

Name _____



The Joyful Mystery: The Dancing Plague of 1518

Step back in time to the curious and bewildering event known as the Dancing Plague of 1518. It's a tale that's both strange and intriguing, where dancing took over an entire town, and happiness danced hand in hand with mystery.

The Dance Begins

Our story unfolds in Strasbourg, a town in what is now France, but was then part of the Holy Roman Empire. In July 1518, a woman named Frau Troffea stepped out into the streets and began to dance. There was no music, no celebration—just her, dancing uncontrollably.

The Joy Spreads

What started as one woman's dance soon spread like wildfire. Within a week, 34 people had joined her, and the number kept growing. The dancers were unable to stop, even when their feet bled, and exhaustion set in. They danced day and night.

The Mystery Deepens

Doctors and authorities were baffled. They couldn't find a physical cause for the dancing. Some believed it was a curse or a form of divine punishment. Others thought it might be caused by "hot blood" or a psychological condition. But the dancing continued.

A Town Caught in a Dance Fever

By September, the number of dancers had swelled to around 400. Concerned, the town council decided to help, rather than punish them. They arranged a stage and musicians, thinking that the dancers needed to dance it out of their system. It worked.

The Dancing Ended

By October, the dancing plague had lost its grip on Strasbourg. Some of the dancers had died from exhaustion, but most had survived. The strange episode remains a historical mystery, with no definitive explanation.

The Legacy of the Dance

The Dancing Plague of 1518 has left a lasting legacy. It's been the subject of books, plays, and even songs. While the cause remains uncertain, it serves as a reminder of the strange and unpredictable ways the human mind and body can sometimes behave.

