



A Journal Of The Plague Year

Daniel Defoe

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While some critics categorize it as a historical novel, much debate has taken place over whether Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* is actually a novel or a non-fictional work. The story is set in 1665, the year of the title, and describes the horrors of the devastating pestilence that struck London at that time. The events are narrated by H.F., which suggests that Defoe has based his work on the diaries of his uncle, Henry Foe. H.F. is a man who decides not to leave the city despite the catastrophe in order to record every detail of what happens around him. He claims that the plague has reached England because of active commerce with mainland Europe. Despite the different measures taken by the local health authorities, it has spread like wildfire amid the city crowds. The narrator reports the multiplying numbers of people with black "tokens" on their bodies and the consequent mass burials. Generally, the narrative focuses on the behavior of people, mainly the officials who struggle to enforce quarantines, the terrified citizens who struggle to escape to the countryside as well as some dishonest crooks selling fake cures. When the nightmare has finally come to an end, tens of thousands of dead Londoners are reported.

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