matthias escape King Bull Sparra, but arrives only in time to see the two plunge from the roof, locked in combat. Finally, Jess runs out onto the field to retrieve



an abandoned drum. Her son fills it with wasps to serve as a sort of Greek Fire to drop on the enemy.

Silent Sam Squirrel

Silent Sam is the Squirrels' infant son. He has never spoken and has been in therapy with Abbot Mortimer for the problem. Sam wanders through the novel noisily sucking one paw. Sam finds protagonist Matthias the Warrior lost in Mossflower Woods and leads him to the Redwall Abbey. Sam's parents follow as refugees from Cluny the Scourge. At the height of the siege, Sam figures out how to disable the enemy battering ram, averting the primary danger. He fills a drum captured by his mother with wasps and kicks it over the edge onto the Horde. At the end of the novel, Sam finally speaks and attaches himself to Matthias' and Cornflower's newborn son.

The Vole Family

Abram, his unnamed wife, and their constantly screaming son Colin, are taken captive by Cluny the Scourge, locked up in an outbuilding behind St. Ninian's Church, and threatened with painful death once the invasion of Redwall Abbey has been completed. Instead, the Voles are rescued by protagonist Matthias the Warrior in one of his first acts of bravery.



Objects/Places

Redwall Abbey

The setting for the lion's share of the novel, Redwall Abbey is an establishment dedicated to providing help to any needy creature that comes in good faith. The Abbey is essentially self-sustaining, with its gardens, orchard, and pond. It has the appearance of a medieval Roman Catholic monastery but is virtually void of religious observance. The Redwall Abbey has often been besieged but never conquered. Its success is attributed to the Sword of Martin the Warrior, its founder. The sword, however, has disappeared, leaving the Abbey vulnerable to assault by Cluny the Scourge. The novel's protagonist, Matthias, begins as a clumsy novice, preparing to join the order. In time, however, he becomes the reincarnation of Martin and the Abbey's official protector.

The Abbey is built as a square around a grassy inner court. It is oriented to the four points of the compass. Atop the sandstone walls are wide ramparts, the basis of all defense. There are four gates through the walls, three minor and one large. Cluny's Horde batters the double oak gate, reinforced by earthworks, for days without it showing more than minor distress. The walls are said to be unclimbable, but several times are climbed. The small gates are most vulnerable, and the rats stream in by blackmailing a mouse into oiling the hinges and opening the doors.

Areas of the Abbey most mentioned include: the Great Hall, where ordinary meals are taken as well as the great banquets that open and close the novel. In it hangs a famous tapestry that portrays the Abbey's history. In the lower right-hand corner is Martin the Warrior. Cavern Hole is an underground room used mostly for story-telling. The renowned kitchens are large. They are under the control of Friar Hugo. Below the kitchens lie the Cellars, where various beverages are brewed and stored. October Ale is most often mentioned. The Gatehouse is a small room connected to the Abbey wall, where the Abbey's Recorder has an office and keeps his records. After Brother Methuselah's death, it is enlarged to accommodate the family of Matthias and Cornflower.

The Belltower looms over the Abbey, holding the bells that ring out various messages to the countryside at various times. The largest is called the Joseph Bell. In the final battle, Matthias cuts it down and cracks it. It is replaced by a pair of bells named Mathias and Methuselah in honor of fallen brethren. In an attic area above the main ceiling and beneath the roof, sparrows live and protect their territory ferociously. Matthias finds an inner passage to the roof and is briefly held prisoner there.

The Farm

A property located west of Redwood Abbey, beyond a portion of Mossflower Woods, the farm is occupied only by Squire Julian Gingivere, an aristocratic marmalade cat. His



former barn mate, Captain Snow, a white barn owl, has moved out because the owl's barbaric table manners offend the cat's sensibilities. Snow lives in a tree nearby. They give protagonist Matthias the Warrior directions to the lair of Asmodeus Poisonteeth in the Quarry across the stream from the Farm, certain that Matthias will be killed. He returns victorious, however, and the two reconcile and resume living together in the barn.

Guerrilla Union of Shrews in Mossflower (Guosim)

One of the organizations formed by shrews in the Mossflower Woods, Guosim requires unanimous decision after long, bitter debate before undertaking anything that is not specified in their bylaws. To speak, one must hold the sacred Blackstone, which is normally carried by the union's leader, entitled Log-a-Log. Log-a-Log's name comes from the function of ferrying warriors across the river, and the title is raised as a battle chant. Confusingly, Guosim is also the personal name of one of the Guerrilla Union's leaders, a tough female shrew. Protagonist Matthias the Warrior, on a quest to recover the Sword of Martin, blunders into Guosim's territory and is menaced before being allowed to move on. The shrews are convinced to help Matthias and thus be freed of two of their most feared predators. After Matthias slays Asmodeus Poisonteeth, Guosim voluntarily and without debate joins in a long trek to the Redwall Abbey to help relieve the siege by Cluny the Scourge.

Joseph Bell

The greatest of the bells hanging in the belfry of Redwall Abbey, the Joseph Bell tolls to signal far-and-wide a variety of messages: warnings, alerts, mourning, and joy. Protagonist Matthias the Warrior flees into the belfry after a long, brutal fight with antagonist Cluny the Scourge and has no escape but to cut the rope that suspends Joseph Bell. It crashes to the stone floor, crushing Cluny and shattering. Two smaller bells are forged from the remains and named in honor of two fallen members of the Order of Redwall: Matthias and Methuselah.

The Meadow

The area directly west of Redwall Abbey, across the north-south road, the Meadow is sufficiently wide to offer safety from arrows, rocks, and spears launched from the Abbey's parapets to Cluny the Scourge's battered forces. Cluny sets up his headquarters there in a tent, while his army cowers in the ditch that runs alongside the road. An archer, assuming that the figure wearing Cluny's war gear is Cluny, fires a massive arrow from a massive bow but assassinates the wrong rat, proving that the Meadow is not quite a perfect refuge.



Mossflower Woods

The larger context for the novel Redwall, Mossflower Woods stretches southeast of Redwall Abbey and northeast of St. Ninian's Church. It is an open woodland area crossed by streams. Areas of open grassland surround St. Ninian's and are used by Cluny the Scourge's Horde for infantry drilling. Several times heroes from the Abbey run through the Woods on missions. The section nearest the southwest corner of the Abbey are used unsuccessfully by the Horde to attempt to climb the walls. Asmodeus Poisonteeth crosses the stream from the Quarry where he lives to hunt in the Woods. He claims a number of the Horde.

The Pond

Redwall Abbey's source of drinking water and fresh fish, the Pond appears to be located adjacent to the wall, for protagonist Matthias and King Bull Sparra plunge into it after fighting on the roof. Early and late in the novel, the Pond is fished to provide for gala celebrations in the Abbey.

The Quarry

The home grounds of the great adder (snake) Asmodeus Poisonteeth, the Quarry is a great oval hole in the landscape that seems to have been scooped out by a giant hand. It has steep, terraced sides and fallen stone and abandoned equipment litter it. In the early morning sunshine its strata are beautiful, contradicting the evil that lurks within the tunnels that crisscrossed it underground. Many passageways feature ancient symbols of serpent rituals, far older than the excavation. Protagonist Matthias the Warrior goes there in search of the magic Sword of Martin, a relic of Redwall Abbey that has long been in the possession of the adder. Asmodeus nearly hypnotizes Matthias and his companion before the voice of Martin the Warrior snaps him out of his trance and he slays Asmodeus with the sword. The Quarry is the source of the stone from which the Abbey, many miles away, is long ago built.

Ratdeath

For most of the novel referred to as the Sword of Martin, Ratdeath is renamed by the dying Abbot Mortimer to mark protagonist Matthias the Warrior's slaying of antagonist Cluny the Scourge. Much of the novel is devoted to Matthias' search for this legendary weapon, which had been hidden in the weather vane atop Redwall Abbey and later stolen by King Bull Sparra and in turn lost by him to Asmodeus Poisonteeth. It has a large red pommel stone set in the hilt and a handle of black leather that matches its scabbard. The crosspiece is silver and the blade is made of the finest steel. Beside the blood channel are symbols that Matthias cannot understand. Matthias finds it hanging in Asmodeus' lair and has to pass delicately past the sleeping adder to reach it. He then uses it to slay the monster and goes on to lead the liberation of the Abbey from the



Horde. In a long oration, Squire Julian Gingivere warns Matthias not to consider it magic, as many do, but to realize that it has only one function: causing death. It becomes good or evil by the intentions of the one who wields it.

St. Ninian's Church

A ruined old church located down the north-south road from Redwall Abbey, St. Ninian's is a home to a family of church mice as the novel opens, but is soon seized by Cluny the Scourge and used as headquarters for his Horde as they plan the siege of Redwall Abbey. The architecture of St. Ninian's describes a typical Medieval English Catholic or Anglican church.

The Tapestry

The pride of Redwall Abbey, the Tapestry is woven by its founders and added to in each generation, making it not only a treasured work of art but also a chronology of the Abbey's early history. A focal point is armor-clad Martin the Warrior and his impressive sword. For a brief period Cluny the Scourge uses Martin's picture, cut out of the Tapestry, as a war banner, but it is stolen back and sewn back in, seamlessly.



Themes

Death

Death runs as a constant throughout Brian Jacques' novel *Redwall*, but it has radically different meanings to different characters. After protagonist Matthias recovers the Sword of Martin and uses it to decapitate the dreaded snake, Asmodeus, Squire Julian Gingivere warns him not to consider the sword magical, as many do, but to realize that it has only one function: causing death. It becomes good or evil by the intentions of the one who wields it. Asmodeus, who causes many deaths throughout the novel, should be considered a carnivore by nature who uses his natural abilities to feed himself, on a par with birds of prey. Jacques, however, emphasizes Asmodeus' stealth, hypnotic eyes, terrible fangs, and constant hissing of his own name to bring out sense of evil that surrounds snakes, thanks to the biblical stereotype. Asmodeus is happy when prey fall into his path, relieving him of an arduous chase. What could be more natural?

The primary antagonist, Cluny the Scourge, trivializes Death. If a follower is not physically useful to him, he might as well be dead. A rat whom he sends scrambling onto a horse's back to frighten it into running again falls beneath the wagon wheels and is crushed. Cluny is untouched. One of the henchmen that he has known the longest falls from a high wall and is paralyzed. Cluny snatches from his claws the item that he has stolen for him, kicks him, and leaves him for dead. He threatens to kill anyone in *Redwall* Abbey who does not surrender peacefully at his first and only offer and is on the verge of carrying out the executions when reinforcements arrive and turn the battle around. Like Asmodeus, the best that Cluny has to offer is a swift and painless death. He knows how to inflict another kind.

Contrasting with Asmodeus and Cluny are the Abbey mice, particularly Abbot Mortimer. He is in a difficult place, being a pacifist at heart but needing to defend his institution. Wisely, he leaves battle plans to his generals and attends personally to healing the sick and feeding the hungry. His generals give no quarter and show no mercy, fighting far more deviously than the rat Horde, because they know that they are weaker and untrained. When elderly Brother Methuselah is killed, inadvertently, but violently, the community deeply mourns his passing. They believe that young Matthias has also died, and Mortimer calls this a waste. Young Cornflower Fieldmouse disagrees: all lives are valuable and both have died as heroes. As he in turn lies mortally wounded, Mortimer is happy with what he has seen and accomplished in life and dies happily. Death is merely a part of life.

Legend

Legend underlies much of the action in *Redwall* by Brian Jacques. Brother Methuselah as the Recorder and Gatekeeper of *Redwall* Abbey, entertains travelers of all sorts and systematically collects and records their tales. He consults a written Chronicle that



predates his time, but finds the entries cryptic and incomplete. The Abbey prides itself on a Tapestry begun by its founders and added on to in each generation. It too provides a kind of formal history.

The most revered part of the Tapestry is found in the lower right-hand corner. It depicts a heroic, armor-clad Martin the Warrior and his impressive sword. Legend says that Martin arrives at the Abbey during the winter when the Founders are under attack by vermin. He is impulsive and a natural leader, superior to those older and more experienced than himself. He fights off the enemy, single-pawed, before retiring to heal and help the unfortunate. This becomes the Abbey's vocation. Legends surround Martin's Sword, which is subsequently lost without a trace, and when Cluny the Scourge presents a new threat, the peaceful creatures inside the walls despair of surviving without the Sword's almost magical assistance. Methuselah and a clumsy young novice, Matthias, go on a quest for the sword, assembling obscure clues and eventually finding Martin's tomb deep beneath the Abbey. The effigy strongly resembles Matthias, and Martin's spirit fills Matthias to make him a Champion virtually inseparable from himself.

Martin's legend haunts Cluny, giving him vivid nightmares of his own impending doom. Cluny is himself the stuff of legend. He has been leading his Horde steadily southward for years and woodland creatures invoke his name to make their children behave. The effect on Cluny, the populace, and indeed Matthias goes beyond all facts. Legend is a psychological force. When Matthias recovers the sword and uses it to decapitate the dreaded snake, Asmodeus (who represents the serpent in Genesis), he is warned not to consider the sword magical, but to realize that it has only one function: causing death. It becomes good or evil by the intentions of the one who wields it.

Good and Evil

The juxtaposition of Good and Evil provides the basic conflict in *Redwall* by Brian Jacques. Redwall Abbey is a place of goodness, founded and dedicated to providing help to any needy creature that comes in good faith. Thanks to the mice's hard work, the Abbey is self-sustaining, maintaining gardens, an orchard, and a pond. In times of trouble, the Abbey offers sanctuary to the helpless creatures of the surrounding woodlands and meadow. In form it has all of the features of a medieval Roman Catholic monastery but is virtually void of religious observance. Because of this, the struggle with Evil cannot be reduced to the classical question of theodicy: questioning why an all-knowing and all-powerful God allows Evil to befall the good. Evil simply is - and must be fought by the Good.

A number of characters personify various aspects of Evil. A giant adder who preys on helpless creatures in the woods is greatly feared and built up into a monster: hypnotizing victims before his poison dispatches them instantly. Wherever he goes, he hisses his name, even in his sleep. In a story of black-and-white, Asmodeus is not seen like other predators, killing in order to survive. Like the serpent in the biblical Garden of Eden, Asmodeus is a symbol of Evil. His very name means Devil.



Linked to Asmodeus is King Bull Sparra. Years before the novel opens, Asmodeus steals the Sword of Martin from Bull, who has stolen it from the Abbey. Bull personifies the arbitrary tyrant, using violence to keep his subjects in line. The sparrows kill for food, but bother non-prey species only if their space is invade. Protagonist Matthias the Warrior is captured by them, threatened by death, but spared because he has tasty treats that the King enjoys. He befriends Bull's sister and niece, learns about the sword's whereabouts, and goes in successful quest of it.

The most evil of the characters is Cluny the Scourge, leader of a Horde of rats and other vermin (a loaded term used often in the novel). He is easily as arbitrary as King Bull Sparra and as cunning as Asmodeus. He has spent a long time pillaging and killing his way southward until he reaches the Abbey, where he decides he would like to retire in comfort. He treats his forces mercilessly, sending rats to their deaths, killing those who show weakness as a sign to others, using a hapless creature's relatives as hostages to ensure that he sneaks into the Abbey and opens its doors to the Horde. Even the mortal wounding of one of his oldest companions in the line of duty fails to move Cluny. He kicks him and leaves him to die. He is at the point of executing all of the inhabitants of the Abbey when a relief force almost miraculously falls upon his forces. It is gathered by Matthias through his exercise of good will. With the restoration of peace, the Abbey dedicates itself all the more powerfully to caring for the sick and feeding the hungry, not because it is divinely commanded, but because it is right.



Style

Point of View

Redwall by Brian Jacques is consistently told in the third person past tense by an anonymous and omniscient narrator. None of the characters is human, although there are hints that humans live in the vicinity of Redwall Abbey (milk and cheese are eaten, presuming domestic animals). The novel strikes a strongly moralistic tone. Most of the good characters are cute mice, while most of the bad characters are filthy, vicious rats, and one is a giant adder. Asmodeus' name comes from Jewish folklore: he is a devil, even though he merely follows his nature in seeking prey. By contrast, the sparrows' and owl's hunting is viewed neutrally as instinct. The Sword of Martin, which protagonist Matthias the Warrior, a mouse, seeks to recover, is simply a weapon of death. Whether it serves for good or evil is up to whoever wields it. So speaks an aristocratic cat, who has on principle become a vegetarian.

The mice of Redwall Abbey live a monastic but not specifically religious life and, when their institution is threatened by Cluny the Scourge's Horde, take in a large number of refugees from the surrounding woodlands. The Abbey has a history of offering hospitality and aid to all peace-loving creatures. When besieged by the quintessentially evil and cruel Cluny, the peaceful creatures are forced to learn the art of war. Some of them, Constance the Badger in particular, is by nature suited for fighting, but even the most pacifistic, notably Abbot Mortimer, allows that they must do whatever is needed to survive. Personally, however, he retreats into healing the sick and feeding the hungry.

Jacques incorporates a good deal of dialog among the characters as the protagonist's quest for a mythical sword develops. The style and level of talk is appropriate to the various species involved. Basil Stag Hare, the Abbey's most experienced soldier, acts as a consultant but also works side-by-side with the troops. His speech is that of a stereotypical British officer as he urges comrades to keep a stiff upper lip and strikes dramatic poses. Brother Methuselah, the ancient Recorder and Gatekeeper of Redwall Abbey, speaks as a scholar whose short-term memory has been compromised and who sometimes seems to be returning to childhood. He digs out and cites historical documents relevant to Matthias' quest. The sparrows speak a primitive dialect at a rapid pace, while moles speak a "countrified" dialect (pg. 287) that is difficult to decipher but humorous once the effort is made. Jacques devotes a good bit of space to peripheral detail, which enriches and broadens the basic story.

Setting

Redwall by Brian Jacques is set in a few square miles, in and around Redwall Abbey, an ancient establishment dedicated to providing help to any needy creature that comes in good faith. The Abbey is self-sustaining, with gardens, orchards, and a pond. It has the appearance of a medieval Roman Catholic monastery but is virtually void of religious



observance. It has often been besieged but never conquered. Its success is attributed to the Sword of Martin the Warrior, its founder. The sword, however, has disappeared, leaving the Abbey vulnerable to assault by Cluny the Scourge. The Abbey is built as a square around a grassy inner court. It is oriented to the four points of the compass. Atop the sandstone walls are wide ramparts, the basis of its defense. There are four gates through the walls, three minor and one large. Cluny's Horde batters the double oak gate, reinforced by earthworks, for days without it showing more than minor distress. The walls are said to be unclimbable, but several times are climbed. The small gates are most vulnerable, and the rats stream in by blackmailing a mouse into oiling the hinges and opening the doors. Inside the highest roof thousands of ferocious sparrows nest. They attack only when their space is invaded. Protagonist Matthias lives for a few days as their prisoner and learns where his quest for Martin's Sword must lead. The architectural scale appears to be human, although there are no signs of human inhabitants. The various species of animals in the novel are in proper relative scale to each other. Rats are bigger and stronger than mice.

South of the Abbey down an established road lies a ruined church, which also fits the description of a typical Medieval English Catholic (or Anglican) church. St. Ninian's is in ruins even before being taken over by Cluny's Horde. Around it stretch cleared common lands on which the Horde trains. Surrounding this clearing and extending northwest lies Mossflower Woods, where a number of scenes are set. Beyond the Woods are an abandoned farm, where Matthias learns particulars of the whereabouts of the sword. This leads him across a stream to an ancient sandstone quarry, where he confronts a terrible adder and recovers the sword. West of the main road stretches a Meadow that is out of range of most of the mice's weapons. Cluny pitches his command tent there. His soldiers spend much of their time in the ditch running along the road, sallying out to attack the Abbey walls and running back to cover.

Language and Meaning

Redwall by Brian Jacques is a great swashbuckling tale that pits evil against good. All of the characters are animals. The narrator takes for granted that they walk upright and talk like humans. Each species obeys its proper nature and the speech of each is appropriate. Thus, the pack of rats led by the savage Cluny the Scourge that has been steadily advancing towards Redwall Abbey is a bye-word of terror even before they arrive. The creatures living around Redwall Abbey hope that they are just a legend. They arrive, however, crashing onto the scene (literally), set up camp in an abandoned church, and announce that they will kill anyone who fails to surrender. They snarl and scheme and bluster against the peaceful mice of the Abbey, who politely refuse, and must then overcome their humble nature to repel the siege that the rats mount.

A variety of woodland creatures receive sanctuary and add the skills of their respective species to the defense. The ferocious sparrows roosting in the eaves become allies, as do cantankerous shrews in the woods. A hare, a retired military veteran, teaches camouflage and strikes valiant poses to help keep up morale. Tunneling creatures are vital to both sides. They speak a "countrified" dialect (pg. 287) that is difficult to



decipher but humorous once the effort is made. With the exception of grace before the jubilee meal there is no trace of religious language in the Abbey. The Order of Redwall heals the sick and feeds the hungry in purely secular terms. Out in the woods, the dreaded adder Asmodeus hisses his own name constantly, even when he sleeps. It is noted that the name means the Devil. Although like other predators he hunts only to survive, Asmodeus is vilified as a great evil and his slaying at the hands of Matthias the Warrior is a high-point in the novel.

Much of the novel follows Matthias as he matures from clumsy novice to the Abbey's Champion. It involves his quest to learn the whereabouts of the tomb of the Abbey's legendary founder, Martin, and to reclaim his supposedly magical sword, to use in the defense. The language suggests the medieval epics with a splash of modern Indiana Jones. Martin's sword is not magical. It is an instrument of death. Whether it fights for good or evil is up to whoever wields it. Matthias fights for good, but finally prevails only by treachery.

Structure

Brian Jacques' *Redwall*, the first in a series of novels set in the vicinity of Redwall Abbey, consists of three numbered and titled books. Each book is divided into many chapters of unequal length and the chapters are usually divided into scenes that are set apart by extra vertical space and/or rows of asterisks. The numbering of the chapters within each book resumes at one. The novel is about a quest and the battle between good and evil. Emotions rise and fall and fortunes rise and ebb, but there is little difference in the texture of the novel throughout.

Book One, entitled "The Wall," contains twenty chapters. It establishes that Redwall Abbey is a monastic (but not specifically religious) institution for mice that has long offered hospitality to peaceful, needy creatures. It is joyfully celebrating the jubilee of its Abbot when a horse-pulled wagon full of ferocious rats races past and then crashes down the road. Led by Cluny the Scourge, they take over an abandoned church and announce that they will take over the Abbey. The mice offer sanctuary to threatened woodland creatures and all offer their distinctive services to the common defense. A clumsy young novice, Matthias, shows promise as a military leader, much like the legendary Martin the Warrior, whose picture is stolen from the Abbey. Its loss reveals riddle clues about the whereabouts of his Sword.

Book Two, entitled "The Quest," contains twenty-three chapters, which describe the various approaches taken by Cluny to conquer the Abbey by force. One by one they are turned back and he grows frustrated. Matthias' mentor, Brother Methuselah, is killed while Matthias is held prisoner under the eaves by ferocious sparrows. There he picks up additional clues about the sword. Escaping death, Matthias sneaks out of the Abbey to follow the sword, and thus misses most of the siege. He makes it as far as the abandoned Farm and knows in what dreaded direction he must go next.



Book Three, entitled "The Warrior," contains fifteen chapters, which continue to portray the battle for the Abbey and show Matthias confront Asmodeus, the giant adder who controls the sword. With Martin's inspiration, Matthias kills the snake and hurries back to the Abbey, hoping that he is not too late to help preserve it. He arrives after Cluny takes it by trickery and is on the point of killing the inhabitants. Matthias and Cluny fight to the death, Cluny dying by Matthias' act of treachery. A brief epilogue describes the year that follows the so-called Late Rose Summer Wars.



Quotes

"Skullface had time for just one agonized scream before he fell. The iron-shod cartwheels rolled over him. He lay in a red mist of death, the life ebbing from his broken body. The last thing he saw before darkness claimed him was the sneering visage of Cluny the Scourge roaring from the jolting backboard, 'Tell the devil Cluny sent you, Skullface!'" Book 1, The Wall, Chapter 4, pg. 15.

" 'Did you see the faces of those mice today? The mere mention of Martin the Warrior sends them into ecstasies. don't you see, he is their symbol. His name means the same to those mice as mine does to the horde: in a different way maybe. Martin is some sort of angel; I'm the opposite. Think for a moment. If anything were to happen to me, you'd all be a leaderless rabble, a headless mob. So, if the mice were to lose their most precious omen, the picture of Martin, where would that leave them?'" Book 1, The Wall, Chapter 12, pg. 53.

"Long years and much mental strain had taken their toll on the ancient mouse. Warily he swayed on his feet and, putting out a paw to steady himself, he touched the wall—the exact patch of stone over which Martin's likeness had once hung.

"Methuselah gave a sigh of satisfaction and allowed a small smile to creep across his features. His search had not been in vain. Beneath his paw there was writing carved into the dust-covered wall." Book 1, The Wall, Chapter 20, pg. 97.

" 'Methuselah, do you realize what this means?'

"The old mouse sat down beside him, nodding gravely.

" 'Oh yes, indeed I do. It means that Martin somehow knew that one day he would live on through you.'

"Matthias was staggered. 'He knew about me! Martin the Warrior knew my name! Can you imagine that?'

"The enormity of it overwhelmed them both." Book 2, The Quest, Chapter 4, pgs. 120-121.

"Matthias waited for a glimpse of the sword, but Jess was not halfway down when a shout of consternation arose from the crowd below.

" 'Look out, she's being attacked by sparrows!'

"Sure enough, the fierce birds were whirling in close to the intrepid Jess. They tried to peck at her, seeking to dislodge her, or distract her enough to make her fall. It was a fearsome, sickening drop should she lose her grip." Book 2, The Quest, Chapter 9, pgs. 154.

"At that precise moment it was two of those same creatures who stood on the fringe of Mossflower Wood, spying across the common land to where Cluny's army was exercising.

"But for the gravity of the situation, Basil and Jess would have seen the chance for many a good laugh. What a difference between the antics of this rabble and the way in which the Abbey defenders went about their business of training! Jessu observed that it



was the contrast between slaving under a tyrant and voluntary cooperation that arose from determination and good fellowship." Book 2, The Quest, Chapter 17, pgs. 205-206.

"In a fighting fury, Matthias grabbed the scabbard. He used it like a sword, smashing it mercilessly once, twice, thrice, into the Sparra King's face. The force of the blows from the weighty sword case knocked Bull Sparra senseless. He toppled from the root out into space. Matthias screamed in panic. The King's claws were still caught fast in the sword belt." Book 2, The Quest, Chapter 18, pg. 221.

"The Joseph Bell tolled for mid-afternoon.

" 'Look, what a golden opportunity! There's the Scourge himself, all dressed up to kill. we'll never get another chance like this.'

"The giant bow worked perfectly. Cheesethief's latest promotion was swift but brief. He never knew what it was that snuffed his life out!" Book 3, The Warrior, Chapter 1, pg. 261.

"The sandstone ranged through a spectrum of pale sunlight gold, banded through every shade of yellow, fawn, umber, brown, down to the dusty red sandstone that must have been hewn out in distant ages to provide the masons with material to build Redwall Abbey.

"He roused his companions to view the awesome spectacle.

" 'To think that all this peaceful beauty should hid such cold evil,' he breathed wonderingly." Book 3, The Warrior, Chapter 4, pg. 282.

"Suddenly the spell of the snake was broken. The young mouse's eyes snapped open, clear and bright. He swung the ancient sword high and struck at the giant adder.

"He struck for Redwall!

"He struck against evil!

"He struck for Martin!

"He struck for Log-a-Log and his shrews!

"He struck for dead Guosim!

"He struck as Methuselah would have wanted him to!

"He struck against Cluny the Scourge and tyranny!

"He struck out against Captain Snow's ridicule!

"He struck world of light and freedom!

"He struck until his paws ached and the sword fell from them!" Book 3, The Warrior, Chapter 8, pg. 304.

" 'No doubt your sword is indeed a beautiful thing. It is a tribute to whoever forged it in bygone ages. There are very few such swords as this one left in the world, but remember, it is only a sword, Matthias!

" 'It contains no secret spell, nor holds within its blade any magical power. This sword is made only for one purpose, to kill. It will only be as good or evil as the one who wields it. I know that you intend to use it only for the good of your Abbey, Matthias; do so, but never allow yourself to be tempted into using it in a careless or idle way. It would inevitably cost you your life, or that of your dear ones.'" Book 3, The Warrior, Chapter 9, pg. 306.



"Matthias stood up on the wooden beam. With one mighty blow from the blade of the ancient battle-scarred sword he severed the rope holding the Joseph Bell.

"It appeared to hang in space for a second, then it dropped like a massive stone.

"Cluny remained riveted to the spot, his eye staring upwards. Before he had time to think it was too late...

"CLANG!!!

"The Joseph Bell tolled its last, huge knell. The colossal weight of metal smashed Cluny the Scourge flat upon the stone floor of the bell tower." Book 3, The Warrior, Chapter 14, pgs. 328-329.



Topics for Discussion

How does the old elm tree near the corner of Redwall Abbey figure in the story?

How do Cluny the Scourge and King Bull Sparra compare and contrast as rulers? Describe how their followers regard them.

Is Asmodeus fairly portrayed as a force of evil, or is he no different from the other predators in the novel (sparrows, owl)?

How does the spirit of the deceased Martin the Warrior affect the course of the novel?

Abbot Mortimer is a devoted pacifist. Discuss how he is able to reconcile this with the reality of savage warfare.

How would you explain the absence of religion in a novel about an Abbey that has all of the outward appearances of a medieval monastery? Would including religion add to or detract from the story?

Which character best fits the stereotype of his or her species? Cite specific traits that make you favor that character.