

Name: _____

I Survived the
Black Death, 1348



LITERARY ELEMENTS AND CONTEXT REVIEW

LITERARY DEVICE: A simile uses “like” or “as” to make a comparison. Below, find the simile in the book using the page number listed in the first column, and fill in the blank in the second column. Then, in the third column, rewrite the simile in your own words by making a different comparison.

EXAMPLE:

PAGE	SIMILE FROM BOOK	IN YOUR OWN WORDS
14	The story must have seeped into Humphrey’s brain, like <u>a sneaky evil spirit</u> .	The story must have seeped into Humphrey’s brain, like <u>a bad dream you can’t forget</u> .

PAGE	SIMILE FROM BOOK	IN YOUR OWN WORDS
29	Elsie’s guts squirmed like _____.	Elsie’s guts squirmed like _____.
56	With each step, her courage seemed to drain away, like _____.	With each step, her courage seemed to drain away, like _____.
79	It was raining so hard, like _____.	It was raining so hard, like _____.
89	She was freezing cold, like _____.	She was freezing cold, like _____.
112	The rubies... They sparkled like _____.	The rubies... They sparkled like _____.

Name: _____

I Survived the Black Death, 1348

CONTEXT REVIEW (CONTINUED)

CONTEXT REVIEW: The I Survived books are works of historical fiction. Author Lauren Tarshis supplies important information at the back of each book about the events in the story and the history around these events. Use this information—called “context”—to answer the questions below. You can refer to the back of the book, after page 114.

1. What was life for most people like in Europe in the 1300s? Why was life so difficult, even before the Black Death?

2. What happened when the Black Death—known today as the bubonic plague—spread through Europe?

3. What is plague and how is it spread? When did scientists discover these important facts?

4. Why was the Black Death far deadlier than Covid?

5. Do people still get plague? Is it still a deadly disease?



ANSWERS

LITERARY ELEMENT ACTIVITY: SIMILES:

Page 29: Elsie's guts squirmed like eels in a barrel.

Page 56: With each step, her courage seemed to drain away, like water leaking from a cracked bucket.

Page 79: It was raining so hard, like the sky was crying for Jonah.

Page 89: She was freezing cold – like she'd been plunged into an icy river.

Page 112: The rubies... They sparkled like the church window when the sun shined through.

Responses in column three will vary.

CONTEXT REVIEW:

1. In 1300s Europe, most people were very poor and life was extremely difficult. The average person never learned to read or write, and most worked as farmers on land that they didn't own. They had few rights, and little hope for creating a better life, no matter how hard they worked. Death from illness was a constant risk.
2. When the Black Death spread through Europe, tens of millions of people died. The sickness spread like wildfire and great cities lost more than half of their populations. Some farming villages lost so many people they were completely abandoned.
3. Plague is a disease caused by a bacterium (a germ). The bacterium is called *Yersinia pestis*. It's possible for a person to catch plague by touching an infected rodent, but it is much more commonly spread by tiny creatures called fleas. The plague germs travel to humans when fleas become infected by a rodent's blood, then bite a human.
4. The Black Death was far deadlier than Covid because today, we understand germ theory and have modern medical advancements. When Covid struck, scientists from around the world mobilized to create vaccines and medicines. Understanding that diseases spread easily in crowds, people protected themselves by wearing masks and staying home when sick. But in Europe in the 1300s, people had none of this scientific knowledge. Because of that, millions died.
5. Yes, people do still get plague. Every year, between 1,000 and 3,000 people are diagnosed with plague around the world. But luckily, plague is not the deadly disease it once was. Modern medicines such as antibiotics work very well against plague.