

Black death

[History](#)



The author graphically describes the symptoms of the plague, the most characteristic being the foul odor, severe pain and necrotic swollen lymph nodes. Contracted either by intact or airborne transmission, once acquired the victim would die within a very short time period. Dutchmen depicts how the bubonic plague ravaged entire towns and countries all across Asia and Europe. Populations became so diminished that the living were unable to keep up with the remains of the victims.

At one point Pope Clement VI of Avignon had reported that over 23 million people had perished from this disease. An accurate death toll could never possibly be calculated, however, It is said that " a third of the world died". Dutchmen is able to accurately portray the rebound psychological effects caused by the plague. This disease seemed to bring out the worst in human nature. Death became such a common occurrence that the disposal of human remains became careless.

The disease tested the faith of many. Aside from a recorded handful of Parisian nuns and priests, many religious figures neglected their duties such as performing last rites out of fear of contracting the fatal disease. Homes and towns were deserted. People abandoned their spouses and children. Crops were left unattended and livestock left to die, causing great damage to the economy of an already afflicted society. People became filled with hopelessness and despair.

Dutchmen describes how the death toll amongst the poor was greater mostly due to the closer housing quarters, poor sanitation and hard labor of the lower class. Younger people and women seemed to be highly vulnerable as

well. Doctors and members of clergy were highly affected due to their occupations. The wealthy had more resources to escape to less populated and diseased areas; however royalty and individuals of higher social prominence fell to his indiscriminating disease regardless of their wealth and privilege.

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