Chapter 10 Starting with a Story – “The Plague”

Read pages 318 and 319 to answer the following questions.

The Plague

The plague is a disease of rodents. It crosses over to humans when fleas that have bitten the infected animals then bite people. There are three forms of plague. The most common is bubonic. After a variety of early symptoms, the victim’s fever spikes, and buboes appear in the neck and armpit area. Bubonic plague is contracted by humans from a flea bite. The second type of plague is pneumonic. This causes death within three or four days from the filling of lungs with fluid. Once pneumonic plague is in the human population, it is highly contagious and spreads from person to person by airborne germs. The third type of plague, septicemic, affects the blood and leads to death within 24 hours. The bubonic plague is most commonly associated with the 14th century epidemic. Pneumonic plague was also present, however, and accounted for a high number of the deaths.

1. Identify the three forms of plague and their symptoms.

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2. Where did the plague begin and how was it transmitted? (Page 318)

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3. What did people believe a pomander could do? How did they use it? (Page 318)

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4. What symptoms did Claire’s aunt suffer? Write down all the details. (Page 319)

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5. How did the narrator’s parents try to help Claire’s family? (Page 319)

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6. According to the text what is happening “nowadays” when people die? (Page 319)

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7. What have the townspeople done with the bodies of the dead? (Page 319)

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8. What steps did the father take to protect the family from the plague? Why did they decide to stay in Siena? (Page 319)

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