Ravage Rodents

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An essay I wrote for my history class about the plague.

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My name is Eleanor. I live with my husband, Ralph, and our two kids, Edward and Clarence on a manor in England. Our lordâ s name is Richard and in exchange for our loyalty to him and monthly rent; we have jobs, a place to live, wheat, barley, and food for our pigs in the communal woodlands. We have to tend to the lordâ s land before our own because we are not free peasants, but it doesnâ t bother us because it gives us a way to pass the time. The manor is split up into three fields. Every year two fields are harvested with two different plants, usually wheat and barley. The other field is left to rest to maintain fertility and every year the field left to rest is rotated. Our family owns land in all three fields to ensure that we always have enough food and ale to survive. Why ale? Well, the water is very dirty, so we use barley to make ale. We drink it with every meal every day. Ale has lots of calories, which is perfect for people who have to ration their food for the whole year. We sell our extra food at the market, to get money for rent and essentials needed for the year.

We are faithful Christians. We love God and pray to him every day. Our faith has been weakened a little because a few decades ago there was a famine caused by torrential downpours. Some say this was caused due to the temperatures dropping three to four degrees. This has been called the â Little Ice Ageâ . This lead to high demand and low supply of crops, which made prices of everything rise. Even today, problems with malnutrition and bad immune systems flood the country. Why would God let such horrible events happen? Some argue that it is punishment for bad behavior. Others argue that it is the natural order of things; that to keep the population down, people have to die of starvation. I donâ t quite know if I believe these stories.

This morning messengers riding through the countryside brought word of a terrible hell coming towards us, a plague. Apparently, hundreds of people have already died. The doctors donâ t know what caused it, how to prevent it, or how to stop it. Some people have died with little black sores all over their bodies. Some became epileptic. The only common symptom was that all of the people came down with fevers and the flu. Maybe the stories are right; maybe God knows that there are too many people and not enough food and resources for all of us. Oh God, please have mercy on my soul. Please spare my family.

People have become insane because of this plague. Some people in the city claim that it is bad air that is making people sick. They carry flowers around with them everywhere to keep the bad air away. Personally I think they are really carrying the flowers with them to cover up the smell of rotting bodies and excrement. Others claim that the wells were poisoned by the Jews, lepers, and heretics and are killing these supposed criminals. These people have stopped bathing for fear of being poisoned-thatâ s just another reason why someone might want to carry around flowers. Some skeptical Christians have joined the flagellant movement-these people whip themselves and sing and chant in new-found rituals. These people believe God is punishing them and want to redeem themselves by whipping. This is absurd. My family will not associate with any of these people. In fact, we have decided not to associate with anyone. Our doors will remain shut until this plague has passed. We will not leave our house or let anyone inside. We are going on lock-down.

We have been in lock-down for ten days, just us and the rats that run free in our bedroom. We have been doing so well until last night, when Clarence came down with a fever. How could this have happen? We have not come into contact with anyone who is infected. The doors have been locked, unlessâ ¦thatâ s it. Someone must have broken into our house in the middle of the night. I must put chairs up against the doors, to ensure that it wonâ t happen again. Clarence really needs medical attention, but I canâ t let anyone into the house. Nobody can be trusted, not even the doctors. If a doctor doesnâ t come to help

Clarence, he may die, but if the doctor comes in the house, we may all die. Oh God, help me. What should I do?

Seven days have passed since Clarence first got a fever. Now he also has a flu. Even worse than that-he has black sores all over his body. The sores appear to be filled with pus or maybe blood; either way they are horrid to look at. We must throw him onto the streets to prevent it from spreading to the rest of us, but I canâ t do that he is my son. Oh God, what do I do?

Three more days have passed. Clarence is dead. We threw him into the street last night, out the window. Iâ m afraid it might be too late for us. We should have thrown him out when the sores started forming, but how could I do that to my son? We are still not sure who broke into our house, but I fear that the rats may soon become our only food. Edward has a fever. I should really call a doctor, but our lives depend on not letting anyone in the house. Oh crap, he has the flu as well. I should throw him outside, but I donâ t have the heart to do it. This will not end well for us.

Edward was developing block sores on his arm, which he tried to hide from me. Ralph and I threw him out the window to die among the infected, and hopefully, we will escape the same fate. We have no food left, except the innocent little rats that wander our home. Oh God, why have you forsaken me? What did I do to deserve this? Havenâ t I lived a pure live? Ralph and I are scared to death. Please have mercy on our souls.

Ralph and I have both come down with the flu and spiked fevers. We know what comes next. We know our fate. We have accepted our demise. We wish not to go through the pain and torment that our sons went through. We wish to die less painfully. We have decided to stab ourselves to death. Sure it will hurt, but nothing can compare to the pain of the plague. When you read this, we will be dead. When you open our doors, you will find our bodies lying on the kitchen floor next to the rats that we were forced to eat when our food supply ran out.

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