

The dancing plague of 1518

Do you like dancing? (*Yes, I like to...*)

Vocabulary

1. disease 2. hunger 3. believes 4. uncontrollably 5. curse 6. exhaustion

True Story

In July 1518, the people of Strasbourg, a city in France, started dancing _____. It began when a woman named Frau Troffea started dancing in the street. She danced by herself for a week before more people joined her. Soon, about 400 people were dancing. Doctors thought it was due to "hot blood" and advised them to keep dancing to get better.

The city built a stage and hired musicians to help. However, many dancers became very tired, and some even died from _____ or heart attacks. The dancing finally stopped in September when the dancers were taken to a shrine to pray. Historian John Waller _____ the cause was fear of St. Vitus, a saint thought to bring a dancing _____. Stress from _____ and _____ may have also played a role.

Quiz

1. Who started dancing in Strasbourg in 1518?
2. How long did Frau Troffea dance by herself?
3. What did the doctors think was the cause of the dancing?
4. What happened to some dancers because they were too tired?

True or False

- | | | | |
|--|------|--|-------|
| 1. The people of Strasbourg stopped dancing in August. | True | | False |
| 2. The city built a stage and hired musicians. | True | | False |
| 3. John Waller thinks the dancing was caused by a fear of a saint. | True | | False |

Conversation

- A: Frau! Why are you dancing so much?
 B: I don't know, I just can't stop!
 A: Well, you've got the whole town dancing with you now.
 B: I guess we all need a break from stress.
 A: Maybe we should take a rest before we drop!
 B: Yes... maybe we can dance over to the shrine for a break.

Discussion

1. Do you like to dance when you're stressed?
2. Have you ever danced for a long time?
3. What is your favorite type of dance?
4. Do you think music can help people feel better?
5. Would you rather dance non-stop for 10 hours or study English non-stop for 10 hours?