

17<sup>th</sup> May 1349

Dear Diary,

You would not believe what has happened in our village over the last few days! Somewhat horrifyingly, the deadly plague has arrived on our doorstep and is coming for us. Pestilence swept rapidly through our village since its arrival and I am starting to see horrendously gruesome and unspeakable things happening everywhere nearby.

It all began last Sunday as we left church. During the ceremony, there were a few coughs spluttered from some faces I did not recognise. It was only a matter of hours after we had left church when the first victim fell. From then on, countless people have fallen prey to the plague.

It is clear that this horrific disease is extremely deadly. Some people say it came to us through infected air spread from the cities. Apparently, hundreds of dogs and cats have been slaughtered in an attempt to stop the spread of this infernal disease. I don't really know what has caused it, the church say it has been sent by God to punish us for our evil sins but not all of us are evil, so why would he do this?

I have heard the plague comes with many excruciatingly painful symptoms including fever, headaches, painful aching joints, black weeping boils, vomiting and finally a violent death. Out of every person who catches it, it seems almost all die within a week. The sights and smells are like nothing I have ever experienced before.

As you walk down the once busy cobblestones, the streets are desolate. Doors that house the dying have been marked with a blood-red cross and infected people weep quietly inside waiting for their end. In the past week, I have witnessed many deformed dead bodies being left to rot in old wooden carts, some of which have not yet been collected as there aren't enough healthy or able people left alive to help. To make things worse, a swarm of revolting rats have been seen scurrying through the village. The streets are covered with rotting food and filthy waste that must be

attracting them. Throughout the area, red, glowing fires burn to mask the awful smells of death that hang in the summer's air. The village is eerie and silent.

So far, Mother, Father and I have managed to escape the clutches of the vile illness. We pray every day that it will not come to us. Mother says if we do our best to avoid others, we should be okay, but it is so hard not seeing my friends. I am beginning to get extremely lonely. I can't stop thinking about what could happen to us. Next month, I turn thirteen. However, the way things are going, I am just hoping that I make it to my next birthday.

Is there really nobody out there who can actually help us? As you can imagine, I am desperately longing for this illness to pass or a miraculous cure to be discovered.

Living in hope,

Catherine