

CLASS XI D - LIBRARY ACTIVITY : BOOK REVIEWS

The Chant

Vyusti Mishra XI - D

Based on the book, The Tombs Of Atuan

It was dark by the time Tenar returned home. Although she knew a heavy scolding by Ogion would follow, for what she had come up with, it would be worth it.

"Absolutely not," came Ogion's stern reply, just as she had expected.

"I'm not saying I want to perform it right now. I just need a chance to find out what happened to him. He was the closest thing to family i had."

She was talking about Manan, her guardian, who had fallen to his death in the pit in the labyrinth. But what if he hadn't died?

Ogion seemed to ponder this for a while. As much as he wanted to refuse, he knew Tenar would resort to doing the chant by herself, and he did not want her to be harmed as, Ged was. But so magnificent a task, when her powers were yet to be properly honed, might prove to be extremely dangerous.

At length, he agreed, with the condition that the Seeking Chant be performed by him, with Tenar at his side.

The next day, just as dawn broke out, Ogion and Tenar sat down for the ritual. Seeking someone who was most likely dead was no easy task. The person in question being related to the Nameless Ones did not make it easier.

Tenar watched with awe as the lights blew out in the room and a soft, dusty shadow crept up the walls. Soon they were in darkness, the unmistakable rubble of the Tombs all around them. She held up a lantern and called out, "Manan."

They were met with silence.

Just as she was about to call out again, she noticed a shadow flickering nearby.

"You shouldn't have come back, *Arha*," came Manan's voice, although they could not quite make out his body. "I wish you hadn't come back."

"What?" Tenar was stunned. She had not expected him to say this. The shock of hearing his voice and being referred to as '*Arha*', The Eaten One, once again, made her nervous. She had not been called that since she stopped being the High Priestess and sought freedom, with Ged.

"I don't wish to be reminded of what I could not finish for my masters," Manan continued with a sneer. "*The High Priestess*, never grateful for the life she was given."

It was then that it struck her. That day, in the labyrinth, all those years ago, Manan hadn't been trying to save her by pushing Ged in the pit. He had been trying to push her, and in the struggle, fell himself. She had been mourning him, thinking he died for her. How foolish she had been!

Tears sprung to her eyes at the confession of betrayal. Noticing her anguish, Ogion silently asked for her consent to return back, receiving a weak nod from her. As he started the Chant, Tenar could make out Manan's wispy outline moving towards them.

As they made their way out of the Seeking Chant, the last thing they saw was Manan's seething face, and in place of his eyes, dark, black pits.

Bottomless pits, just as the one he had died in.