

Name: _____

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Attacked by a Crow

The strange fragrance was stronger now, coming over the top of the rise in a wave of scent that struck him powerfully – as the scent of orange-blossom in the Mediterranean strikes a traveller who smells it for the first time. Fascinated, he ran to the crest. Nearby was another hedgerow and beyond moving gently in the breeze, stood a field of broad beans in full flower.

Hazel squatted on his hunches and stared at the orderly forest of small, glaucous trees with their columns of black- and- white bloom. He had never seen anything like this. Wheat and barley he knew and once he had been in a field of turnips. But this was entirely different from any of those and seemed, somehow, attractive, wholesome, and propitious.

True, rabbits could not eat plants: he could smell that. But they could lie safely among them for as long as they liked and they could move through them easily and unseen. Hazel determined then and there to bring the rabbits up to the bean field to shelter and rest until evening. He ran back and found the others where he had left them. Bigwig and Silver were awake but all the rest were still napping uneasily.

“Not asleep, Silver ?” he said.

It’s too dangerous, Hazel,” replied Silver. *“I’d like to sleep as much as anyone, but if we sleep and something comes, who’s going to spot it?”*

“I know. I’ve found a place where we can sleep in safety for as long as we like.”

“A burrow?”

“No, not a burrow. A great field of scented plants and that will cover us, sight and smell until we are rested. Come out here and smell it, if you like.”

Both rabbits did so. *“You say you’ve seen these plants?”* said BIGWIG, turning his ears to catch the distant rustling of the beans.

“Yes, they’re only just over the top. Come on, let’s get the others moving, before a man comes with a tractor or they’ll scatter all over the place.”

Silver roused the other and began to coax them in the field. They stumbled out drowsily responding with reluctance to his repeated assurance that it was *“only a little way.”*

They became widely separated as they struggled up the slope. Silver and Bigwig led the way with Hazel and Buckthorn a short distance behind. The rest idled along, hopping a few yards and then pausing to nibble or to pass droppings on the early, sunny grass.

Silver was almost at the crest when suddenly, from half-way up, there came a high screaming- the sound a rabbit makes, not to call for help or frighten an enemy, but simply out of terror. Fiver and Pipkin, limping behind the others and conspicuously undersized and tired, were being attacked by the crow. It had flown low along the ground. Then, pouncing, it aimed a blow of its great bill at Fiver, who just managed to dodge in time. Now it was leaping and hopping among the grass tussocks, striking at the two rabbits

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with terrible darts of its head. Crows aim at the eyes and Pipkin, sensing this, had buried his head in a clump of rank grass as was trying to burrow further in. It was he who was screaming.

Hazel covered the distance down the slope in a few seconds. He had no idea what he was going to do and if the crow had ignored him he would probably have been at a loss. But by dashing up he distracted his attention and it turned on him. He swerved past it, stopped and looking back, saw Bigwig come racing in from the opposite side. The crow turned again, struck at Bigwig and missed. Hazel heard its beak hit a pebble in the grass with the sound like snail-shell when a thrush beats it on a stone. As Silver followed Bigwig, it recovered itself and faced him squarely. Silver stopped short in fear and the crow seemed to dance before him, it's great, black wings flapping in a horrible commotion. It was just about to stab when Bigwig ran straight into it from behind and knocked it sideways.....

Watership Down by Richard Adams

Fill in the gap with a word or words.

1. *The scent of the Bean field and orange-blossom was _____.*
2. *The orderly forest with colours of broad bean flowers are _____ in colour.*
3. *The field would be safe because of the _____ plants.*
4. *Silver would not sleep in case _____.*
5. *Silver began to wake the others and _____ them into the field.*
6. *Fiver and Pipkin were _____ and were _____ when the crow attacked.*
7. *The crow used it's _____ as a weapon to _____.*
8. *Pipkin _____ in the clump of grass was screaming.*

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After reading the story, answer these questions.

1. What genre is this text ? _____.
2. What character trait best describes Hazel ?
a. quiet b. determined c. confused
3. What evidence is there to suggest this? (Highlight the line that makes you think this)
4. Why do you think the author has called the rabbits Bigwig, Silver and Hazel.
a. names he liked b. names of his pets. C. physical appearance of the rabbits.
5. Why did you think the author used a dash after the words high screaming.
a. to indicate it was loud b. for dramatic effect c. to join the words.
6. What character trait best describes BigWig?
a. quiet b. determined. c. confused. d. courageous
7. What evidence is there to suggest this?(Highlight the line that makes you think this.).

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