

Name: _____

Date: _____

Inside The Vault

James sat down on the steps of the tomb and watched. The light at ebbed from the church. Shadows began to pack the roof and the crowd around the pillars and dark oak pews. The knight and his lady lay on their tomb with worn faces and stiff stone drapery. He was a crusading knight, armoured from head to pointed feet, his hands frozen in prayer: he must have known the strange, hot, far-away places and then come back to die in Ledsham, among elms and willows beside the Evenlode. James fetched himself a cushion to sit on and thought about this and other things while listening to the tapping noises of Ben's pick and watched the dust and chippings fly up around the flagstone.

"I think this is the one" said Ben. "I reckon it is."

"What if someone comes?" said James.

"I'm seeing about the damp, aren't I?" said Bert. "Rising damp, they've got here. I don't know anything about a vault."

The church was very dark and quiet now but not empty because no place that has been used for so long by so many people can ever be empty. Like all old buildings, it was full of their thoughts and feelings, and these thoughts and feelings seemed to crowd in upon James as he sat waiting and watching. He had asked Alan to come and Alan had come at once and was there now, ay James's elbow, waiting and watching him.

"Here she comes," said Ben. He put his pick down and dug his fingers down under the edge of the flagstone. He heaved, muscles stood out like cords in his arms, the flagstones rocked and tipped on to one side. James leaned forward.

"Hang on," said Ben. "I got to get through the next bit. I told you I mortared it up again." He swung the pick down: the floor split mortar crumbled away downwards and these were a jagged black hole, man-sized.

"There we are," said Bert. Let's have that torch."

He pointed the torch down the hole. "Want to have a look?" James clutched the edge of stone step. He said to Alan, "Shall I?" and Alan told him he'd be a silly idiot not to go. He got up, rather slowly and came forward and lay down on his stomach and shone the torch down into the hole.

It was smaller than he expected. A little, crumbling underground room, with rough masonry walls and rubble all over the floor. There were long stone boxes stacked up on top of each other: several at one side, and one by itself on the other.

Ben's face appeared at the other side of the hole. "Let's have some light over here."

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James sung the torch around. They could see the lettering now on top of the solitary box, black-shadowed in the beam of light. "I thought so," said Ben.

***Here lyeth, ye body of
Thomas Kempe Apotheraire
He departed this life ye last of October AD 1629
In the 63 year of his Age.***

"Apothecary?" said James. His voice dropped into the vault, sounding deep and hollow.

"He couldn't go having then put sorcerer, could he?" said Ben.

"Not if he wanted to be here. The church wouldn't hold with that."

"Why do you think he wanted to be there?" said James in a whisper. "He wasn't very religious, was he? Believing in all that magic and hating priests."

The Ghost of Thomas Kempe Penelope Lively.

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Read the text and answer the questions

1. Why are the faces of the Knight and his lady described as worn ?

2. Who was the first of the three to look into the vault ?

3. What are the stone boxes ?

4. How do you know?

5. Which character is your favourite and why ?

Write the definition of

6.. heaved : _____

7. solitary: _____

8. sorcerer : _____

1. Has the author used any grammar or writers craft to add to the story?

10. Use three adjectives to describe the James, the main character .

11. How would you feel if you were there ?

12. Write your own questions for the teacher to answer. Try to catch me out.

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