November 2nd, 1348

Dear Diary,

Today Papa and I took our usual weekly stroll to the Butcher’s on Lipton Lane. I felt uneasy during today’s trip as folk walked around faster than usual, as though there was a secret we were prohibited to know.

Soon, we arrived at the butchers where Henry (the butcher) greeted us with a warm smile and I was pleased to see his son, Roger, in there too. Papa instructed me to wait outside while he talked to Henry, so Roger escorted me out.

While we waited outside, Roger told me everything he knew. He explained to me that there was a horrible illness going around. “It’s not like the others that have passed,” he explained, “It has already killed fifteen people in our town. My father said that the people from the trading ships brought it overseas from the Black Sea.”

According to Roger, the doctors are unsure how to treat this disease and it has already spread very quickly.

Now I know why Mother doesn’t tell me anything; she wants me to be happy and stay innocent. To be honest, I’d rather the information was still a secret. I’m petrified! I’m scared of going to sleep in case I have nightmares. What if I get it Buttons? What if Mother or Papa get it?

Troubled, worried, scared I can’t talk to either of them about this. They would be terribly mad at Roger if they knew he’d told me. Mother doesn’t think that peasants are clean. She doesn’t even like it when Papa buys meat from Henry’s shop. According to Mother, the meat is not clean because they are not clean. In the past, she has simply refused to eat anything Papa bought from there, which meant that she went to bed hungry and without supper. I don’t understand it.

I’m starting to feel sleepy now Buttons. I am going to say my prayers and hopefully fall into a dreamless sleep.

Until tomorrow,

Julia x