

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 503: The Torsåker Witch Trials

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Hey weirdos, I'm Ash, and I'm Alaina, and this is Morbid.

Does that have to be a little silly, alright?

A little silly goofy.

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Just a little bit.
It's October, everyone, obviously.
It's October.
It is October.
And I'm very excited about that because, you know, October's the best burr there is.
Yeah?
I didn't have a comeback for that.
My brain just was like, the thing was, Ash looked up, like she was going to say something and then just froze.
Yeah.
Yeah.
You know?
But either way, it's unavoidable to talk about.
October is great.
I fucking love October.
The leaves are changing.
We're in New England, so we get the best of it.
Say a little bit.
She said, fuck y'all, I was going to say Salem Night Fair.
Oh, the Salem Night Fair.
Is it coming?
Fucking spooky movies.
There you go.
There's going to be a fucking Saw prequel.
There's a Hell House LLC prequel.
The New Monster High movie premieres this weekend.
Very excited about that.
It's not weird that I like that because I only like it because my niece has showed it to me.
We're going to have a movie night for it.
It's going to be a lot of fun.
Just spooky shit.
The Saw movie, the new Saw movie, my girl Sidney at Horror Chronicles, I've shouted her out, her TikTok before on here.
She's awesome.
I trust her implicitly with horror movie recommendations and reviews.
Has she seen it?
If she tells me something isn't good, I'm like, fuck it.
I'm not going to try that.
Next.
I'm like, she gets it.
She said that the new Saw is her favorite horror movie of the entire year.
Wow.
And she was barely able to even contain how much she loved it.

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She said it was phenomenal.

I want to see movies early.

I want to have that privilege.

I know.

I like that.

I like that too.

I really want to see it though.

Remember one day when we just watched all of the Saw movies and John came home and was like, what are you guys doing?

It was before I had kids.

Yeah.

I think I was still a teenager, so I had no responsibility.

However many were out at that time, we watched them back to back.

Yeah.

I think it took us two days actually.

Yeah.

I think I ended up coming back like a week or so later and John was like, are you guys doing this again?

Like, what is happening?

You guys all right?

Close to the days.

See where?

You know, sitting down and watching a movie.

But yeah, so, you know, lots of fun stuff happening.

It's a great month.

Hey, hey, hey, I'm what's happening.

I hope you're having a great month.

I hope everybody kills it this month.

So I think we should just get into our next spooky, really, kind of off-putting story.

Oh, great.

Because we're going to talk about the Tor Shorker Witch Trials.

Tor Shorker.

Tor Shorker.

Tor, Tor Shorker.

They are Swedish, which was a journey in the pronunciation department.

But yeah.

Here's the thing to our Swedish listeners, Tobias Forge, if you're listening, that includes you.

Obvious.

But of course.

I meticulously went through and I tried my damndest on each of these pronunciations.

Can confirm.

Yep.

I said them out loud several times.

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I listened to several versions of the pronunciation.

With no warning.

Yeah.

I really did.

I did my due diligence here.

I tried.

I know I'm not going to kill it because I myself am not Swedish.

I don't know.

I thought you sounded great.

Thank you.

Are you one of my Swedish listeners and anyone who loves a Swedish listener?

I'm trying so hard and I hope I do you proud.

Yeah.

Alina randomly just started listening to pronunciations and practicing them while I was working on my case.

So I was typing and then all of a sudden it was like, I'm not going to try because that will be bad.

But I was like, what's happening?

What are you calling me?

I was literally, I was like, excuse me.

I was like, don't worry.

There's fighting words.

But yeah.

This one's going to be interesting.

It's one that I didn't know about until recently.

We have a very, like obviously everybody thinks of the Salem Witch Trials, which again, wild. In the US, not a scarier or more cited example of mass hysteria and scapegoating than the Salem Witch Trials in 1692 to 1693.

But even though they were super, they're obviously very significant, very horrifying.

They were kind of small in scale when compared to the centuries long witch hunts and trials that occurred across Europe.

Because we've mentioned that before with some of the ones that you've like dived into.

Dived into.

Dived into.

Dived?

Dove?

Dove into.

Oh no.

Dived?

Sorry.

I became Swedish for this.

So I don't know how to do this.

No.

I think so.

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I can't help you.

Like I dove right into that.

Sounds good to me.

Either way, the trials and the trials and witch hunts that happened in Europe over the 16th and 17th centuries are, the scale is massive.

It's incomprehensible to be incomprehensible.

I'm Swedish.

I'm sorry.

I forgot how to speak English.

I was like, I forgot.

We just forgot English entirely.

I'm going to trip over all the English and say the Swedish perfectly.

But either way, while countries with high rates of accusations and executions like Germany and England tend to kind of be the thing that people focus on when they think about Western interest in witch hunts, they were definitely not the only European countries where supposed and alleged witches were pursued with much bigger.

Evidently.

In the Swedish parish of Tor Shorker, I believe that's how you say it.

For example, years of hysteria over witchcraft and black magic led to a massive trial known as the Tor Shorker witch trials in 1674 and 1675, so before the Salem witch trials.

This is where a truly unbelievable amount of people were executed in one single day.

In one day.

One day.

Damn.

And we'll get to it.

So let's talk about fear of witchcraft in Europe at the time because it really is a wild thing to peek through.

Fear of witchcraft is lame.

So throughout the early modern period of 1350 to 1500.

So this is way back.

I like that it said early modern period of 13.

Europeans understanding of witchcraft and sorcery was a little different to what it would become in the centuries that came after.

Witchcraft was considered a crime and could result in the death penalty, but accusations of sorcery were seldom taken literally and executions of supposed witches were very uncommon.

This is not to suggest that, you know, Swedish people or Europeans for that matter didn't take the subject seriously, but they just kind of adhered to the Catholic Church's position and there in the Catholic Church's position at the time was that belief in or practice of witchcraft or black magic was the product of devil-induced delusions and was considered heresy.

Oh.

So the biggest change to how Europeans understood witchcraft came around 1486 and that was with

the publication of a truly wild book called the Malleus Maleficarum, a hammer of witches.

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It was written by famed Dominican demonologist and witch hunter Heinrich Kramer. Now this book took a much stronger position than that of the church. They basically said that sorcery and witchcraft were a direct result of satanic influence. No. So the church is saying it's heresy. You can't believe that shit. But he's saying, oh, no, no, no, Satan himself has induced you to do this. And so this person, this Heinrich here, Kramer, was saying that it presented a very real threat to God-fearing people everywhere. And in response to that threat, Kramer advocated that the use of like mind-bending torture, physical, psychological, emotional torture was the only means of getting any suspected witch to confess to their heresy and death was the only way to eradicate witchcraft in Europe. Oh, fuck. You could not cure the person of witchcraft or the black magic that they have dabbled in. You have to kill them. That's it. Seems a bit much. Now, when it was first written, Malleus there was received actually very poorly by the church. They did not like it. They labeled it zealotry. They said, this guy's like over the top. Wow. Like we're looking at it as pretty black and white here. He's like, he's gone wild. He's really intense. And they vehemently contested Kramer's interpretation of religious texts, which in the book, Malleus Maleficarum, he uses a lot of different, like, you know, he looks at the Bible, he looks at religious texts and he interprets them his own way and talks about it like it's fact. So although the Catholic doctrine stated that witchcraft and sorcery were a kind of mental illness that was influenced by the devil, those who fell under Satan's influence, according to the church, could be saved. Okay. So you didn't have to die like you, you could be saved. Damn. Kramer's assertion, though, was that a person was a witch and remained a witch once he or she had been accused. Okay. So that's to say that, unlike the church, Kramer insisted a person could not be saved from Satan's influence. The only way to solve the problem, kill the witch at the end. Well, and that makes sense that he believes that because Malleus Maleficarum translates

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into the hammer of witches.

Yeah.

That's what, that's what, um, exactly.

That's insane.

Yeah.

The hammer of witches.

Oh my God.

Now, in modern analysis of Malleus Maleficarum, many writers and historians have noted a ton.

I mean, it's a staggering amount of misogyny and profound sexism influenced in this text.

That checks.

Kramer was so misogynistic and sexy.

It's unbelievable when you reach back.

And don't you worry, I'm going to give you a few little, little things from the text because I read the whole thing.

You read the whole thing.

You read the whole thing.

You read the whole hammer of witches.

I read the whole hammer of witches.

As a witch.

I have it in my library right now.

As a witch.

I spent \$16 on that.

Research, my friend.

I think it's funny that his book sells for \$16 now.

What a douche.

There you go.

But according to Kramer, women were far more likely to be witches than men because, quote, their flesh is lecherous and their minds feeble.

What a cunt.

So basically they're like, they're, they're lustful and stupid.

My skin is lecherous and my mind is dumb.

Yep.

Cool.

It's fall.

And sometimes it's super tough to fit working out into your fall schedule because it's all back to it.

It's back to school.

It's back to work.

It's back to the grind, but your routine should never feel routine because then it gets boring and we don't like that.

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And Peloton's not just a class, it's a fitness entertainment mashup that will have you dancing and singing all the way through and actually wanting to tell people about it after I talk about it.

I talk about it like a show I love.

It's really that wild.

And it's not just a fad.

It really actually works.

You want proof?

You don't believe me?

Well, I'm offended, but I'm going to give you something to chew on 90% of Peloton households that join at the start of the year are still active 12 months later me.

That's me.

I'm one of those households.

Still unsure.

Well, okay.

All right.

I'm still a little offended, but we've got you try Peloton bike or bike plus free for 30 days.

Throughout it's not for you return it for a full refund.

Find your zone with a 30 day worry free home trial of Peloton bikes.

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Well it is official fall is here.

If you're like me, you're settling back into busier routines with the kids at school and spare time filled with soccer practices and seasonal activities.

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It is designed to help stop crime in real time.

Now if an intruder breaks into your home, simply safe professional monitoring agents can actually see speak to and deter them through simply safes new smart alarm wireless indoor camera.

I for wreaking love simply safe.

I actually got to my little office this morning.

I was like, oh crap.

I lock my door and guess what?

It didn't matter because I can open my app and just lock it from there.

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There's no safe like simply safe.

Um, Kramer was actually obsessed with the purity of women and that they should be pure, but he also believed them to be inherently evil and vastly inferior to men.

Isn't it strange how like he technically is probably a serial killer because like his work probably led to the death of so many women.

Yeah, that's pretty well.

And then he shares that in common with serial killers like pathology of being like women are dirty and we must save ourselves with the purity of women, but thinks them inherently evil and very inferior to men, but like very much a modern day serial killers for you.

You're right.

Yeah.

Women.

It's wild.

It's interesting how those two things like really quarterly, but he said because they're so evil inherently and so stupid that we were more susceptible to evil influence and far more likely more likely to engage in witchcraft and sorcery because of that.

This guy's so rude.

So his hatred of women can also be found, um, not explicitly stated, but in the section of the text devoted to interrogation and punishment, uh, because many of the suggested techniques of torture that you should use to get a confession from a witch so that you can then burn her at the stake, um, involved a lot of exposing and destruction of women's bodies in particular and a lot of sexual humiliation.

I was just going to say like humiliation.

He's gross.

This guy's fucked.

While Malleus Maleficar may not have been endorsed by the Catholic church, it definitely spoke directly to the fears and anxieties felt by ordinary people across Europe who were emerging from the late middle ages into a pretty unfamiliar era at that time.

So thanks to the invention of the printing press just 40 years earlier, his text was able to be reproduced and distributed.

And for a time, it was second only to the Bible as the most popular book in Europe.

Okay, lady, whistle down.

Damn.

Yep.

So the result of this popularity was that the public, so those outside of the church, developed extreme and very dangerous and outlandish beliefs about witches that would shape centuries of which hunts to come.

So this is a very powerful book.

Did anybody even know who this man was before he wrote this?

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He just came right on the scene and was like, just like, listen to me, fuck women and witches. Let's go.

I love that everybody fell at their feet, fell at his feet.

So would you like to hear a few things from this book?

No, but I know that it's necessary.

So there's a section that is titled, what sort of women are found to be above all other superstitious and witches?

Me.

Don't you want to know?

The answer is any woman who is unfaithful, which remember that could be like she opened her eyes after blinking and a man happened to be in the room.

But the next is that she's ambitious.

Wait, unfaithful was like looking at another man even?

Well, back then you could be considered adulterous by just like showing an ankle.

That's so wild.

There was very, the borders there were big.

But the next was an ambitious woman.

Oh, you're fucked.

Oops.

The last is if they are lustful, lame.

So she breathes near any other men.

She has ambitions and she fucks.

That's like essentially witch, witch, witch.

What's his name?

It literally Heinrich Kramer.

Like Heinrich, we're here for a good time, not a long time.

It literally says in the book, quote, it follows that those among ambitious women are more deeply infected, who are more hot to satisfy their filthy lust and such are all, all terraces fornicatrices and the concubines of the great.

The concubines of the great.

I've never been more flattered.

There is also a section called that witches deserve the heaviest punishment above all the criminals in the world.

Basically, they want to confiscate all the witches things and then decapitate her.

That's what they think the punishment should be.

Oh, my God.

Take all her shit and then decapitate her.

And worse than any other criminal, criminal murder, child rapist, everything.

Like the worst of the worst.

It was said that witches couldn't cry.

That was the belief.

So I cry all the time.

So interrogators were encouraged to do any manner of fucked up things to force the accused to cry.

So then what if they cried?

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Basically, do the worst you can imagine to get them to cry, because if they don't, then they're a witch.

But then they're get shock.

I was just going to say that shock can happen or other reasons why someone wouldn't cry under severe torture, because human beings do have different ways of expressing emotion.

Well, and a lot of times, like you just said, forget shock, but people disassociate.

Yeah, like there's so many different reasons why you wouldn't cry or something so crazy.

Now, lawfully, they were told that when they go to a witch's home to an alleged witch to pick her up after she's been accused, they were told to physically pick up an accused witch at their home and put her on a plank or in a basket to carry her out of the home.

A basket.

Without allowing her feet to touch the ground.

If she was allowed to touch the ground, she would be given powers by the devil through her feet, I guess.

Oh, because hell.

Which these dudes had, this dude had weird kinks, I think.

And if they kept her from touching the ground, then she would have to confess because she would lose her powers.

And they said in this book that a lot of time before being burned alive, witches would ask to just touch the ground one last time.

And that wasn't because they were about to die a horrifically painful and senseless death, but they said it's because they wanted their powers to kill everyone with lightning.

No, I don't think so.

Everything I just said is in that book.

I think they just missed the earth and they were like, let me hit her up one more time.

I think they were like, I'm about to be burned alive.

Can I just touch the grass?

And they were like, nah, you want to kill everyone with lightning with your feet.

And that's like, that's really what they felt.

That's literally what they said.

I don't argue that.

Like it would be hilarious if this wasn't real and if they didn't use it.

Exactly.

Like when you think about the words themselves, you're like, that's fucking hilarious.

And then you think the power behind those words.

And you're like, oh, fuck, people took this as true.

Like, whoa.

I just can't believe that they literally like went around and took them out of their homes via basket in front of their kids.

That's so sad.

There was a belief that the devil gave witches powers to deal with torture without crying or confessing the truth.

So again, if she stayed quiet, shock or doesn't confess, then she is being helped by the devil.

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I'm also like, why are you making the devil sound humane right now?
And then if she confesses, though, it's because God has compelled
via a holy angel to force the devil to desert her.
So either way, she's a witch.
Just one side says that the devil is still helping her.
And the second one says that apparently the devil deserted her.
Well, in either way, she was helped.
You guys are rooting for the wrong guy
because if the devil is helping her, that's fantastic.
Oh, and then if God is making her confess that she's a witch,
she's going to die anyway.
Well, and why are you not really rooting for your guy here?
Why would God compel a holy angel to force the devil to desert her?
I don't know.
I mean, to make her shopping, you're going to kill her anyway.
That's but that's exactly it.
Yeah, that's what I'm saying.
Like, that doesn't make sense.
Yeah, when they were taken according to this book,
they are to be stripped completely.
And that is to look for, obviously,
witch marks like that's a thing we hear from the sale of a child.
But also to look for the limbs of unbaptized children hidden in their clothes.
I wish I was making that.
That's the thing because I wish I was making this up
because your first reaction is to like chuckle at that because it's absurd
because it's absolutely absurd.
But then you're like, holy fuck, hundreds and hundreds of years ago,
men were stripping the clothes off of women
they believed to be cohorting with the devil and looking for the limbs of babies.
Yep.
Like that's a wild sentence.
And that's true.
It puts you on such a roller coaster of emotions
because your initial, like you said, your first thing is like,
that's fucking ridiculous.
I'm laughing at that.
And then you're like, no, I can't laugh.
No, that's not funny.
Like when you your mind bends the other way and it's like, oh, no,
this isn't satire.
Like this is a real book that was second to the Bible.
And it's just by this random man.
Like it's not like the fucking poep wrote this.

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Like, who the fuck is Heinrich?

That's even if the pope wrote, what the fuck?

And even if he did, but do you see what I'm saying?

Yeah, he's just some random fucking dudes who clearly has a lot of.

Well, I'd like to know about his mother.

He's a demonologist and witch hunter.

Like he wasn't known demonologist and witch hunter.

So he wasn't like just some guy that came out of the woodwork.

But still, that's ridiculous.

I also really want to know about his mother.

I also want to know that.

I have so many questions.

Well, if they found anything that they believed to be a witch's mark

or they found any instrument of witchcraft during the stripping,

he literally wrote that they would gather up some, quote,

honest men zealous for the faith.

And they were instructed to bind her with cords

and place her on some engine of torture.

No.

And no shit.

They were to be instructed to make themselves, the torturers,

put a look of dis to look disturbed while torturing her.

Why do you need to be told that?

They were told not to smile or appear joyful, even if they might be.

They said, you have to try to look disturbed as you torture this woman.

Wow, these this just.

I'm speechless.

The accused lawfully could be told by a judge

that if she confessed, her life would be spared,

even though they had no intention of doing that.

They would either just do that and then kill her or do that

and promise her imprisonment, but then later burn her unexpectedly.

Take her out of her cell and just burn her.

Or the judge could promise her her life.

And then at the last second, go, oops,

a new judge is stepping in to take my place.

And the new judge would say, you're you're going to die.

This is just like psychological, physical, emotional torture.

It says the accused should be frequently exposed to torture,

beginning with, quote, the more gentle of them.

And a notary is to be present for the torture

and write down how she was tortured and her answers to each level of torture.

Then if she confesses under torture,

they bring her directly to another room and ask her again

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so that she doesn't, quote, confess only under the great stress of torture.

Oh, my God.

If she doesn't confess after torture,

then other, quote, engines of torture should be brought in by the judge

and she will be told that she will have to endure those if she does not confess.

It says, quote, if then she is not induced by terror to confess,

the torture must be continued on the second and third day,

but not repeated at the present time,

unless there should be some fresh indication of its probable success.

One of the sections of the book is titled

and I shit you not with this title.

This is the title of the section.

No, no, no.

Of the continuing of the torture and of the devices and signs

by which the judge can recognize a witch

and how he ought to protect himself from their spells.

Also, how they are to be shaved in those parts

where they use to conceal their devil's masks and tokens,

together with the do setting forth a various means of overcoming their

obscenity in keeping silent and refusal to confess.

And it is the 10th action.

That's the title of the chapter.

Concise.

Wow.

And he said they need to be shaved in parts

where they hide their devil's mask.

Yep. This guy is fucked on every level.

I'm also like, did you have an editor, my guy?

That was like, I feel like you should clean that one up

because that's I feel like we can get to the point of that one a little quicker.

I think that probably took a full 45 seconds for you to say.

Now, yeah, that's a dynamic ad.

Now, rule of thumb for judges.

Don't use the same old torture.

Be creative in the words of the book, quote,

if the sons of darkness were to become accustomed to one general rule,

they would provide means of evading it as well as well known snares

set for their destruction.

As an example, quote,

is he wishes to find out whether she is endowed with a witch's power

of preserving silence, let him take note

whether she is able to shed tears when standing in his presence

or when being tortured.

If she be a witch, she will not be able to weep,

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although she will assume tearful aspect
and smear her cheeks and eyes with spittle to make it appear she is weeping.
So even if you do cry, they're just going to go, you're faking.
So you either don't cry and you're with the devil or you cry and they go,
that's fake and you just can't win.
You wipe your eyes with spit.
Can you not let the accused
see the judge before he sees her because this is a method of bewitching him.
Oh, OK. In fact, he says,
what you should do is bring the accused into the trial backwards all the time.
Oh, and the judge should always wear salt around his neck.
Consecrated salt, that's holy, obviously.
Oh, and also they should strap holy relics and shit to their naked bodies.
But it's the witches that are weird, for sure.
What the right?
Like the witches are the ones that are odd and strange and like you think about
the women just being walked backwards into like the confusion
and they just like what the like the pure just fuckery of this all.
Every, like we said before, every part of the accused is to be shaved
because witches hold witchy shit in their hair.
Oh, and just like how do me or quote
in the most secret part of their bodies, which must not be named.
Oh, my God.
So they would shave their heads as well.
Everything. Yeah. Oh, my God.
He has he has another suggestion.
Make sure you torture your witches on a Friday, if you can.
That's when everyone else is gathered together at Holy Mass to await their savior.
So usually a confession can be tortured out of the accused then,
you know, when no one else is around.
Yeah, that checks. Yeah.
If she is deeply disturbing.
Yeah.
If she endures all torture you can come up with while drinking
brusquies at a local tavern, then the judge is allowed to bring her somewhere else
where she will be fed and given drink and treated OK for a minute.
Then the judge comes in and speaks nicely to her,
telling her to confess to him in confidence
and he will promise under God to be merciful.
Sounds like a lie, right?
Yes, it's what we just read.
Well, it is.
So we all say, I think a lot of us said, well, wait,
isn't God not into lying sacks of shit?

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Isn't that like kind of the whole that's supposed to be the whole deal?

Like lying is bad.

That shall not lie.

I think is one of the things.

Well, don't worry, because these people knew how to do some serious mental gymnastics to make all this holy stuff work.

According to the book, he can lie like this to the witch because, quote, with the mental reservation that he means he will be merciful to himself or the state for whatever is done for the safety of the state is merciful.

So he's not lying when he tells her he'll be merciful.

He's not saying I'll be merciful to you.

He's saying I'll be merciful.

And that means to him or the state.

Wow.

They would subject a wish, a which to purgation, I believe, is how you say it.

What is that?

That is forcibly inducing bowel movements for cleansing purposes.

So they would give her some kind of laxative to completely clear her out.

Why? Cleansing.

What?

And the last thing is there was a trial by Red Hot Iron that they would use.

No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, don't they would make the accused carry

a huge, heavy red hot iron bar like several, like as long as possible.

And if you get burned, you're guilty.

If you don't get burned by that hot iron bar that you have to carry a mile, then you're innocent.

So let's give it to Heinrich and see if he gets burned.

What? Like what?

Those are just a few of the things I picked out of there as I was reading to be like, wow, this is nuts.

If you get burned, you're guilty.

If you get burned, you're a fucking human.

It's like how they used to do the drowning thing, where if you sunk when they dunk you, then you were innocent, but you were dead, you drowned.

And if you exploded, then you were guilty.

And we talk about witch prickers, which we'll get to.

And they also fucked with those two.

Witch prickers, I'm upset.

So while the Malleus Maleficarum may have proven profoundly influential when it came to kind of getting the idea in Europeans minds of what a witch is, it wouldn't have been over what they wanted you to think a witch is.

It wouldn't have been anywhere near as influential had it not been for the Protestant Reformation in 1517.

The Reformation was one of the most significant events in the history of

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Western civilization, and it broke apart the Catholic Church.

It established a number of religious reform movements that basically created new denominations like Calvinism and Protestantism.

These denominations posed a direct threat to the consolidated power of the Catholic Church, who labeled the reformers heretics and idolaters.

The Reformation contributed to the social upheaval of early 16th century Europe and led to religious wars across Europe.

I'm sure a lot of people know about this.

I remember that.

Large destabilizing effect on the people of Europe.

Sweden was a very religious nation.

So the Church of Sweden largely rejected the ideas of Reformation at the time.

They lumped the movement in with supposed, you know, heretics, their beliefs.

And, you know, they're basically like pagan ancestry kind of stuff.

In 1555, Swedish Catholic Archbishop Magnus Gothus, which is a pretty cool name.

That's a dope name.

I'm willing to bet he was a witch.

He addressed witchcraft directly and is opus, I think it's Vite.

Vite, Vite, I think it is opus Vite.

History of the Northern peoples in which, quote, he demonizes pagan beliefs as well as Lutheran beliefs conquering Sweden.

Gothus followed Kramer's lead by interpreting witchcraft not as a metaphor or some kind of vague threat, but as a real and actual danger in the lives of Swedish people.

Fantastic.

For example, among a lot of the, one of the many claims in the history of the Northern peoples was that Balakula, a supposed gathering place for witches on the Sabbath in Swedish folklore, wasn't folklore at all, but was in fact a real place and thing where witches flew to perform a Sabbath and conçoit with the devil.

I think I mentioned before, probably somewhere that my little life partner there,

Drusifer, is like an inferno at night.

He is so, I mean, he's so hot anyways, but like he is burning up at night.

And then I usually am like, do I move on onto the couch?

What do I do?

But not anymore because now we have Buffy.

Buffy has the Earth's softest bedding.

The breeze sheet by Buffy are quite literally the softest sheets you will ever try.

And they keep me cool at night.

And they are woven, by the way, from Eucalyptus, which makes them softer than cotton or linen, actually softer than anything I've ever slept on or touched in my life.

And the thing is fabric that's made from Eucalyptus is actually naturally cool to the touch.

It's researched back to be more breathable than cotton or linen and perfect for hot sleepers like my Dro-Dro.

It's with natural botanic dyes that are skin safe and better for the planet.

So not only am I sleeping cooler, I'm like more relaxed that I'm not destroying the planet.

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Buffy products are consistently on best of list.

They're at the top of mine, but they're also on architectural digest and glamour.

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Do you guys ever feel like your brain is getting its own way?

I feel like this sometimes because I will go into my week and I'll be like,

I'm going to work out four days this week.

It's going to be amazing.

I'm going to get eight hours of sleep every night and I'm going to meal prep.

I know those are things that are good for me.

I know what I should do.

I know what's good for me.

But then I just park it on the couch and I just scroll on my phone all the live long day.

I think I need some more therapy because therapy helps you figure out what's holding you back so you can work for yourself instead of against yourself.

I've benefited from therapy in the past and I could benefit from it in the future.

Really, I could.

If you're thinking of starting therapy, give BetterHelp a try.

It's entirely online, designed to be convenient, flexible and suited to your schedule. And all you have to do is fill out a brief questionnaire to get matched with a licensed therapist and you can switch therapists anytime for no additional charge. Make your brain your friend with BetterHelp.

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Now, I looked up what Balakula is.

It is an island.

It's an actual island in the Kalmar Strait.

And it's referred to now by its name, Bloy Youngfren, which means the Blue Maiden.

Oh, that's cool.

It's known as a gathering place for, you know, you can go and visit it.

Like tourists can go see it now.

But it was known in folklore as a gathering place for witches for hundreds of years, and there's something called the Trojaborg Labyrinth on this island.

And if you look it up, it's cool.

It's a series of stones in the form of a maze, like a labyrinth.

And it's said to be created by witches over hundreds of years of rituals.

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Well, that's cool.

And it's like a labyrinth that like bends in on itself,
like snakes back in on itself.

Tell me what it's called again.

The Trojaborg Labyrinth, T-R-O-J-A-B-O-R-G.

Most people believe it's from pagan times
and probably was created during fertility rituals and stuff like that.

Like, you know, earth rituals, like very cool shit.

This is really beautiful.

It's a national park now.

And if you're visiting just like, you know, it is very much advised
not to take any rocks from that Trojaborg Labyrinth.

I love that.

But people are stupid and apparently get a shit ton of bad luck
if they do temp fate and they end up coming back to return them.

Don't mess with shit like that.

So don't take shit like from that stuff.

As a text, Gothys' history of the Northern peoples was not really intended
just to address witchcraft or sorcery directly.

It's just kind of one short passage in that text.

It's about a lot of other things.

But along with the larger issues of heresy there in the book,
it's did have a big influence on the subsequent books
that dealt with directly with witchcraft.

In Laurentius, Polinesis, Gothys' Ethicae, Christiani
and Erechus, Johannes, Pritz's Magica in Contricks, for example.

Both authors echo the sentiment and ideas of history of the Northern peoples
by talking about witchcraft as a very real and present threat.

In fact, in the mind, I think it's Magica in Contricks.

I'm pretty sure that's how you say it.

It draws heavily on Kramer and Gothys' ideas

and it identifies Maleficarum, idolatry and devil worship as types of heresy.

And that all of those should be punished by death and that's it.

And he also echoes Kramer's belief

that women were far more likely to be seduced into sorcery.

Maleficarum, by the way, I think you mentioned that

altogether it loosely translates Malice Maleficarum to Hammer of Witches.

Maleficarum is loosely defined as an act of witchcraft performed
with the intention of causing damage or injury, the resultant harm.

OK. So they would say that Maleficium was something that witches did.

Now, it's also worth noting that although Christianity had firmly taken root
across Europe by the 17th century and completely replaced older belief systems
that had been labeled pagan heresy at that time,
that doesn't mean the old ways had been forgotten entirely.

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Pre-Christian beliefs and magic and, you know, a magical realm and, you know, fey, all that stuff, they had just kind of transformed from the real world belief of that into kind of folklore that was viewed through the now Christian lens as like malevolent and menacing. OK. So it turned.

Yeah. It turned from being this magical thing that that people actually believed was real and to like, no, this means bad stuff. Now, although this is incredibly complicated, obviously, one of the most obvious forms of this transformation can be seen in the folk tales that had women who were once benevolent like healers and, you know, like respected and midwives.

Yeah. This, that it just all those all those kind of women. Now they were twisted by the church and presented as figures that were more similar to Kramer's view of women as, quote, treacherous and lecherous female entities who dwell in the forest. Now they're forest witches and they're like hags, you know. It's also like y'all need us to continue the world.

Yeah, it's true.

Maybe don't fuck us all over again.

These examples in themselves are not all that useful in the daily lives of 17th century Swedish people.

But when they're combined, they help form an idea of witches as not only physical, spiritual and psychological threats, but one that is female, always female.

It's really hammering that idea in.

So by the mid 17th century, the Catholic church, which again, had once very much rejected Kramer's position on witchcraft and sorcery.

Yeah, because you said that in the beginning called it extreme zealotry.

Right.

Suddenly they'd begun to embrace the deep misogyny and wild hysteria presented in the Malleus Maleficarum.

And that was because it was after the Reformation and they needed to get back that power and they were also starting to get into the other texts that we mentioned above, like gothists and, you know, priest's texts.

To be clear, the church had again, for centuries, pursued heretics with vigor, obviously, and they'd use such people as scapegoats.

That was the thing.

But by embracing this new propaganda of Kramer and others like him, they hope to position themselves as the one true faith among the growing number of competing religions that were happening because of the Reformation.

You know, good way to do that, Protestants like.

Good way to do that is just kill everyone.

Yeah, didn't I don't think it really, it's not a great way to go.

Now, for a period of roughly three centuries, beginning with the publication

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of the Malleus Maleficarum and ending in about 1750, witch hunts and trials across Europe led to the state sanctioned murders of approximately a hundred thousand people, most of them women.

As was the case here in Colonial New England, the witch trials served to restore whatever power the church had lost to new belief systems.

But it also gave everybody a new scapegoat in the form of anyone who resisted or defied papal authority.

Right. Now, in Sweden, as in other countries, the whole idea of the heretic or witch was often projected on those who were kind of still connected to that pre-Christian culture.

You know, people who practice herbalism or non-western traditions like healers, like you said, you know, like like cunning women, they were called.

And according to Jenny Tild, a tighter man, Osterberg, from the Swedish witch trials, had to confront Dark Heritage in Smithsonian magazine.

She they said, quote, ideas of cunning women and men who magically cured the sick through herbs and ointments were reinterpreted and given threatening meanings as a strategy for demonizing folk beliefs, which is so sad that they took like something so simple and connected to the earth and very pure.

That's a thing. In a way, and and twisted it this way.

Like to make it evil. Yeah.

And it was all really to help people, not to hurt anybody.

Exactly. And at this, at that time, as far as the church at that time was concerned, only God and those who acted on his behalf.

Because remember, at that time, they could choose who acted on his behalf.

And doctors had the ability to cure sickness.

So anyone else who tried to do that, they considered flagrantly challenging the authority of the church.

So you were a heretic and you were subject to punishment.

So to get this straight, only God and doctors and a few priests that decided that they were a direct connected God,

they were the only ones who were allowed to heal. That's it.

And if some woman said, hey, I know how to heal this person and I would love to make their life better by healing them with these things that I grew in my garden, which then you're a piece of shit.

We're directly challenging the authority of a man upstairs. These men at that time who were pissed that you came up with a better cure than they ever could.

Yeah. And so they just kill you. Yeah.

Like, that doesn't make sense.

I mean, no, none of it makes sense. These people are helping the sick.

Like, but it's because they're not doing it.

And then they don't want people to rely on women too much.

Exactly. It's just it was a wild time.

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Now, we're going to talk about the great noise.

OK. In Sweden, the worst of the witch trials fell between 1668 and 1676 in a period known as the great noise.

Wow. So not too far before.

Right before the Salem one.

And in Swedish, it is det stå oversendet.

I tried, guys, det stå oversendet.

OK, look at me, Swedish listeners.

I'm trying. I'm trying to do you proud.

I like it.

Although not the only period of witch trials in Sweden's history, it was the most intense and certainly had the highest body count.

Is this the one that happened all in one day?

Yeah, we're going to get to it, don't worry.

But many of whom were women who worked in the Fjabud, which was Scandinavian summer farms. OK.

I think it's Fjabud or that one was tough.

Fjabud, I believe I tried.

Scandinavian summer farms, that's how you say I am.

Farms.

But much like the witch trials of Salem, Massachusetts, the great noise began with the thoughtless accusation of a child.

One afternoon in 1668, in a rural area near Dalarna in Harje, Dalen, a young shepherd girl named Gertrude Svenstotter and her friend, Matt Nielsen, were tending to a herd and they got in some kind of argument.

They were young, Gertrude was like 12, so they were kids.

So they were like too focused on their own little squabble, and they didn't notice when some of the goats straight away from the herd wandered out into the sandbar in the Dalar River and were like stuck out there.

Oh, no.

Now, they were too frightened to go on the or excuse me, the boy, Matt's, was too frightened to go out on the sandbar.

So he refused to help. OK.

And Gertrude had to wrangle the goats on her own.

She did it herself. Right.

Later, when they returned to the village,

Matt's feared that he was going to be made fun of if anyone found out that he was too scared to go out there and recapture the goats.

So he decided to undermine Gertrude by telling villagers that he watched her wrangle up the goats because she walked on water.

Oh, my God. And they all fucking believed it.

So his shitty little ego couldn't handle just being like,

I don't want to go on the water and she went in.

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And we're all just going to take this 12 year old mother fuckers.
Like, so he's saying this to villagers
and Pastor Lars Elvius hears this. Yeah.
And he called Gertrude to the church and began questioning her.
Oh, my God. And she's 12 and like questioning her.
So like, who knows?
I mean, what we've seen in the Malleus Maleficar there, who knows?
They were going by it at this point.
So under duress, Gertrude told the pastor
that when she lived in Lily Hardle,
a maid by the name of Murette Jean's daughter from a neighboring farm
took her and 12 other children to Blockula
and made them participate in black mass.
Oh, my God.
And we're going to take a 12 year old's word for it.
A 12 year old in distress.
Yeah, exactly.
Jean's daughter, Gertrude said, had a birthmark
on one of her left fingers that looked like the devil's mark
as it was described in the Malleus Maleficar.
There were also these assholes.
I mentioned it before called witch prickers, by the way.
And just speaking of a devil's mark,
they would be brought in to stab the accused all over their body
to see if there was a place where they didn't bleed. Fantastic.
That was where they claimed that the witch's mark was
in the place that it didn't bleed.
And sometimes these assholes would use a fake blade,
like a retractable one to make it look like they stabbed when they didn't.
So then it wouldn't bleed and they go, well, there it is.
Just playing games.
Now, a firm believer in Satan's ability to seduce women
into practicing the lack magic, Elvius, our pastor here,
put the 12 year old Gertrude on trial for witchcraft
and she was found guilty and sentenced to die.
A 12 year old, all because this little pussy ass bitch
wouldn't go to the sandbar.
His little ego couldn't handle that he didn't,
that a girl went out onto the sandbar and he didn't lose her.
Now, fortunately, before the execution could happen,
the larger body of the church did intervene.
That's good.
And Gertrude and the 12 children she named as accomplices
were spared the death penalty and instead just got flogged severely.

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So they just, 13 kids just had the absolute shit kicked out of them in public because she was tortured into naming them.

Oh, yep.

The maid, though, Murette, John's daughter was less fortunate based on these false accusations, which again, were born out of Matt Nielsen's childish lies to save his own little ego.

The maid was arrested and executed for being a witch.

And like burned alive.

This is what kicked off the great noise.

OK. Now, the incident involving Gertrude,

Sven's daughter, not only illustrates the way that witch hunts spread like fucking wildfire, but also how the influence of earlier works like Malleus Maleficarum were still fueling hysteria centuries after it was published.

In this case, as well as a bunch of others that followed this,

a child typically acting out of guilt or shame or boredom

made some outrageous accusation,

something that was usually completely impossible, like walking on water.

Yeah, we're looking at you and Putnam.

And then rather exactly and fucking Putnam.

We don't forget you.

Never.

Rather than just all the adults acknowledging it as a lie and the community treating it as such as like childlike behavior, it would be it would be this.

And it would just be looked at as like, yep, this is obviously real.

That's for real. Nobody questioned it.

And this was in part due to the fear of which is spread by the church.

But it was also due to Kramer's assertion that once a person is accused of witchcraft, you remain a witch until you can prove that you are not.

And that's not to this, of course, put the accused in an impossible position.

There was no way to dispute this accusation as we aligned out for you.

And the result was a completely irrational cycle in which a person,

again, obviously, most oftentimes a child made some thoughtless,

baseless, wild accusation.

It would inevitably lead to the conclusion that according to the church's position, they were a witch and then a sham trial would follow and an execution of the accused.

And it would all keep cycling.

And during that whole thing, they would try to get that accused to name other people.

Once they're named, they're a witch.

You can't stop being a witch.

So now you're brought in and the whole cycle continues.

You can't win.

Now, at the trial outside Harjadaylin,

Gertrude Svenstotter accused 19 more village women of witchcraft under torturous interrogation.

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Gertrude, the 12 year old.

Yeah, she was being tortured again.

Oh, no.

Yeah.

And then those 19 village women who were being tortured and interrogated, they accused more women of witchcraft.

Because it was like you had to.

You had to, they tricked you into it.

And the trend began spreading to other villages.

And now conscious of how such hysteria could divide communities,

the Swedish government responded to the growing rate of accusations by establishing a commission.

And this commission was priests and government officials,

and they were used to address the fears of witches and sorcery.

According to Tiderman Osterberg, who we mentioned before, the Smithsonian Magazine article,

right, the purpose of the commission was to relieve the public sense of responsibility for dealing with the problem.

And they were going to do this by sending government and church officials,

quote, to the most most witch infested areas to free the nation from the fury of Satan.

OK.

But this only increased the witch hysteria.

No way.

Spreading to all other parts.

I couldn't imagine that.

And the trials became a national catastrophe.

This is horrific.

So like the initial hysteria itself, the commission and government sanctioned witch trials quickly escalated from being something that they were trying to keep a lid on and trying to keep kind of orderly and at least have some kind of process, like due process in these things.

They quickly devolved into chaos and increased violence.

Like this all began as like fucked up,

but they were at least trying to make some kind of due process happen here.

So people weren't just being like wildly executed and accused.

Somewhat.

Didn't work.

I was going to say it just doesn't seem like it did.

It was very quick that it escalated into chaos.

Osterberg, Tiderman Osterberg writes, previously, torture was forbidden,

but to execute a person, the Court of Appeal, Hoverett, Hoveretton, must confirm the sentence.

Indisputable evidence was required, which meant a confession.

Hence the authorities deemed torture necessary.

Also, the courts allowed children once deemed untrustworthy as key witnesses.

Wow.

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Priests even paid some to testify.

And the stories of children became the basis for many death sentences.

It gets even worse.

Kids will say anything under distress.

I mean, most people will say anything under distress will.

Yeah, exactly.

Now, in Hamre, in the province of Halcingland,

the entire village was caught in this frenzy in 1673

because a woman named Kirsten Larsdorter was pulled out of her home

in front of her children after being accused of witchcraft by local children.

What?

Tiderman Osterberg says, given the rate at which the hysteria had grown

in such a small period, it's pretty possible that Larsdorter and many

of the other women in the village expected this to happen, to be honest.

But obviously it was unbelievably traumatizing for her and for her children.

Kirsten Larsdorter's trial before the commission lasted four days.

And during this trial, this four day trial,

54 local children and a handful of other locals suspected of witchcraft

accused her of sorcery and of participating in black mass at Blockula.

My God.

Now, according to one local boy,

he said that Kirsten fed him food that turned out to be a live snake.

And he could feel it moving around in his stomach.

And he said, so he says that that alone is like, I don't know, little boy.

Like the kids say, I don't know about that.

Bet.

I'm cool.

What does that mean?

Is that lie or truth?

Bet. I think that just means like, yeah, I bet.

Oh, really? Is that what that means?

That's how I never knew.

I think cap means lie.

Oh, that's the one I was thinking of.

Yeah, that just means like I bet.

Oh, OK. So you just take away the eye.

Yeah, I kind of like it.

What really does that?

We're really lazy.

So the boy was like, yeah, totally like she fed me food.

It was a snake.

It's living in my stomach now.

And it's like, I think that's just a tapeworm, but I also think that's just indigestion.

Yeah. So the boy then was like, oh, but you know what's cool?

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An angel appeared to me later that day
and told me the only way to rid myself of the snake was to go to the Paris
priest, the priest confessed my sins, and I did that.
And then what's awesome is I regurgitated the snake after that.
So the angel was right.
But this bitch, she gave me the snake.
During the trial, the boy's story was confirmed by his parents and two other adults.
Fuck y'all. This is real fucking life.
I did not make that up.
That is a real trial.
I got to go.
That happened.
A little boy said, Kirsten Lahr's daughter fed him a fucking sandwich or something
that had a live snake in it.
It was living in his tum tum.
A holy angel appeared to this little shit, said, if you go to the priest
and confess all your sins, you'll puke out the snake and be fine.
So he did.
He puked out the snake and his parents were like, yop, confirmed.
What? Yeah.
What? Yeah.
Feeling under the weather this cold and flu season.
Well, Gooder X is here to help with savings on prescription cold and
flumeds for the whole family.
And if you still need a flu shot, Gooder X can help you find one at an affordable price.
They also have tons of information and resources to help you stay healthy all season
and beyond with Gooder X.
You can instantly find discounts, compare prices and save up to 80% at the pharmacy.
All you need to do is search for your medication on the Gooder X website
or app and show your discount at the pharmacy.
It's literally that easy.
Gooder X is accepted at all the major pharmacies in your neighborhood,
like CVS, Walgreens, Rite Aid, Vons, Walmart, Sam's Club and more.
And remember, Gooder X is not insurance, but it works whether you have insurance or not.
Even if you've got insurance, Gooder X may beat your co-pay price.
That happens to me, honestly, more often than not.
And I'm like, I love Gooder X.
That's what I sing when I leave the pharmacy, because it saves me so much money.
Now, listen, for big savings on cold and flu meds, plus discounts on your
everyday prescriptions, go to Gooder X dot com slash morbid.
That's Gooder X dot com slash morbid.
The other children in the village told similarly in just wild stories, insane.
Yeah.
And they were they were talking about consorting with serpents, renouncing God,

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turning their backs on the altar.

And this was all Kirsten's fault.

Kirsten, for her part, strongly and consistently denied having any knowledge of any of this.

One would or any knowledge of witchcraft or doing anything of the sort.

She's like, I'm just raising my kids out here, but it did no good.

She'd already been accused.

There's no way to undo it.

Once you've been accused, the toothpaste cannot go back in the tube.

At the end of a four day trial, Kirsten was found guilty and sentenced to death by beheading.

And after that, her body was burned at the stake.

After she was beheaded, her beheaded body was burned at a stake.

And they wondered where the plagues came from.

Now, among the many problems with Sweden's witch hunting commissions was that it put like we've already mentioned a billion problems.

But one of the the offshoot problems of this commission was that it put an impossible burden even on the like just random men that they put on these commissions, because they made them responsible for quelling the growing fears and anxieties of everyone in the village.

But everyone's getting accused.

But that's the thing.

So they specifically were being told to root out and eradicate witches by the church. And in that way, they were being responsible for proving and dealing with something that was impossible to prove and deal with.

But then their failure to meet the demands of the state and their neighbors meant that even the best on the commission were ineffective.

And at worst, they would then be accused of witchcraft themselves.

So this was a horrible cycle with which pulled.

Everyone into it.

Even the people that were placed on this commission, some of them were simply doing it so they themselves wouldn't get wrapped in it and executed and beheaded.

It's like this is not to say that the men on these commissions were great or anything.

I'm just saying like there's so many layers to who got affected by this.

Oh, yeah, holds into this.

Like these kids, these kids are not inherently evil kids.

No, they're being pushed into it.

They're being terrified into this.

Like this is all everyone is working off of fear.

It's so scary.

And it's fear that's being trickled down by this giant authority that's looming over them.

Kind of like how that happens now.

And it's like, look what's happening.

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Even the because I'm even going to give it to these men on the commission.
Some of them were not inherently evil like before this.
But they were just this was their job.
It's an impossible thing for anybody to be involved in.
So fucked up.
And then they're being told, well, if you don't do this, you're going to be beheaded.
And it's like, what the fuck?
Like, how does anybody act in this way?
Everybody's just getting launch myself into the sun.
Everyone's just getting pitted against each other.
Yeah.
And that's just to say, like, you know, it was just chaos.
It was chaos.
Sure may have with zero kind of like clear thinking involved from anywhere.
No, this motherfucker is saying he threw up a snake in front of his priest.
Like that's not clear.
Yeah.
And it's like, you got like nine year old saying this kind of shit.
And these nine year olds aren't inherently evil.
Like they say stuff.
They make up stories like fuck Anne Putnam.
But like the red, like listen, especially kind of fucked up.
But like these nine year olds and shit, like not all of them were just dicks.
Like a lot of them were just fucking terrified.
And they were acting from men and women because there were women who were accusing these witches who were just trying to stay out of the well.
And they're just they're trying not to get flogged.
It's everyone.
It's everyone is basing it out of fear.
And then there's those random evil pieces of shit that are in here.
Just having a fucking party because this is what they couldn't wait for.
Yeah.
And it's hard to distinguish between everybody.
Really, quite honest.
So it's scary.
Now, this was particularly true in the small village of Torskir,
which is what we this is all about.
Yes, in Sweden's Angerman land, it is actually spelt Angerman land.
I think that's more fun personally.
But I think you say it Angerman land.
This whole place sounds like Angerman land.
The Angerman.
It does, actually.
Everyone is an angry man in the land.

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It's Sweden's Angerman land province in the northern part of the country.
OK. In 1674, the commission contracted
Laurentius Christofri Horneas, another as it wasn't there already a Horneas.
No, no, you said it yesterday.
I was going to say you heard me say it out loud
because I was trying to pronounce it correctly.
Yeah, you didn't want to say it the wrong way.
So he had served as the local clergyman for the year prior
after the previous minister had passed away.
All right, Pete.
And as they had done in the other villages,
the commission tasked Horneas with investigating and eradicating
witchcraft in the parish, using whatever means necessary.
No, thank you.
Now, in pursuit of his goal, Horneas recruited a group of local boys.
First mistake. That's always good.
Who claimed they could and it gets worse
because he recruited this local boy group that was like,
we can actually identify those marked by the devil just by looking at their face.
Good.
How Horneas was like, this seems legit.
He was like, this checks.
What's kind of interesting, though,
is that he almost gets real checked himself for choosing to do this.
And I'll let you know how.
So they're like, yeah, we can totally we're going to figure out
who's marked by the devil just by looking at their fucking mug.
And he's like, that sounds great.
So over time, such people, those who capitalized on the hysteria,
like we talked about, there were the bad people who were capitalizing on this.
There's always the bad people.
Capitalizing common.
But while it may appear that as though these individuals
sought to benefit from this unspeakable horror going around them, again,
it was more likely that most of them, not the little boys,
but some most of them were trying not to be accused themselves.
So it was basically align yourself with the witch hunters
or align yourself with the witch.
Fuck.
And it's like, it's an impossible situation.
And it's like, or just run into the forest and never stop running.
That would be what I would do just by.
Truly.
But then if you're found in the forest, you're fucked.

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Also, speaking of witch trials, again, go read Slough Foot.

It's really good by Brom.

It's really good. Brom.

So either way, whatever their motivations, these boys,

which they referred to as viscosa,

which loosely translates to something like wise boys

or smart boys or sage boys.

Sounds like biscoff cookies.

Right, it does.

They became common in witch trials across Europe,

particularly in cases where children played a large part of the trial,

which is so chilling.

It is. It's fucked up as like witnesses or accusers.

In many cases, these boys, such as those positioned outside the church

and doll were paid for these services.

I bet they fucking were.

So like many people who are in Horenaeus's position here,

he was a true believer in the teachings of the church

and saw himself as a soldier in this battle against the devil.

And in a very short amount of time,

Horenaeus had rounded up seventy one people in a small parish.

Sixty five of those were women, sixty five out of the seventy one.

Many of them were elderly or poor.

And the accused were all identified by two boys,

the Viscosa, who stayed, who were stationed

outside of the doors of the church to identify them as they left church.

As they left church, as they left church,

these boys would be sitting out there and go hurt marked by the devil.

What the fuck?

This is what's funny, though, because one of the boys identified

Horenaeus's wife, Horenaeus's own baby mama,

Brita Rufina as one marked by the devil.

What a pretty name, Brita Rufina.

Well, and then this boy was slapped for having identified the minister's wife

as a witch and he corrected himself and said, oops,

I must have been blinded by the sun.

Just kidding. Oh, has that happened before?

And it's like, friend, fuck you. Wow.

And also fuck you, Horenaeus.

Put your wife through the same. My life.

Fuck you. Your wife was.

I would. I'd be like, no, no, no, no, no, no.

He said what he said. He said what he said.

He said, Brita, get out there.

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So the trial.

But he don't get her. Yeah.

So the trial began October 15th, 1670, 74 in Torsherker.

That's like hard to say it is with Judge

Johan Andersen, Humbraeus presiding over all 71 cases,

which included residents of Torsherker, Dahl and Eater, Eater Lanis.

All 71 had been accused of practicing witchcraft

and abducting children who were then forced to participate

in whatever was happening at Blockula.

OK. At the time, the population total

for all three villages was 675 people.

So the accused accounted for more than 10 percent of everyone

over the age of 15 in the entire parish.

In this one day.

Holy fucking shit.

Yep. So as in every other case of witch hunting,

the accused at Torsherker had already been

an accused almost all by children.

And so stood no chance of proving themselves innocent.

That's it. You're accused.

And not only that, you're accused because two little shit

stood outside of a church and said, you mark by the devil.

Wow.

And just at random.

Yeah. Just at random.

Clearly, because they accidentally got his wife.

Yeah. Oops.

The sun was in my eyes. Wow.

In one case, one of the accused confessed to having made a bejara,

which is a magical ball of yarn.

And I was like, that sounds delightful.

I like that.

They said they made it by dripping her blood onto the yarn

and asking Satan to give it life.

OK.

Darn it.

It's weird how like they wrap Satan up so much in witchcraft

because I'm like, witchcraft really doesn't have anything to do with Satan.

They don't even like give a shit.

It's not even real.

In another case, a girl of only 11 or 12 years old

was forced to testify that her own mother had brought her to Blockula.

Oh, that is so fucked on another level.

And she said when she was there, she watched the women chop up

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and boil children in a cauldron.

Honey, you've been watching too many programs.

But she was forced to testify. Wow.

Now, another young boy accused his neighbor of kidnapping him and taking him to Blockula, where he watched her eat, drink and dance in Blockula and lying with the evil one under the table and kneeling before Satan.

Sounds pretty rad.

Party. I was going to say, like, see you at 10.

Now, according to Hans Hogman, many of the children who testified at the trials in Torshiker did so against their own family members. And in some cases, like we mentioned, their own mothers.

That's horrific.

Hans says in the course of the trials, it seems that most of the accused had serious doubts that the authorities would go to such lengths to impose the death penalty. Rather, those who confessed did so to return home to their children as soon as possible. Right.

A church sentence could one could one always put up with.

So they were like, I'll deal with the church sentence.

That's what they thought they were going to get.

They had no idea it was going to go this far.

But obviously, those doubts were very misplaced because by the end of the trial, all 71 were convicted and sentenced to die.

Seventy one on June 1st, 1675,

the accused, along with a bunch of people from the villages, were all gathered at the Torshiker church where they learned that they were going to all be beheaded and all of their bodies would be burned at the stake. All 71.

And can you imagine one day, first of all, what?

And second of all, can you imagine if one of those was your mom

that you had to testify against and then he's going to be beheaded and burned because of you?

She's being beheaded and burned.

And they had no idea.

They thought they were just like, let's get them.

They can deal with the church sentence.

Right. And their mom's probably told them.

Their mom was probably like, I can deal with it.

Just, you know, whatever it takes to get this done and I'll get home to you.

And then they're like, no, we're going to cut off her head and burn her body at the stake. Oh, my God.

Yep. It's horrific.

So from the church, after they learned of their sentences, they were all led up to a spot in the mountains known as Hacksburg.

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Which is Witch Mountain,
where three pyres had been built to accommodate this unusually large group.
In many cases, the prisoners fainted or became too weak to carry on
because they were so upset and family members were forced
to carry them to their execution.

Oh, my God.

The executions were overseen by the parish mayor
and carried out by two or three executioners who worked all day
beheading each of these people.

How are you ever the same after that?

Seventy one, Pete.

What is seventy one divided by three or two even?

Seventy one divided by three.

The answer is approximately twenty three point six, six, six, six.

Everybody is beheading that many people
likely or more if it was only two executioners, because it's two or three.

Seventy one divided by two.

The answer is thirty five point five, thirty five people.

I that's on another level.

And you just have to go about your life after that.

And they would do these beheadings in the location
below the pyres where the pyres were built because they wanted to ensure
that the blood flow wouldn't extinguish the flames.

Oh, once the head had been cut off,
the body was carried to the pyre.

A family member had to do this, by the way, carry your beheaded body
over to the pyre where you would be thrown on there and burned.

That's yeah.

And after this was all done after all the executions, I just have to say it again.

Sorry, this is real.

This is real.

Like this isn't a horror story.

Like you keep having to tell yourself over and over again.

This fucking happened.

The amount of times I like cognitively like dissonance to myself away from this.

But then we had to come back and be like, oh, no, this is not a fiction.

Story. This is this happened to people's ancestors.

This happened.

That's so fucked.

Like there's listeners from that have Swedish ancestry
that could be tied to either side of this.

Wow. Yeah.

It's why I go on.

No, it's true.

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Because I even think that way with the Salem which is when I go into it.
Because it's hard to think of it as real.

It sounds like fiction.

It does.

So when this was all done, the executions were concluded.

The clothing of the accused, which also had been stripped
before they were executed, they were returned to the family.

And then the family was instructed, just go home.

Sorry, what was returned to the family?

Their clothing. Oh, OK.

Here. And so they would say, here's their clothes.

Just go home, I guess.

See you guys on Sunday for Mass.

And oh, and you know, you have to be at Mass on Sunday.

You know, your ass was going to be there that day.

But then you don't know, am I going to come out of Mass on Sunday
and some little shit is going to point at me and say, I'm Jesus.

Because did these so where they're subsequent ones like afterwards?

There was, but this is one of the main, like this is this is a wild one.

Yeah. And it's just I.

And there are some sources that you can read records that say
that a couple of individuals might have been spared that day
because of they might have been pregnant.

But if they were spared that day, then they were waited after.

They gave birth or the same fate befell them.

So that's somehow that's like worse because you knew what was coming.

Yeah, it's all it's all bad.

Now, the trials and executions at Torschecker
proved to be something of a turning point.

There were trials, but it changed after this,
especially in Sweden in particular.

It proved, if nothing else, that when it came to accusations
of witchcraft and sorcery, no one, not even children were safe.

And later that year, after the executions at Hacksburg,
Hornayus's own mother and aunt were accused of witchcraft.

Wow.

If that is in karma, I don't know what is for real.

Hornayus himself was later shunned by the community and retired in shame by Hornayus.

Yeah, fuck you, dude.

By the following year, 1676, public opinion on witches
and accusations of witchcraft shifted a bit.

This was a turning point.

That's good. There were other things after this,
but this was a big turning point.

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By the time the hysteria had reached Stockholm that year, it had all but petered out, to be honest.

There was still one final case to be tried, though, before everything came to an end.

OK.

Because just a few months after the executions at Torschecker, a boy in Stockholm, by the name of Johann Greis, accused a neighbor, Mel and Matt's daughter of witchcraft.

Matt's daughter was put on trial and refused to confess to being a witch.

And she was, of course, deemed guilty and burned alive at the stake.

And how old was she?

I don't know how old she was, but I thought I missed anything.

No, that's OK.

But she was she was just a neighbor.

Wow.

And he just accused she was burned alive at the stake.

And a short time later, it was learned that Johann had lied when he accused Matt's daughter.

And when that was learned, he was executed.

So suddenly, according to Jenny Titterman, Osterberg, a majority began to question the truthfulness of child witnesses, several of whom later confessed that they had lied.

And were they executed?

I don't know how that.

But I'm like, are we just going to execute and execute and execute till we can't execute no more?

Well, for a lot of their role in spreading the hysteria, some of them were executed. Wow.

And in the months and years that followed, accusations of witchcraft and sorcery suddenly became increasingly rare.

I bet.

And when they were leveled, they were pretty quickly shut down

either by neighbors or authorities, because they were like, we're not doing this again.

And with that, the great noise came to a rather unceremonious end in Sweden

after having led to the death of nearly 300 people in the end, mostly women.

But it's more likely that it's a very much higher number, I'm sure.

Right. Like some people just weren't documented.

Now, in the decades that followed the big noise, there were attempts to obviously accuse and try witches, but they never really gained any attraction.

And in some cases were just completely shut down by authorities.

By then they had reached a more enlightened age.

And in 1858, for example, a priest in Delarna,

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a county in central Sweden, accused an entire group of local women of witchcraft. So a priest did, hoping the case would be brought to trial. And instead, the authorities went out of their way to silence him and the accusations. And they said that it brought embarrassment to their government, that he even accused them of this. So Sweden turned it around. I'm glad to hear that, because Sweden turned it around. Yeah, that's pretty fucking embarrassing. They learned. Now, as Tidderman Osterberg wrote, in heritage discourse, the histories of marginalized peoples were as oppressed as the peoples themselves because heritage is so often forged in preserved power and maintained precedence. The story of the women in the Swedish witch trials, which trials serves as an example. So Torsjöker has not tried to hide this brutal history of witch hunting. They've actually just tried to kind of like rebrand it a little bit as like they're a destination for like those with an interest in history. Nice. But they don't hide it. They're like, this happened. Yeah. They might like not give you like, I don't think they're out there like, let me tell you all the gory details, but like they don't, they don't hide from it. They're like, this happened and you can come here and learn about it. You have to recognize it. They actually have a memorial to those executed. That's been erected in the village and it was erected in 1975. Wow. And it's still there. Yeah. So I don't know when that one was erected. You can visit Torsjöker, know that they know what happened there and that they have, they have, you know, done all they can do to get past it. But it is unthinkable that this is real. It's unthinkable. Truly, I'm like without words. And then the fact that even more people were executed after when they were like, yeah, I lied. It's like two executions don't make one go away. Exactly, like it's just not a good. And because I know some people when they see witch trials, they're like, OK, whatever, like what? But when you read about it, well, each one was a difference. Yeah, you don't realize how how intense these things are. It's not just like, oh, they got put on trial and some people were screaming and pretended and they were being bit by specters and shit.

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It's like, no, no, no, no, this is wild.

And then their own mother, yes, it's got real brutal.

So that is the story of some of the European witch trial, madness and the Malleus, Malitha Karam and the Torsjöker witch trials.

Fun. Except not at all.

Sweden learned so good for Sweden.

Yeah.

Thanks, Sweden.

You've done well for Sweden, you know, killing it since.

Well, with that, we hope you keep listening and we hope you keep it weird.

But not so weird that you put anybody on trial for witchcraft

because I think you're probably lying and then it's going to come up that you're lying and then everybody's going to get executed and really who wins when that happens?

No one, not you. No one.

And Puck was a bitch.

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