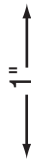


Name
Mr. Isaacs
Subject
Period #
Date



MLA Layout Guidelines:

- Font Size: 12pt
- Font Style: Times New Roman
- Spacing: Double Space
- Margins: 1" all around

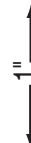
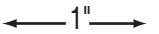
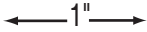
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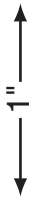
Title

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On the surface Albert Camus' novel, *The Plague*, appears to be a very simple and straightforward story. A small fictional town on the coast of Algeria, Oran, is suddenly stricken with a mysterious plague. Initially the plague shows up in rats that come out of the alleys and sewers to die on the streets. Then it rapidly spreads to the townspeople resulting in thousands of deaths. Eventually the city reaches a crisis situation as the government and community tries desperately to save people who are infected and dying. We follow the events through Dr. Bernard Rieux who becomes one of the only doctors treating a rapidly diminishing population. The story becomes how the people of this small town will survive this seemingly unstoppable plague before the whole city is wiped out. As mysteriously as the plague appears it vanishes leaving the small city in a state of celebration. At the end of the story we learn that Dr. Rieux is the narrator of the story and a survivor of the plague. The story is his testimony for what he saw took place during the time of the devastation.

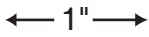
As is the case with many of Camus' novels, including *The Stranger*, appearances can be deceiving. A great deal of research has shown that *The Plague* is an allegory for World War II and the Holocaust. One scholar, Lev Braum, summed up the underlying message of *The Plague*



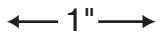


Comparing the stories to each other we can pull out threads that are common to each, thus giving us great insight for Kafka's overall message and some guidance for our own lives.

□ Before looking at the stories we must first look at Kafka's own history to help us understand the many psychological allegories that are apparent in his work. He was born in Prague on July 3, 1883 to Hermann and Julie Kafka (Kafka 475). He had three sisters, Elli, Valli, Otta and two younger brothers who died in their infancy (475). Kafka's family was Jewish, but he grew up in a predominantly Catholic



neighborhood. To further complicate his identity, Kafka's father only spoke German and sent Franz to German schools (Brod 3). Hermann Kafka was a "powerful and extraordinarily imposing father" who served in the military for many years (5). He was a man that Franz feared greatly, but respected to the point of idolatry (5-6). Julia Kafka was much quieter and represented a much more scholarly tradition



(6). She worked long hours at her husband's warehouse and was rarely at home during the day (9). This left Franz very lonely and sad for much of the earlier part of his life (9). Those feelings intensified as he

suffered from deep anxiety and depression the rest of his life. This is apparent in many of his journal entries in which innocent thoughts are turned into nightmares of anxiety and guilt (11). Going against

his father's will, Kafka went away to law school at the University of Prague and after getting his law degree he worked at an accident insurance corporation until his retirement in 1922. Kafka was never

married but got engaged twice to Felice Bauer in 1914 (and a second time in 1917), and to Julie

Wohryzek (or Vohryzek) in 1919 (Kafka 477-478). He also had a son by Grete Bloch in 1913, a friend

