

Name: _____

I Survived the
Black Death, 1348



CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS AND CREATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. Elsie keeps thinking, *It wasn't right!* What injustices are on her mind as she thinks these words? Explain at least two.

2. How does the author foreshadow the plague spreading in Brambly?

3. Why does Jonah's story about the village of Westerly matter? What does it show about Sheriff Grimwood?

4. Why is Elsie determined to try to get the church treasure back herself?

5. How does Elsie show kindness to the girls in her village, Abra and Lucy, during the story?

Name: _____

I Survived the Black Death, 1348

CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS AND CREATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

(CONTINUED)

6. Why does Elsie say she feels like “a nothing,” even after she saves Humphrey’s life?

7. Elsie has visions of a dragon, a dungeon, and getting attacked by rats. What’s really happening in this part of the story?

8. When Elsie’s strength returns, she takes a walk through the quiet village. What does she notice? How does she feel?

9. Weeks after the plague has left Brambly, Granny and Elsie awake to a frantic knock on the door. Who is there? Why is Granny crying?

10. The final scene ends on a positive note, despite the devastation of the plague. What plot events and imagery contribute to the story’s positive ending?

ANSWERS

CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. Responses should include at least two of the injustices on Elsie's mind. For example: the fact that girls don't have the same opportunities as boys in her village, that she and Humphrey both lost loved ones, that wealthy men like Lord Norling feast while others in the village starve, and that Sheriff Grimwood is breaking the law while still having the power to punish others.
2. The author uses the first chapter of the book to show that Elsie has the plague and explains that it was spread through rats and fleas. During the story, the traveler foreshadows the plague spreading, although Elsie doesn't believe it at the time. Later, Elsie sees a black rat and gets flea bites after carrying flea-ridden fabric. Jonah also shows plague symptoms, like headache and extreme thirst, before anyone realizes he is sick.
3. Jonah's story about the village of Westerly matters because it shows that Sheriff Grimwood is a criminal. People are afraid to stand up to him, even though everyone knows the bad things that he has done.
4. Elsie is determined to get the church treasure back herself because she sees it as her chance to make things right. She thinks this is one way that she can make a difference.
5. Elsie shows kindness to the girls in her village by standing up for them, drying their tears, and giving them a coin to buy sweet cakes.
6. Even after she saves Humphrey's life, Elsie still says she feels like "a nothing" because she failed at her mission to get the bowl back. She was trying to take a stand against Grimwood and the outlaws, and she didn't succeed in getting the bowl back.
7. When Elsie has visions of being in a dungeon and being attacked by rats, she's having nightmares from her fever.
8. Elsie notices the eerie quiet hanging over the village. She sees the shuttered shops and abandoned homes. She feels the loss like an arrow of pain shooting through her chest.
9. Weeks after the plague has left Brambly, Humphrey arrives at their door. Granny is in tears with relief and happiness that Humphrey has come back safe and well.
10. The plot events that contribute to the positive ending are Humphrey and Papa's safe return, and the fact that the characters successfully find the stolen silver bowl in the forest. The imagery of the bowl's rubies shining brightly and the rays of sun shining through the dark forest both cast a positive light on the story's ending.

CREATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT: Responses will vary but should include details about what Elsie does with the silver bowl, for example polishing it and returning it to the church. Other relevant details might include Granny's reaction to hearing they were out in the woods again, or Father William's gratitude or surprise at having the bowl returned.