

Lines from Camus, *The Plague*

Wesley Advo cates

Part IV

~~11-9-14~~

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Saint Roch is patron saint of those with plague, of dogs, of persons falsely accused. Lots of detail online.

“Saint James Infirmary”

It comes to this: like all of us who have not yet died of plague, he fully realizes that his freedom and his life may be snatched from him at any moment. But since he, personally, has learned what it is to live in a state of constant fear, he finds it normal that others should come to know this state. (Tarrou 178)

. . . he chose this moment to stagger grotesquely to the footlights, his arms and legs splayed out under his antique robe, and fall down in the middle of the property sheepfold, always out of place, but now, in the eyes of the spectators, significantly, appallingly so. (Narrator 180)

The old woman went to Mass every morning. “Don’t you believe in God?” she asked him.

On Rambert’s admitting he did not, she said again that “that explained it.” “Yes,” she added, “you’re right. You must go back to her. Or else—what would be left you?” (Old Spanish woman, mother of Marcel and Louis, with Rambert 184)

Tarrou shrugged his shoulders. “At my age one’s got to be sincere. Lying’s too much effort.”

“Excuse me, Tarrou,” the journalist said, “but I’d greatly like to see the doctor.”

“I know. He’s more human than I. All right, come along.” (Tarrou and Rambert 186)

From between the inflamed eyelids big tears welled up and trickled down the sunken, leaden-hued cheeks. When the spasm had passed, utterly exhausted, tensing his thin legs and arms, on which, within forty-eight hours, the flesh had wasted to the bones, the child lay flat, racked on the tumbled bed, in a grotesque parody of crucifixion. (Narrator 193)

Paneloux, who was slumped against the wall, said in a low voice: "So if he is to die, he will have suffered longer." (Narrator and Paneloux 193-194)

Only the child went on fighting with all his little might. Now and then Rieux took his pulse—less because this served any purpose than as an escape from his utter helplessness—and when he closed his eyes, he seemed to feel its tumult mingling with the fever in his own blood. And then, at one with the tortured child, he struggled to sustain him with all the remaining strength of his own body. (Narrator 194)

For the first time he opened his eyes and gazed at Rieux, who was standing immediately in front of him. In the small face, rigid as a mask of grayish clay, slowly the lips parted and from them rose a long, incessant scream, hardly varying with his respiration, and filling the ward with a fierce, indignant protest, so little childish that it seemed like a collective voice issuing from all the sufferers there. Rieux clenched his jaws; Tarrou looked away. Rambert went and stood beside Castel, who closed the book lying on his knees. Paneloux gazed down at the small mouth fouled with the sordes of the plague and pouring out the angry death-cry that has sounded through the ages of mankind. He sank on his knees, and all present found it natural to hear him say in a voice hoarse but clearly audible across that nameless, never-ending wail: "My God, spare this child!" (Narrator and Paneloux 194-195)

Thus we had apparently needful pain, and apparently needless pain; we had Don Juan cast into hell, and a child's death. For while it is right that a libertine should be struck down, we see no reason for a child's suffering. And truth to tell, nothing was more important on earth than a child's suffering, the horror it inspires in us, and the reasons we must find to account for it. (Paneloux 201)

For who would dare to assert that eternal happiness can compensate for a single moment's human suffering? (Paneloux 202)

. . . –since it was God's will, we, too should will it. Thus and thus only the Christian could face the problem squarely and, scorning subterfuge, pierce to the heart of the supreme issue, the essential choice. And his choice would be to believe everything, so as not to be forced into denying everything. (Paneloux 203)

"Thanks. But priests can have no friends. They have given their all to God." (Paneloux 210)

"I hope Jacques did not suffer too much." (Othon 218)

"To make thing simpler, Rieux, let me begin by saying I had plague already, long before I came to this town and encountered it here." (Tarrou 222)

"Needless to say, I knew that we, too, on occasion, passed sentences of death. But I was told that these few deaths were inevitable for the building up of a new world in which murder would cease to be." (Tarrou 226)"You see, I'd heard such quantities of arguments , which very nearly turned my head, and turned other people's heads enough to make them approve of murder; and I'd come to realize that all our troubles spring from our failure to use plain, clean-cut language." (Tarrou 229-230)

"Exactly! Can one be a saint without God?—that's the problem, in fact, the only problem I'm up against today." (Tarrou 230-231)

At this moment he suffered with Grand's sorrow, and what filled his breast was the passionate indignation we feel when confronted by the anguish all men share. (Narrator of Rieux 237)

"Oh, doctor, I know I look a quiet sort, just like anybody else. But it's always been a terrible effort only to be—just normal. And now—well, even that's too much for me." (Grand 237)

"Burn it!" (Grand 239)