

## THE FOG

Ring-a-Ring o’Rosies  
A Pocket full of Posies  
“A-tishoo! A-tishoo!”  
We all fall Down

Cloaked by the fog I crept in silence into the night. I left a trail of sickness and death and conquered more than anyone could have imagined.

Creating fear aided my quest to purge the world of humankind. Man turned on himself; prompted by religious beliefs this pandemic was caused by sins against “The Almighty”. The world, once ridden of heretics meant health and well-being would be restored.

Neighbour turned on neighbour, brother on brother. The unknown is a powerful weapon.

Communities slaughtered undesirables to control God’s ire. This way mankind assisted me in my bidding. If a shadow fell on a household, little could they.

It was a time of great division, providing me with the advantage. The haves and the have-nots, mostly the have-nots.

I travelled in the shadows entering homes on the backs of vermin. A simple rash followed by bulbous tumours appeared on the body in the armpits or groin, bursting and oozing pus and blood. By then too much time had passed; victory was mine.

Poverty and famine were my friends. The uncleanness, squalor and the weakness of the victims made them vulnerable and easy targets. But I did not discriminate. For you see, some who lived in squalor were as strong as those with wealth and power who showed weakness. My target well defined.

Man manipulated by greed allowed me passage on the merchant ships, infecting those onboard. Many ships arrived at their posts of destination hulls filled with dead shipmates. Foolish men surmised if “death ships” turned back to the sea once unloaded, the cities would be spared the ravage. But as the vessels arrived, the flea-infested rats scurried ashore, bringing with them my wrath.

Princess Joan, daughter of Edward III and his wife Philippa of Hainault embarked on her trip from England to join her betrothed Pierre of Castille, unaware of what awaited. The ship she sailed laden with treasure, gifts her father sent with his beloved daughter. He spared no expense. “Such an impressive display of wealth and power to bestow on his allies in Castile”, he thought.

The princess was one of the most protected women in Europe, her trousseau alone filled the ship. It left Portsmouth travelling to a royal castle in Bordeaux stopping en route and unaware of what awaited them.

As a cat toys with a mouse, I began my game. I took members of her entourage one by one. Late August her leading official Robert Bouchier fell casualty to my rage. Fearing for the life of the princess she removed to a small village nearby. They were foolish to think their efforts to escape me would prove fruitful.

I captured her in Loremo the first victim of the camp; her suffering quick and violent. She died in July 1348, confirming my resilience against not only the poor and weak. I had taken Royalty as proof of my power. Wealth or nobility nary immune from me.

King Edward sent northern ecclesiastical Lord Kirby, bishop of Carlisle to return Joan's body to England for burial, paying him a healthy sum for the risk involved. What happened after is unknown as records of her remains returned to Britain do not exist. I shall not divulge the truth. Some say she died in the Plantagenet Castle burned by the mayor of Bordeaux. A futile effort to halt my ravage of mankind.

I continued to lay waste to Europe for centuries and while modern day sanitation has taken much power from me, I still lay in wait and strike when I can. I refuse defeat and will once again wreak havoc when the opportunity presents itself. Until then, I cloak myself in obscurity and await my opportunity.