

The Black Death: a short story:

The ship had just docked as I reached the attic window. To get to my current position I had to summersault over boxes, ascend a rotting pole and finally precariously crawl along a beam of wood and I did all this in under ten minutes since I had seen the classic, weather-beaten vessel on the horizon. I wanted to climb out of the window and slide down the drainpipe to rush to greet everyone, but something was holding me back. A member of the ships crew had seen me and was looking at me solemnly, and I could see a trace of pity in his eyes. As the rest of the crew climbed out of the cabin door, I realized something. The solemn-eyed person was the only one that looked.....well, normal! All the others were weary (which is to be expected after a trip around the world) but more alarmingly, diseased! I even saw black lumps protruding out of one sailor's SKIN, which made a bulge inside his t-shirt. It looked like someone had got inside him and had implanted cricket balls in his limbs! I shuddered: what could have caused this? Suddenly my heart stopped. A body lay limp on the scrubbed cabin deck, only held up by two tired sailors that looked like they were about to join the person they were holding on the floor. Unexpectedly the ill person sat up with their back to me and proceeded to violently vomit blood before making a gurgling noise and falling back to the floor, where they lay still. It was only now that I recognized the facial features of the deceased man. His unmoving eyes were the same colour as mine; blue, and my brother and him shared a hair colour. This was my father. My father, who was a servant on a ship that travelled the world. My father, who earned as much money as he could to keep our small family afloat. My father, who rarely had a day off and had worked hard all his life. "Nooooo!" I screamed as I opened the latch on the window. I ran over to the looming ship, but my mother caught my arm. "Come" she said, trying to keep her emotions in control in front of me even though silent tears were trickling down her cheeks. "There's nothing we can do" I must've followed her because when I woke up I was on my bed made of pallets and straw. A crow was in my room. Wait....no.....that does not make sense! I rubbed my raw-from-crying eyes and looked again. This time the crow spoke. "good evening miss" it said. EVENING! I had been asleep for 5 hours! I tried to sit up in shock which is when I realized I couldn't feel anything. The crow spoke again: "Please rest". I liked the crow. He had a soothing voice and smelt like lavender. My mother was in a corner, with what looked like a rose stuck halfway up one nostril. Dramatically, the room

started spinning. The crow said something like “There’s nothing more we can do” but his voice was distorted now so I could not quite make it out. The last thing I heard was my mother screaming. Then darkness.