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Ento 896

Book Discussion

Due Date Jan 21, 2021



Introduction

A Rustle in the Grass by Robin Hawdon

Original publishing 1985 by Dodd Mead, revised 2014 by THISTLE

Summary

A lone ant is foraging in the higher branches when an army of red ants destroy his entire colony right before his eyes. He encounters a scout from a colony of his own species, who leads him back to his colony to warn them of the red ants who are ravaging the riverside. The higher council deploys three warrior ants to leave the colony and see what they can find out about the army of red ants. Snake's Tongue is the leader, with

Dreamer and Joker as his team. On the trail food is scarce, and they must defeat unexpected predators such as tree spiders, all while trying to stay on the trail of the red ants without being seen.

Back at the colony tensions are running high as they await the unknown. They also must survive hungry “Tawny Killer Bird” attacks and reason with a tyrannical power-hungry ant, Dew-Lover, who is addicted to the honey-dew of aphids.

The book is a perfect mix of both adventure and biology, as it incorporates entomological facts throughout the story. For instance, in the back story of one ant called “Story Teller,” it explains how he was born a winged ant and was meant to form a new colony, but the first born of that brood is not often strong enough to actually leave the colony. It’s a great read altogether.

Discussion Questions

1. For the ants called “Dreamer” and “Joker,” how did their names affect their personality? Did they change throughout the story?
2. Do you feel like Five Legs is qualified to be a part of the council? Or to replace Thunderer?
3. Would you agree that Dew-Lover’s death was truly heroic?
4. When Dreamer tells the story to future generations, which details will he pass on? Which might he leave out?
5. Is it realistic that ants could defeat spiders and birds? Or do you feel that it was for the sake of the story?
6. Which of Story-Teller’s stories were your favorite?