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English 1302

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How turmoil makes a society stronger

When a society, nearly overnight, loses everything that they know to exist how can they possibly end up as a stronger society? The Great Fire of London created immediate but short-lived turmoil; however it allowed residents of London to bond in accomplishing the monumental task of rebuilding the city in a way that allowed them to keep their identify.

The Great Fire of London destroyed four fifths of London in a matter of four days. “The historic, commercial, topographical, and imaginative center of London burned… [throwing] existing and potential changes into calcined relief, bringing to a culturally universal level the history and meaning and shape of London to Londoners(Wall 4).” The Fire came at an unfortunate time as London had just gotten over the Great Plague that struck the year before and killed nearly 65,000 people (NYSED). The destruction was felt regardless of socioeconomic status, just like the plague, so it stripped any class differences.

Londoners felt a loss of identity due to the fire at the beginning but if anything they actually kept their identity. The residents of London had lost everything they had known, what was Fish Street where they could buy fish was no longer there. Everything that was known to Londoners, from the “most reliable signs suddenly [were lost] (Wall 3)”. However, their identity in the end had nothing to do with the signs and buildings that London previously had, but the bond they had for being residents of London.

The turmoil that London suffered was short-lived, in a matter of a few years London was rebuilt with disaster-proof in mind, a stronger economy, and a stronger bond between Londoners. Just as the world experience after the devastating terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Americans were united with one bond – being Americans! This brought people together regardless of race, color, religion, or sex in a way that we had not experienced before. This was also seen with the Great Fire of London, everyone, regardless of their socioeconomic status were all in the same situation. They had all lost everything physical. “From her high turrets, hourly suitors come; The East with incense, and the West with gold, Will stand, like suppliants, to receive her doom (Dryden 1186).” There was much commrodary between residents at this point as they had one goal in mind, rebuilding the city in a way that they could of only dreamed of before.

Londoners, were given a huge blessing in the end, they had the chance to rebuild their city the way they wanted. They did just so, they built it safer, modern to that time, and due to the fire got publicity around all of Europe that brought people to London. The fire also balanced the classes to a more even level than they were previously.

London profited because of the fire by bringing everyone together and accomplishing the monumental task of rebuilding the city. Because of this they ended up as a stronger society that would of most definitely not of been possible if the fire had never taken place.

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