

## AP European History Summer Reading Assignment 2014

Students will need to read *Peasant Fires: The Drummer of Niklashausen* by Richard Wunderli – The book can be purchased on amazon.com for less than \$10.

One night in 1476 in the small German town of Niklashausen, an illiterate shepherd and a street musician by the name of Hans Behem had a vision of the Virgin Mary. The Virgin told him to burn his drum in a bonfire of the vanities and preach the virtues of a life of poverty and devotion to God. In a short time great crowds came from all of Germany to hear the drummer preach. Authorities were alarmed. Hans was arrested and burned.

This incident has become emblematic of the conflicts between wealthy rulers, both church and state, and the peasants and common people of Europe. It has been portrayed as a precursor of the massive peasant revolts of the next century.

This reading will help us set the stage for our course and provide an understanding of the lives of the "folk" who made up the bulk of the population and struggled to survive in a world they did not understand and a world that did not even recognize their existence.

Read this work this summer and come to class on the first day prepared to explain in writing the lives, dreams and problems of the common man on the eve of Modern Europe.

For each chapter students need to take notes on the lives, dreams, and problems that the common man faces. Take specific notes and list the page number where the information comes from. You will need **AT LEAST** one example from each chapter. This **will be your first assignment for the year and will be DUE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS.** The assignment should be typed and be printed out ready to hand to Mr. Cataldo the first day of class. This assignment will also serve as a baseline for reading comprehension so we can work to become better readers and start preparing for the AP test.

**There will also be a quiz over the book the first day of class, August 15.**

The format should look like this and be typed:

### Chapter 1

Lives – What goes on in the life of the characters in the book? Are they happy, sad, or feeling some sort of other emotions do they encounter in everyday life? What is a “normal” day for the characters in the book?

Dreams – Do the characters dream to live a better life? Are their dreams centered around themselves, family members, or their friends? What are the focus of their dreams?

Problems – What are the kinds of problems the characters encounter in the book? What seem to be “common” problems and what seem to be “uncommon” problems?