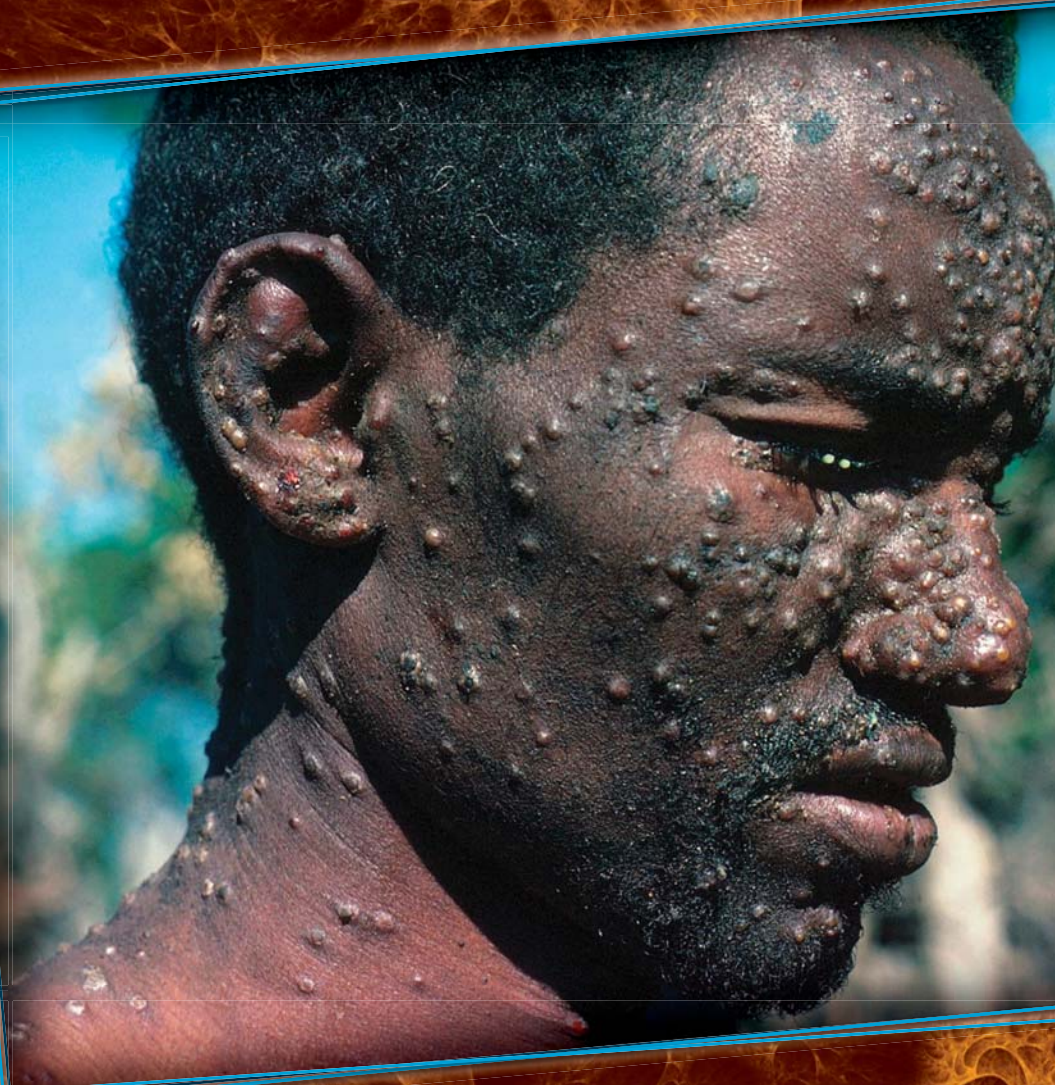




SMALLPOX

Is It Over?



by Adam Reingold

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by Adam Reingold

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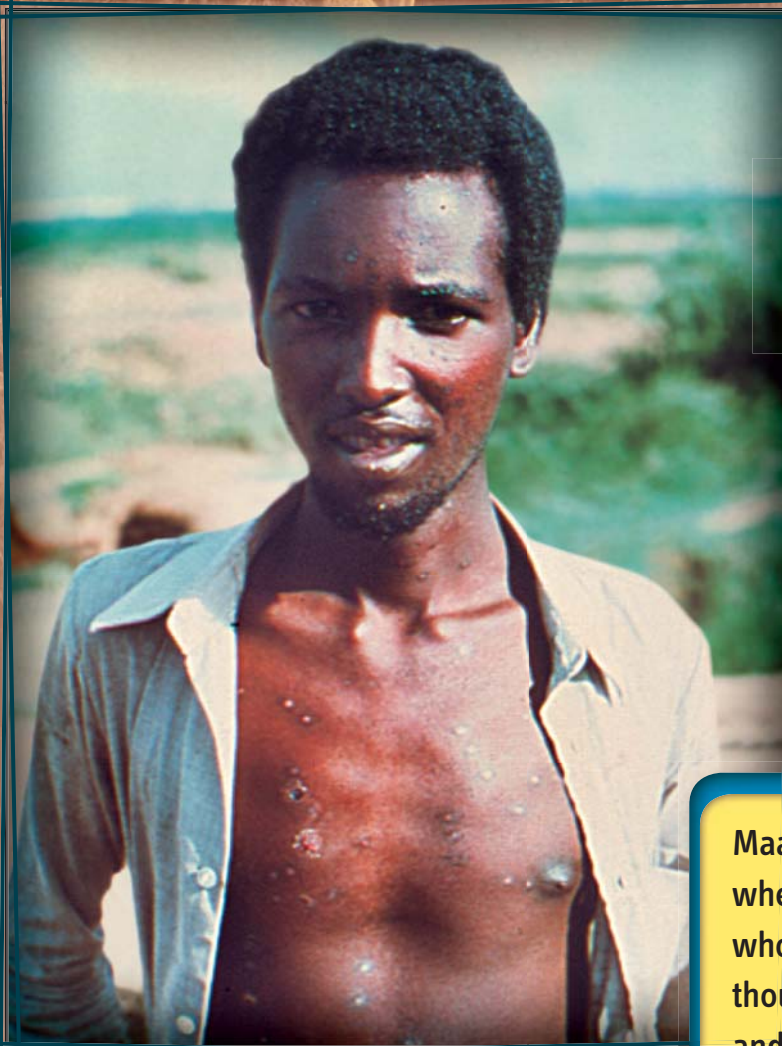
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Terrible Suffering

Ali Maow Maalin (AH-lee MOU MAH-lin) started to feel sick on October 22, 1977. At first, the 23-year-old hospital cook had a burning **fever**. A few days later, a red **rash** appeared on his arms and stomach. Then the rash turned into small, painful pimple-like sores called **pustules**. On October 30, a nurse went to see the sick young man. He knew right away what had struck Maalin—the deadly disease **smallpox**!



Ali Maow Maalin

Maalin went to the hospital when he first got sick. Doctors who saw his rash mistakenly thought he had chicken pox and sent him home.

Smallpox can spread easily from one person to another. As a result, nearby health workers immediately **quarantined** Maalin. They didn't want anyone else in Merca (MER-kuh), the city in Somalia where Maalin lived, to catch the illness. After all, there is no medicine to cure smallpox once a person has the disease.

Fortunately, Maalin soon began to feel better on his own. Over the next few weeks, he completely recovered. The young man was lucky to be alive.



Merca is a city on the southern coast of Somalia, in Africa.



Trying to Stop a Killer

In 1967, ten years before Maalin caught smallpox, the **World Health Organization** (WHO) had started a program to get rid of the disease. Health workers were sent to Africa, Asia, and South America. Smallpox was still a threat in parts of these continents. To prevent people from getting and spreading the disease, the health workers **vaccinated** millions of people. They also looked for people who already had smallpox and vaccinated anyone who lived with them or came into contact with them.



Health workers vaccinated this child in Ethiopia as part of their plan to get rid of smallpox.



The smallpox vaccine is given using a special needle that is dipped into a liquid vaccine. The needle is then pushed 15 times into the skin of a person's upper arm.



In the hundred years before the WHO vaccination program, it is **estimated** that up to 500 million people were killed by smallpox.

The last stop to get rid of smallpox was Somalia. Following a report of an **outbreak**, a team of health workers searched the country for smallpox victims. They quarantined the ones they found. The patients were kept in huts far from other people so they couldn't spread the illness. Next, workers vaccinated anyone who might have come into contact with these sick people.

By 1977, it seemed the battle against one of the world's greatest killers was over. No more smallpox cases were reported—until Maalin. Would he be the world's last smallpox victim?



Ali Maow Maalin was the last known person to catch smallpox. He got the disease in Merca, Somalia, when he offered to help move two sick children to a quarantine camp.

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About the Author

Adam Reingold lives in New York City. On most days he can look across the East River and see the Roosevelt Island Smallpox Hospital, built in 1854 and abandoned in the 1950s.

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Is It Over?

One October day in 1977, Ali Maow Maalin started to feel sick. At first, the 23-year-old hospital cook had a burning fever and a red rash on his arms and stomach. A few days later, the rash turned into painful pimple-like sores. A nurse who went to see the sick young man could see right away what had struck him—smallpox. This disease had once killed millions, but thanks to modern medicine it was now nearly wiped out.

Would Maalin be the world's last smallpox victim? Look inside to find out more about him and other people who have suffered from the deadly illness. You'll also discover what causes smallpox, how it affects the body, and—most important—how to protect yourself if the disease should ever strike again.

Bubonic Plague
The Black Death!

Smallpox
Is It Over?

The Flu of 1918
Millions Dead Worldwide!

Tuberculosis
The White Plague!

Malaria
Super Killer!

Typhoid Fever
Dirty Food, Dirty Water!

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