

The Great Stupidity: A Guide to the Songs

In *The Great Stupidity*, the Black Death (aka the Great Mortality) circa year 1450 blasts through France, and a blacksmith and two friends try to find a way to stop it. He is given a task by the leaders of his village to find a half of Saint Ambrose's toenail, which the Lord of the village had stolen from him, so they can reattach it and end the death. Already the scholars and scientists led by the Great Frenchie in Paris have determined that building six-foot walls around towns and waving one's hands constantly will help prevent death, as will killing all sinners and Jews and being pious. As the trio wander across France, find the toenail, and seek guidance from the Great Frenchie himself, they encounter many others who believe they have the answer to the Black Death, as well as many who find a way to cope with it. Divided into twelve chapters, the book has a song attached to each, and a description of them is below in order of appearance.

The Great Mortality. This song before Chapter One describes how the blacksmith's town prepares for the coming of the Black Death, using science and faith to stop it.

Half Ain't Wholey: This song follows Chapter Two, when, despite all reasonable efforts, the great mortality decimates the blacksmith's town. They try to figure out why, and then realize that they've only done a half-baked job, and that half of the town's most prized holy relic—Saint Ambrose's toenail—has been stolen. The town leaders send the blacksmith on a quest to find it and reattach it.

I Will Submit: In Chapter Three, the blacksmith, known as Smith, enters the Pope's castle in Avignon to get advice about reattaching the nail. There he meets the Pope's number 3 girl, henceforth known as Three, and she joins him on his quest, bringing some indulgences with her to buy back the nail. She sings this song after the chapter.

Just Don't Fart: Smith and Three meet a group of Flagellants in Chapter Four, people who have sworn a life of piety and chastity, and who believe that if they whip themselves and follow certain rituals then their blood will be pure and can cure anyone of disease. These people were real and traveled across Germany and France during the great mortality.

Blame the Jews: Many Christians believed that a Jewish plot was responsible for the Black Death. There was such a plot fabricated, leading to the burning of tens of thousands of Jews across Europe. After torturing a rabbi named Jacob, some Europeans were convinced that the Jews had poison balls they put in wells to kill off the Christians, which was the cause of the great mortality. Smith and Three join the Flagellants into a town with Jews in Chapter Five, and with the help of a Jewish merchant, they save the Jews from murder. That merchant, who Smith henceforth refers to as The Jew, joins him and Three as they travel to find the nail.

Dip Hallelujah: The three of them find the monastery in Chapter Six in which the other half of Saint Ambrose's nail now resides. These monks dip artifacts into holy water and sell it all over Europe. This actually did happen and was touted as a way to stop the death, even as it

enriched those who sold it. The three of them find the nail, take it, and run. They then travel to see the Great Frenchie in Paris to learn how to reattach it and end the great mortality.

The Great Debauchery: Whether fact or fable, several monasteries and convents used the great mortality as a reason to dispense with their vows and engage in a life that they had previously derided. Chapter Seven takes our three travelers to one such monastery where they meet the monks and nuns who have taken a new path away from piety and faith.

Doc Doctor: As Three is getting ill, the three travelers take a detour away from their trek to Paris to find doctors to help her. In Chapter Eight, they meet the doctors, and much of what is in the song and chapter is taken verbatim from the medical doctrines of the time.

Soldiers of France: Flanking around Paris, the three of them meet an army of French Soldiers called the Warriors of our France, who are fighting against the British in the Hundred Year War while they quarantine any French villages in which plague may be brewing by locking people in their homes for 2-3 weeks. This is based on actual events. In Chapter Nine, they go with the soldiers to lock up a village and attack the British.

The Steps of Fate: In Chapter Ten, the three of them find their way to Paris and hear the Great Frenchie speak. They meet some dignitaries who help gain them entrance to the Frenchie's edifice. Smith, in the song, muses over what will come of him and his friends after they meet with the Great Frenchie and save the world.

The Sciency Song: They meet the Great Frenchie in Chapter Eleven, and things don't go as well as planned. This song comes after their visit and is Frenchie's version of what science is and how he is the only one capable of being sciency.

The Great Stupidity: Chapter Twelve ends the book, and this is the song that reflects all the Smith learns. The chapter tells his and his friends' tales after they leave Paris and return to Smith's village and many more adventures.

Dip Hallelujah Encore: I asked two singers to record this song, and both were terrific. This is the second version, and I use it to end the book.

*All music and lyrics are written by Andy Lazris. The songs are performed by four anonymous singers who worked with the author to make the songs soar. They are the same four artists who sang all the songs in his previous 3D book, *The Geriatrics Vengeance Club*.

**The songs from both books can be found on the website, Spotify, Apple Music, and many other commercial music sites.