

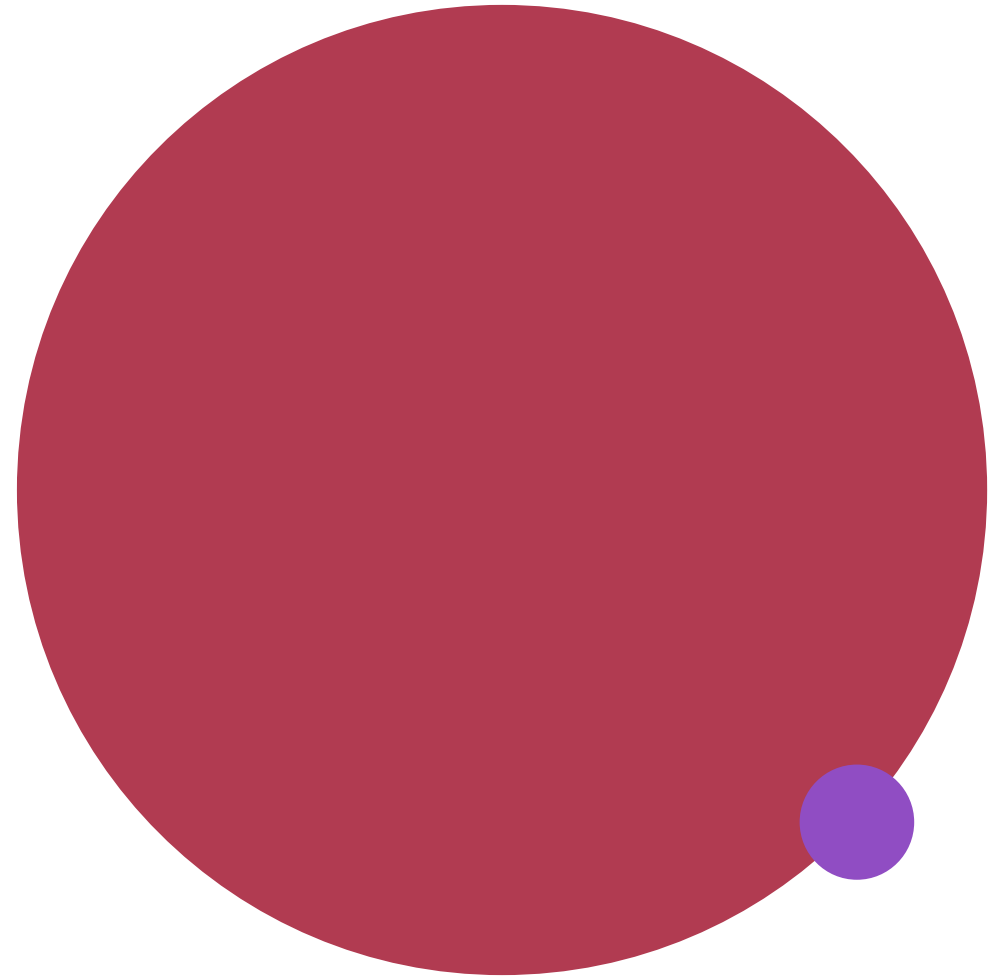



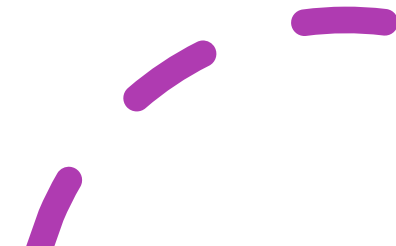
The Great
Works - Albert
Camus *The
Plague*

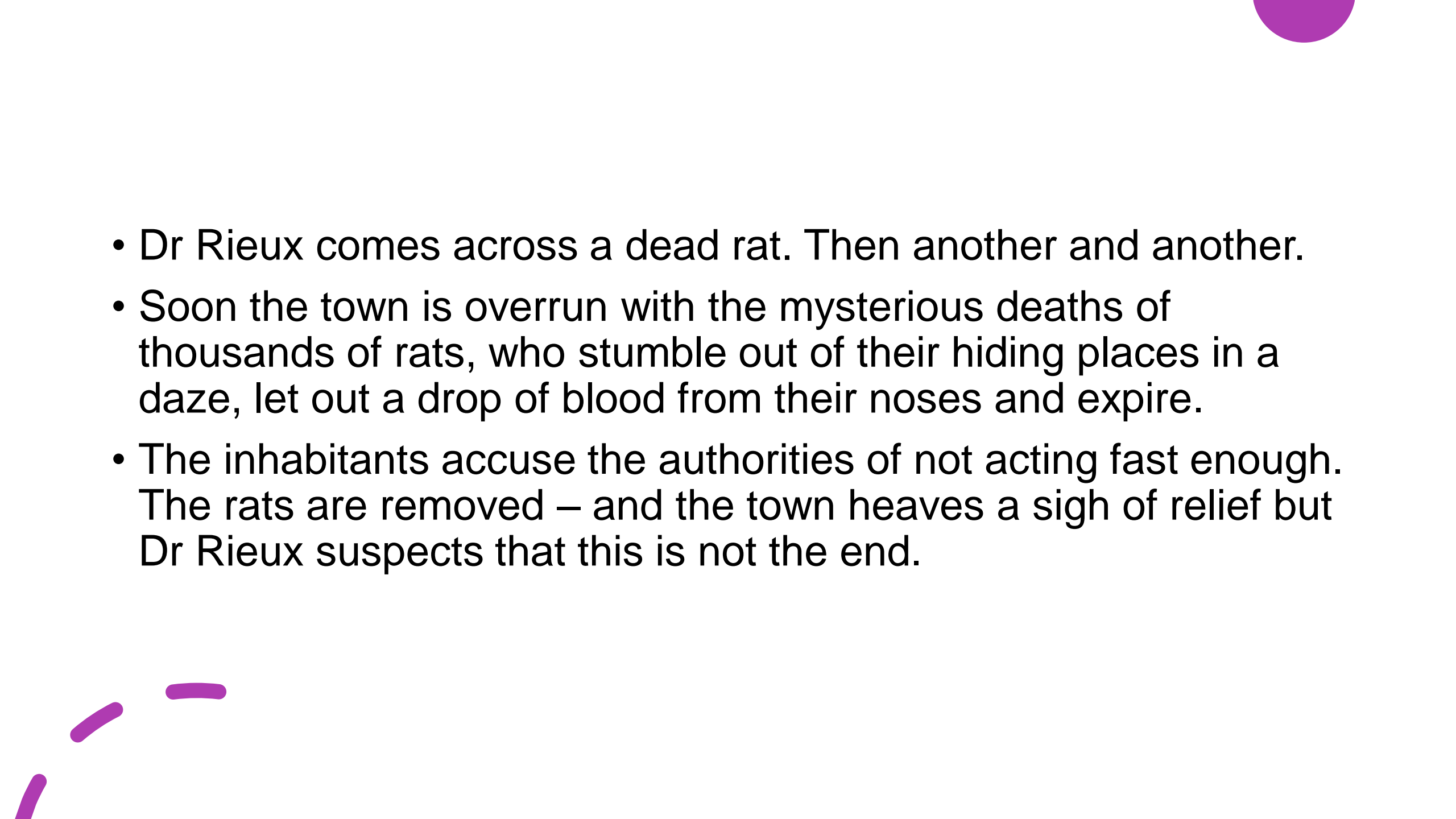


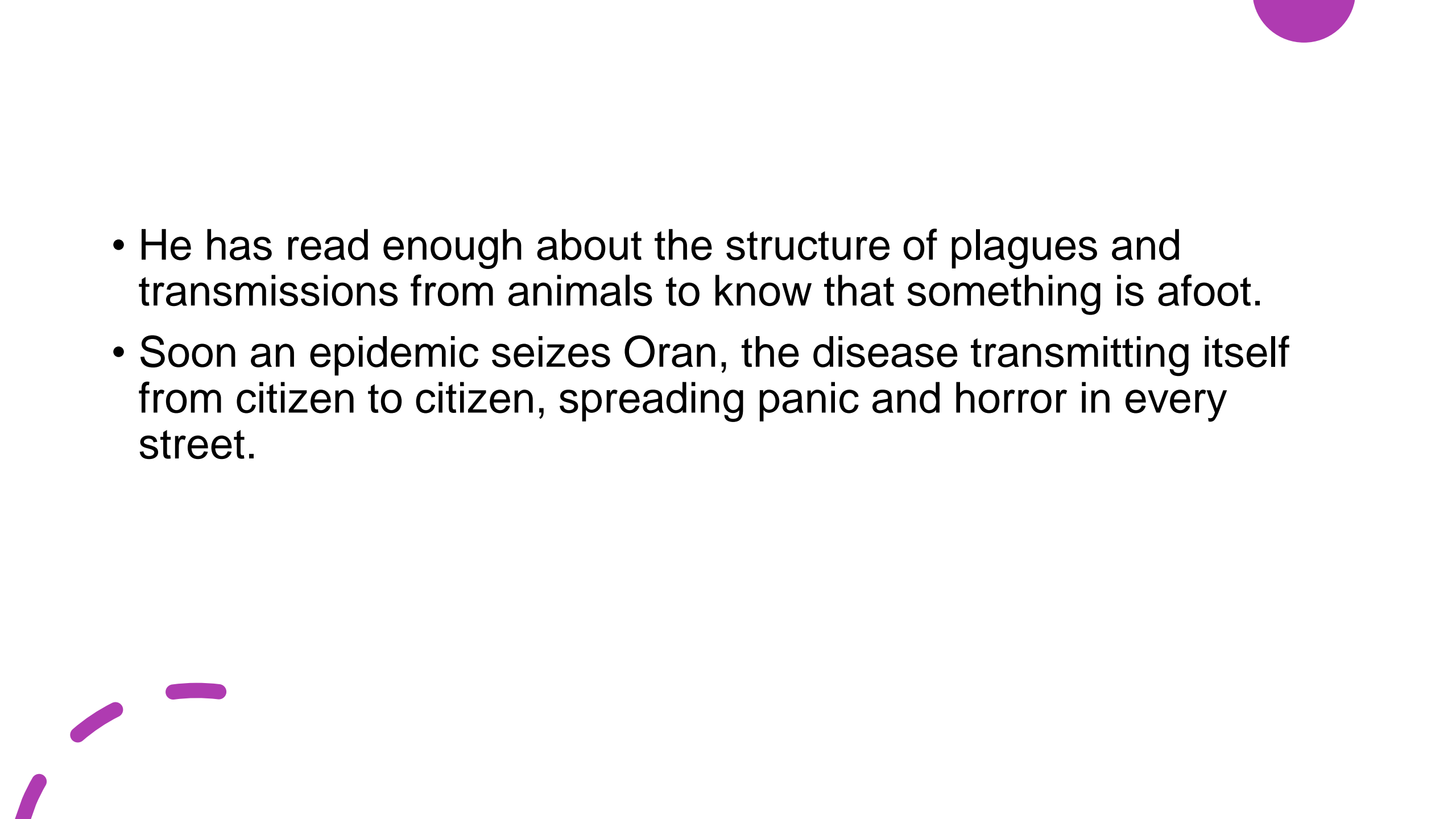
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- The background of the slide is a dark, textured image showing what appears to be a microscopic view of a virus or a similar biological structure. The image is overlaid with several decorative purple elements: a dashed purple arc at the top left, a solid purple circle at the bottom right, and a large white circle on the right side of the slide. The text is white and positioned on the left side of the slide.
- In January 1941 the French Writer, Albert Camus began work on a novel about a virus that spreads uncontrollably to animals and humans and ends up destroying half the population of the representative modern town: Oran.
 - It was called *le Peste*/ The Plague, eventually published in 1947 and described as the greatest European novel of the post war period.

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- The book written in sparse haunting prose, takes us through a catastrophic outbreak of a contagious disease, in the fictionalized town of Oran on the Algerian coast; as seen through the eyes of the novel's hero, a doctor Rieux, a version of Camus himself.


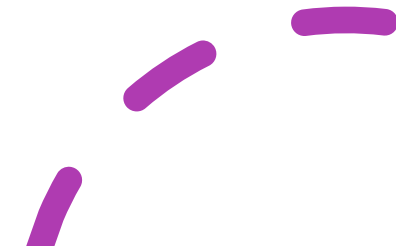


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- As the novel opens, an eerie sense of normality reigns. ‘Oran is an ordinary town,’ writes Camus.
 - ‘Nothing more than a French Prefecture on the coast of Algeria’.
 - The inhabitants lead busy money centered lives; they barely notice they are alive at all.
 - Then with the pacing of a thriller the horror unfolds.....
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- Dr Rieux comes across a dead rat. Then another and another.
 - Soon the town is overrun with the mysterious deaths of thousands of rats, who stumble out of their hiding places in a daze, let out a drop of blood from their noses and expire.
 - The inhabitants accuse the authorities of not acting fast enough. The rats are removed – and the town heaves a sigh of relief but Dr Rieux suspects that this is not the end.



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- He has read enough about the structure of plagues and transmissions from animals to know that something is afoot.
 - Soon an epidemic seizes Oran, the disease transmitting itself from citizen to citizen, spreading panic and horror in every street.

- In order to write the book, Camus immersed himself in the history of plagues.
- He read books on the Black Death that killed 50 million people in Europe in the 14th Century; the Italian Plague of 1629 that killed 280000 people across the plains of Lombardy and the Veneto, the great plague of London of 1665 as well as plagues that ravaged cities on China's eastern seaboard during the 18th and 19th Centuries/

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- In March 1942, Camus told the writer Andre Malraux that he wanted to understand what Plague meant for humanity.
 - Camus was not writing about one plague, nor was this, as has been sometimes suggested, a metaphoric tale about the recent Nazi occupation of France by Germany.
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The Message of the novel

- Camus was drawn to this idea because in his philosophy, we are all – unbeknownst to us - already living through a plague: that is a widespread invisible disease that may kill us all at any times and destroy the lives we assumed were solid.
- The actual historical incidents we call plagues are merely a time when our vulnerability and the idea that our lives are fragile is put under the spotlight and revealed to
- ; they are dramatic instances of perpetual rule: that we are vulnerable to being randomly exterminated by a bacillus, an accident or even the actions of our fellow humans.

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- Our exposure to plague is constant.
 - The book isn't attempting to panic us, because panic suggests a response to a dangerous but temporary condition from which we can find safety.
 - But there can never be safety.
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- Camus's message is to accept the limitations of our own short lives and to make the best of what we have.
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