Section 5: A Time of Crisis

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Setting the Scene:

* 1347, Genoese trading ships, loaded with grain, left the Black Sea of Caffa and were headed towards Messina, Sicily.
* In the mid 1300’s, Europeans felt that the end of the world was occurring. First, widespread crop failures spread bringing starvation. Next, war deepened the crisis.

The Black Death:

* By 1348, the Black Death (which was war) reached past Italy, to Spain, and France. On in three people died because of the war.

A Global Epidemic:

* Bubonic Plague was the sickness that spread by fleas on rats.
* In the 1200’s, Mongol armies conquered much of Asia, probably setting off the new epidemic, or outbreak of rapid, spreading disease.
* The disease would disappear and quickly return, spreading from Asia to the Middle East.
* Mesopotamia, Syria, and Armenia; covered with dead bodies- killed about 7,000 people a day.

Social Upheaval:

* Europe found that there was no way to stop this disease.
* Some people would try magic, witchcraft; while others into wild pleasures, thinking they would die anyways.
* Some Europeans saw the plague as God’s punishment.
* The Italian poet Boccaccio described the social decay and wrote:

“In the horror therefor brother was forsaken by brother….

and oftentimes husband by wife; nay, what is more, and scarcely to be believed,

fathers and mothers were found to be abandoned their own children,

untended, unvisited, to their fate, as if they had been strangers.” –Boccaccio, *The Decameron*.

European Effects:

* European economy plunged down because of the plague.
* Production decreased as workers and employers died.
* Inflation, or rising prices broke out.

Upheaval in the Church:

* The late Middle Ages brought spiritual crisis, scandal, and division to the Roman Catholic Churches.

Divisions within the Catholic Church:

* Churches weren’t positive influences during the “Black Death”.
* In Avignon, popes resigned over a lavish court leading to 1378, where reformers elected their own pope to rule from Rome.

The Hundred Year’s War:

* During 1337-1453, England and France fought a series of conflicts, known as the Hundred Years’ War.

Causes:

* Once fighting began, economic rivalry and national pride made it hard for either side to give up the struggle.

English Victories:

* At first, Englishmen won a string of victories- At Crecy in 1346, Poitiers 10 years later, and Agincourt in 1415.
* Won using longbows, (Bow & Arrows) wielded by English archers.

Joan of Arc and French Victory:

* In 1429, a 17-year-old peasant women, Joan of Arc appeared at the courts of Charles VII.
* She told the King (Charles VII) she came to France to save it, and was successful.

Effects:

* The Hundred Years’ war brought many changes to the late medieval world.
* Long- Bow and cannon gave soldiers a new importance, Knights and castles began disappearing because of the lack of defense.

Looking Ahead:

* In the 1400’s, as Europe recovered from the Black Death, changes occurred.
* Population would expand, manufacture grew; increased trade & Italian Cities flourished from shipping.
* The Middle East exchanged spices, sugar, & cotton with Europe.
* As Europe grew stronger, it would take a more prominent role on the global stage.



1. Who, in 1347, sent out trading ships, loaded with grain, left the Black Sea and headed towards Messina, Sicily?
2. Italians
3. Genoese
4. Europeans
5. What were three effects of the Black Death?
6. Better trading, less population, more deaths
7. Better economy, better education, less deaths
8. Lower population, lower economy, less production
9. What does epidemic mean?
10. A type of shot used to fight disease
11. Outbreak of rapid spreading disease
12. Term for increasing prices
13. Name two ways that the Europeans attempted to defeat the disease;
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16. Why did the Europeans seek wild pleasures during the disease?
17. Europeans knew they were going to die anyways
18. Europeans wanted to hide from the disease
19. Europeans were seeking for a cure for the disease