

Room 13 and Other Stories by M. R. James

- 1 *Student's own answers.*
 (a) There are hedges in a garden which have been planted to make a maze. A maze is a puzzle – you have to find your way to the centre and out again along the paths between the hedges. There is also a stone column and on it is a ball. Inside the ball there is a red cloth and faces and parts of skeletons.
 (b) The skeletons and face look as if they are trying to get out of the ball.
- 2 (a) **The Message of Death** seems the most frightening title. In some countries 13 is an unlucky number so **Room 13** could be the most frightening too.
 (b) **The Maze**
 (c) *Student's own answer. To get some ideas the students could look at the cover showing a picture for The Maze.*
- 3 *Student's own answer. Things to think about:*
 We know that some people said Nicolas Francken was a magician and that he was a bad man and we know that the Bishop did not believe this. We know that Francken disappeared in 1560. Was Francken good or bad? Why did he write in blood? How did Francken die? (*Students can decide if the writings are magic spells or are the writings of a man who was shut up in a room to die.*)
- 4 *Student's own answer. Details needed (for First Person narrative):*
End of Day One: The new guest is Professor Parkins./The Colonel and the Professor play golf all afternoon./The Colonel goes back to the inn while the Professor looks for the place where there was an old church./They have supper together.
Day Two: At breakfast, the Colonel notices that the Professor doesn't look well./They walk to the golf-course./The Professor tells the Colonel about the whistle – how he blew it the previous night and the wind started./They play golf till late in the afternoon then walk back to the inn./A frightened boy nearly knocks the Colonel over and he is angry./The boy says he is scared of the thing in the window of the inn – the Professor's room./In the room, they find an untidy bed and a sheet on the floor though the landlord says that no one has been in there./They have supper and the Professor shows the Colonel the whistle./The Colonel suggests that he throws it in the sea./He also tells the Professor to call him in the night if he needs help./The Colonel does hear a call for help in the night./He goes to the Professor's room and saves him as he is about to fall out of the window.
Day Three: The Colonel throws the whistle into the sea./He says strange things like this happen in India and that these things can only frighten you, not hurt you. The Professor does not believe him.
- 5 (a) Farrer (c) Dunning
 (b) Harrington (d) Karswell
- 6 *Student's own answers (a), (b) and (c). The picture should show a part of the story exactly so that it helps a reader to understand what is happening. The caption should be a sentence from the story which describes what is happening in the picture. It can be something someone is saying (see page 42) or part of the narrative (see page 37).*
- 7 *Student's own answer. Script could be put together in this way. Student writes notes:*
 (a) *Some questions for the policemen to ask, eg: Was Paxton a friend of yours?/When did you meet him?/What did you talk about?/You went for a walk last night with Paxton. Where did you go?/The porter saw someone else with you. Who was he?/Why do you think he was killed?/Who do you think killed him?*
 (b) *Answers for Mr James and Mr Long which tell part of the truth but not all of it, eg: He wasn't a friend./I met him at the hotel for the first time./I talked about the history of this area./I walked around the village./There was no one else with us./I don't know why he was killed./I don't know who killed him.*
 (c) *Student writes script assigning questions and answers to the two policemen and Mr James and Mr Long.*
- 8 *Student's own answer. To make 'old' papers, students can use coloured paper, coloured inks, can make the papers dirty, tear the edges, burn or singe the papers (carefully and with help if necessary!).*
- 9 *Student's own answer. (a) and (b). Students can find useful vocabulary in the stories in the book, eg in The Whistle. A story could use the characters from the book, eg Mr James as narrator as in The Lost Crowns of Anglia or Professor Parkins, the main character in The Whistle. A simple story with frightening descriptions of what happens will be the most effective.*