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The Door in the Wall

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Reading Notes

The Plague	Bubonic plague; also known as the Black Death
Sir John de Bureford	Robin's father
Lady Maud	Robin's mother
Brother Luke*	friar of St. Mark's who cared for Robin
The Scottish Wars	fighting in Scotland started by Edward I and continued by Edward II & Edward III

Vocabulary

Write the meaning of each **bold** word or phrase.

1. Tears of **vexation** started to his eyes _____ irritation; annoyance
2. in an **embrasure** of the thick wall. _____ opening *
3. not the plague but some other **malady**. _____ disorder or disease of the body

Comprehension Questions

Answer the following in complete sentences.

1. What is the time period and setting of this story? The story is set in England in the fourteenth century during the reign of Edward III. *
2. Where had Robin's father and mother gone? Robin's father was away fighting for the king in the Scottish wars, and his mother had gone to be the queen's lady in waiting.
3. At what age was Robin expected to leave his family? With whom was he going to live? Robin was expected to leave his family at the age of ten. He was going to be a page under Sir Peter de Lindsay.
4. Why is Robin in bed? How long has he been there? The day after his mother left, he became ill and unable to move his legs. He has been in bed for a month.
5. Why does Brother Luke take Robin to St. Mark's? Brother Luke takes Robin to St. Mark's to care for him, since all of Robin's household servants have died from the Plague or are away with his parents.

Quotations

“Thou hast only to follow the wall far enough and there will be a door in it.”

Who said this? Brother Luke *

To whom? Robin *

What does the speaker mean by this? Although the events of Robin’s life are not what he had planned, he can still be useful and hope for good to come from his situation. *

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think Robin was ready to leave home? Why or why not?
2. Describe Robin. Did he have the character qualities required of a knight?
3. Have you ever seen an unfortunate event eventually result in good, either for you or others? Share your example.

Enrichment

◀ The Plague ▶

The Plague, or Black Death, swept across Europe in the 14th century, killing nearly half of the European population. The bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, which caused the disease, originated in central Asia and was most likely brought to Europe by fleas. These fleas lived on rats which frequently traveled on merchant ships from Asia to Europe.

The most common symptoms were small tumors that appeared on the body, usually around the neck or armpit. These tumors grew in size, sometimes as large as an apple, and eventually spread all over the body. They darkened in color until they became black. Victims usually died within eight days, although some accounts of recovery have been recorded. The unsanitary conditions of European cities and the medical knowledge of the Middle Ages did little to combat the disease. Occasional European outbreaks occurred until the 19th century.

TEACHER NOTE: Answers marked with an asterisk designate the material students will be required to know for the tests in the Appendix.

Reading Notes

sacristan	the person in charge of the contents of a church
solar	a private room above the great hall reserved for the owner of the castle (and his family)
dais *	a raised platform at one end of the great hall
hawking *	the sport of hunting with a hawk or other bird of prey

Vocabulary

Write the meaning of each **bold** word or phrase.

1. They did not **linger** in the house _____ delay; dawdle *
2. The drawbridge was lowered and the **portcullis** raised _____ iron gate of a city or castle *
3. There is a dent as large as a **basin**. _____ a circular container used to hold water for washing
4. Yet he felt **timid** about facing either of them. _____ shy; fearful

Comprehension Questions

Answer the following in complete sentences.

1. Why do John and Robin climb the belfry and ring the church tower bell? _____ They climb the tower to ring the bell as a signal for Sir Fitzhugh's army to surround and attack the enemy. _____
2. Why does Sir Peter call Robin "Conqueror"? _____ Robin, by his act of bravery, had saved the castle and conquered the Welsh. Sir Peter gives Robin a title of nobility, like dubbing him a knight, for his act of courage. _____
3. What is John's reward for helping free Lindsay from the Welsh? _____ John receives land, sheep, and hunting and fishing rights. _____
4. How does Robin recognize his father on the road from so far away? _____ Robin knows it is his father by the way he rides his horse. _____
5. Why is Robin afraid to face his parents? _____ Robin's parents have not seen him since he became crippled, and he is afraid that they will be displeased. _____
6. How do Robin's father and mother react to Robin's crippled legs? _____ His father is so proud of his courage, craftsmanship, and spirit that he doesn't notice Robin's legs. His mother is thankful that he will never be called away to war. *

