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00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:08,280

Magical spells, mysterious powers, strange rituals, stories about witches have been scaring

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00:00:08,280 --> 00:00:10,520

people for a long, long time.

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00:00:10,520 --> 00:00:16,640

Is there really anything to be afraid of?

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00:00:16,640 --> 00:00:23,600

Get ready to discover the chilling history of witches, the myths, the legends, the terrifying

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00:00:23,600 --> 00:00:33,600

truth, and meet the witches of today who keep the mysterious ancient traditions alive.

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00:00:33,600 --> 00:00:35,880

Are you prepared to face your fears?

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00:00:35,880 --> 00:00:39,720

Because truth or scare is going to face the truth about witches.

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00:00:53,600 --> 00:01:18,400

Witches, wizards, warlocks.

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00:01:18,400 --> 00:01:23,640

They've been known since the Stone Age for mysterious rituals, spells, and their belief

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00:01:23,640 --> 00:01:26,160

they can bend the forces of nature.

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00:01:26,160 --> 00:01:32,360

Today, witches are the subject of bestselling books, video games, movies, and of course

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00:01:32,360 --> 00:01:33,360

TV shows.

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00:01:33,360 --> 00:01:38,920

But stories have been told about them for centuries, and the true history of witches

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00:01:38,920 --> 00:01:45,920

is the most shocking story of all.

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00:01:45,920 --> 00:01:51,720

To try and get to the truth, we have to go back to the beginning, to a time before history

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00:01:51,720 --> 00:01:56,320

itself where their mystical traditions were born.

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00:01:56,320 --> 00:02:04,000

Egyptian priests, African shamans, and the secretive mysterious druids in the United

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00:02:04,000 --> 00:02:10,200

Kingdom and Europe were just some of the many who claimed they could cast magic spells,

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00:02:10,200 --> 00:02:15,240

predict the future, or even control the forces of nature.

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00:02:15,240 --> 00:02:21,400

And they tried to use these powers to make people's hard lives just a little bit easier.

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00:02:21,400 --> 00:02:22,960

Nothing scary about that.

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00:02:22,960 --> 00:02:26,480

Could they actually do these things?

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00:02:26,480 --> 00:02:28,360

No one knows for sure.

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00:02:28,360 --> 00:02:33,600

But some claim their magic has done remarkable things.

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00:02:33,600 --> 00:02:38,720

Like Stonehenge, a massive stone structure in England that some believe was built by

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00:02:38,720 --> 00:02:41,120

the druids.

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00:02:41,120 --> 00:02:46,840

According to legend, a wizard named Merlin, who some say was a druid himself, magically

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00:02:46,840 --> 00:02:51,760

transported the stones here from hundreds of miles away.

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00:02:51,760 --> 00:02:52,760

Hard to believe?

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00:02:52,760 --> 00:02:58,720

Well, geologists have examined Stonehenge, and they confirmed that some of the huge

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00:02:58,720 --> 00:03:03,800

stones did come from distant lands in Wales.

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00:03:03,800 --> 00:03:10,320

In light of this fact, many today remain convinced that the stones were moved by Merlin's supernatural

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00:03:10,320 --> 00:03:11,320

powers.

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00:03:11,320 --> 00:03:18,920

But others say someone, or something else, must have moved them.

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00:03:18,920 --> 00:03:23,920

Some theories state that humans had the capability of moving the stones by other methods, without

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00:03:23,920 --> 00:03:26,480

magic.

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00:03:26,480 --> 00:03:31,560

We may never know if it was magic that built Stonehenge, but we do know this.

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00:03:31,560 --> 00:03:37,640

In the year 1000 AD, Christianity became popular in the British Isles, and things started to

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00:03:37,640 --> 00:03:41,520

change for the people who practiced the mystical arts.

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00:03:41,520 --> 00:03:48,560

They were looked at suspiciously, and labeled witches.

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00:03:48,560 --> 00:03:53,760

By 1563, British law made being a witch illegal.

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00:03:53,760 --> 00:03:58,600

A few years later, King James made new laws that said witches were under the control of

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00:03:58,600 --> 00:04:01,280

demonic forces.

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00:04:01,280 --> 00:04:06,480

Now if you are accused of being a witch, it was serious business.

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00:04:06,480 --> 00:04:12,080

You might be found guilty in a trial, or even tortured until you confessed.

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00:04:12,080 --> 00:04:16,000

Either way, your fate was usually the same.

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00:04:16,000 --> 00:04:18,000

It was madness.

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00:04:18,000 --> 00:04:20,440

But thankfully, it didn't last long.

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00:04:20,440 --> 00:04:25,520

In less than a hundred years, England had stopped executing people for being witches.

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00:04:25,520 --> 00:04:29,800

But people's fear of witches didn't disappear completely.

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00:04:29,800 --> 00:04:44,360

In fact, it traveled across the Atlantic Ocean, bringing hysteria to the New World.

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00:04:44,360 --> 00:04:51,520

Alone in an attic, late at night, did a group of girls actually come under attack by witches?

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00:04:51,520 --> 00:04:55,800

Salem, Massachusetts is plunged into madness.

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00:04:56,800 --> 00:05:00,800

Next on Truth or Scare.

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00:05:11,800 --> 00:05:16,800

What if you could be tricked into becoming a witch?

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00:05:16,800 --> 00:05:20,800

When the Puritans came to the New World from England, they brought along their belief that

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00:05:20,800 --> 00:05:23,800

the devil had power over everyone.

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00:05:23,800 --> 00:05:33,800

And in 1692, many say that belief drove the town of Salem, Massachusetts to the edge of insanity.

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00:05:36,800 --> 00:05:42,800

The Puritans had come to New England in the late 1600s to live a simple and religious life.

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00:05:42,800 --> 00:05:46,800

Many of them settled in Salem, Massachusetts.

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00:05:46,800 --> 00:05:52,800

But towards the end of the century, some Puritans in Salem didn't like what they saw happening.

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00:05:52,800 --> 00:05:54,800

The town was growing and changing.

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00:05:54,800 --> 00:05:59,800

The port was filled with ships, and new businesses were booming.

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00:05:59,800 --> 00:06:04,800

Many felt this prosperity would harm the pure, simple life they had come for.

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00:06:04,800 --> 00:06:11,800

And historians say this made them fear that the town might be under the influence of the devil.

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00:06:11,800 --> 00:06:15,800

The belief was that he could trick you into signing his book.

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00:06:15,800 --> 00:06:19,800

After that, you'd be given dangerous magical powers.

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00:06:19,800 --> 00:06:24,800

Powers you could use to hurt other people, even kill them.

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00:06:24,800 --> 00:06:27,800

You would be a witch.

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00:06:27,800 --> 00:06:30,800

Was the devil at work in Salem?

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00:06:30,800 --> 00:06:33,800

Samuel Parris thought so, and said so.

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00:06:33,800 --> 00:06:40,800

He was the top minister in town, and many say his sermons made a lot of people suspicious of their neighbors.

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00:06:40,800 --> 00:06:43,800

The situation was getting tense.

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00:06:43,800 --> 00:06:46,800

And then it exploded.

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00:06:46,800 --> 00:06:55,800

On a cold winter's night in 1692, in the minister's own home, the hysteria began.

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00:06:55,800 --> 00:07:03,800

Reverend Parris' nine-year-old daughter, Betty, and her friends were having their fortunes told by Titchiba, the minister's slave.

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00:07:03,800 --> 00:07:08,800

The only problem was, fortune-telling was forbidden.

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00:07:08,800 --> 00:07:14,800

But Betty and her friends didn't care. They were spellbound.

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00:07:15,800 --> 00:07:19,800

But then suddenly, one of the girls saw something.

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00:07:19,800 --> 00:07:24,800

Floating in the air was the terrifying vision of a white coffin.

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00:07:24,800 --> 00:07:29,800

But the terror was only beginning.

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00:07:29,800 --> 00:07:35,800

Betty began to have convulsions, flailing, shaking, thrashing, and screaming,

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00:07:35,800 --> 00:07:40,800

like she was being attacked by some terrifying invisible creature.

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00:07:40,800 --> 00:07:44,800

Then, the same thing started with Abigail, her eleven-year-old cousin.

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00:07:44,800 --> 00:07:49,800

Uncontrollable, horrifying fits, totally out of nowhere.

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00:07:49,800 --> 00:07:56,800

Reverend Parris sent for the village doctor, but he couldn't find anything wrong with the girls.

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00:07:56,800 --> 00:08:01,800

For a puritan in 1692 that left only one explanation.

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00:08:01,800 --> 00:08:05,800

The evil hand is upon them, he said.

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00:08:05,800 --> 00:08:09,800

He meant, of course, the evil hand of a witch.

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00:08:12,800 --> 00:08:16,800

Over the next few days, none of the girls got better.

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00:08:16,800 --> 00:08:20,800

And then, other girls in the village suddenly became afflicted too.

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00:08:20,800 --> 00:08:24,800

Reverend Parris brought in other ministers to help him,

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00:08:24,800 --> 00:08:28,800

and demanded that the girls tell them who had cast this evil spell.

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00:08:28,800 --> 00:08:34,800

Tired and desperate, the girls broke down and named three names.

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00:08:39,800 --> 00:08:42,800

One was Reverend Parris' fortune-telling slave.

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00:08:47,800 --> 00:08:49,800

One was a beggar.

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00:08:50,800 --> 00:08:52,800

And are there others?

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00:08:54,800 --> 00:08:56,800

Sarah Uspin.

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00:08:56,800 --> 00:09:03,800

And the other was a sick old woman who had shocked the town when she married one of her servants.

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00:09:06,800 --> 00:09:11,800

On February 29th, the three women were officially arrested for being witches,

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00:09:11,800 --> 00:09:15,800

and brought to the town meeting house to face the charges.

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00:09:15,800 --> 00:09:19,800

Reverend Parris' slave, Titchiba, was brought before the magistrate,

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00:09:19,800 --> 00:09:25,800

and for the first time ever in Salem, someone confessed to being a witch.

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00:09:31,800 --> 00:09:35,800

Not only did Titchiba claim that she served the devil,

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00:09:35,800 --> 00:09:41,800

she confirmed the girls' stories that Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne were also witches.

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00:09:42,800 --> 00:09:48,800

And she gave wild descriptions of how they all rode on broomsticks to their meetings with the devil,

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00:09:48,800 --> 00:09:51,800

in Reverend Parris' pasture.

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00:09:51,800 --> 00:09:57,800

But the biggest bombshell was her claim that there were other witches at these meetings.

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00:09:57,800 --> 00:10:00,800

Witches that she couldn't recognize.

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00:10:01,800 --> 00:10:03,800

Who were those other witches?

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00:10:03,800 --> 00:10:07,800

Suddenly, it seemed like anyone might be accused.

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00:10:07,800 --> 00:10:13,800

And starting on March 1st, 1692, that's exactly what started to happen.

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00:10:13,800 --> 00:10:16,800

The witch hunt had begun.

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00:10:19,800 --> 00:10:25,800

It's neighbor against neighbor as the witch trials begin, and death comes to Salem.

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00:10:29,800 --> 00:10:32,800

Next on Truth or Scare.

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00:10:38,800 --> 00:10:42,800

The Witch Hunt

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00:10:44,800 --> 00:10:49,800

Imagine if you could lose your life, just because someone said you were a witch.

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00:10:49,800 --> 00:10:57,800

Well, in 1692 in Salem, the claims of the girls in the attic shocked the entire town.

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00:10:57,800 --> 00:11:01,800

Now the question was, were they telling the truth?

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00:11:02,800 --> 00:11:07,800

Historians say it didn't really matter.

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00:11:07,800 --> 00:11:15,800

None of the accused witches were given lawyers, and all of them were pretty much seen as guilty, until proven innocent.

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00:11:15,800 --> 00:11:20,800

Their moles, warts, even their zits were seen as marks of evil.

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00:11:20,800 --> 00:11:27,800

And even if their skin was clear, they still couldn't escape what the court said was the most incriminating evidence of all.

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00:11:28,800 --> 00:11:32,800

It was called spectral evidence.

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00:11:32,800 --> 00:11:38,800

The things that the girls said they saw were taken as cold, hard, back.

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00:11:40,800 --> 00:11:45,800

Ann Putnam, who had been in the attic that night, testified against Sarah Good.

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00:11:45,800 --> 00:11:50,800

I saw the operation of Sarah Good. She'd had tortured me most grievously.

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00:11:50,800 --> 00:11:55,800

She'd had pinched me and pricked me and urged me vehemently to write in her book.

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00:11:55,800 --> 00:11:59,800

Once the trial started, the accusations didn't stop.

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00:11:59,800 --> 00:12:06,800

Even some adults were starting to point the finger, and it seemed like everyone was a suspect.

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00:12:06,800 --> 00:12:11,800

Even Rebecca Nurse, she was a grandmother and a respected member of the church.

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00:12:12,800 --> 00:12:20,800

But when Ann Putnam accused her of being a witch, this frail 71-year-old woman was dragged to court to face the charges.

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00:12:20,800 --> 00:12:25,800

Ann Putnam, have you seen this woman hurt you?

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00:12:25,800 --> 00:12:28,800

Yes, she beat me this morning.

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00:12:31,800 --> 00:12:37,800

Rebecca Nurse, do you not see these afflicted persons, and hear them accuse you?

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00:12:38,800 --> 00:12:44,800

The good Lord knows I have not hurt them. I am an innocent person.

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00:12:45,800 --> 00:12:48,800

She was then found guilty.

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00:12:50,800 --> 00:12:54,800

Many say that the people of Salem had completely lost their grip on reality.

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00:12:54,800 --> 00:12:57,800

Even family ties meant nothing.

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00:12:57,800 --> 00:13:03,800

Sarah Good's five-year-old daughter testified that her mother had actually recruited her to be a witch.

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00:13:04,800 --> 00:13:12,800

Then, a local farmer was arrested, put on trial and convicted, all based on his granddaughter's testimony.

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00:13:14,800 --> 00:13:24,800

Over the summer of 1692, a total of 19 people were convicted and hanged for being witches, including a minister.

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00:13:25,800 --> 00:13:34,800

As the convictions piled up, historians say that some of the accused were so desperate to escape hanging, they confessed.

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00:13:34,800 --> 00:13:41,800

Confessing bought them some time. Time, they hoped, would give Salem a chance to come to its senses.

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00:13:41,800 --> 00:13:45,800

And by the end of 1692, it did.

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00:13:45,800 --> 00:13:53,800

Ministers all over Massachusetts began to question the evidence that had been presented, especially the spectral evidence.

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00:13:53,800 --> 00:13:59,800

All those spirits that only the girls could see. One of the judges even quit.

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00:13:59,800 --> 00:14:07,800

Finally, when the governor's wife was accused, it was clear that the nightmare of the witch hunt needed to end.

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00:14:07,800 --> 00:14:15,800

Increase matter, one of the most powerful ministers in Massachusetts, delivered a famous sermon in which he said,

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00:14:15,800 --> 00:14:22,800

It were better that ten suspected witches should go free than that one innocent person die.

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00:14:22,800 --> 00:14:29,800

I'd rather judge a witch to be an honest woman than judge an honest woman to be a witch.

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00:14:29,800 --> 00:14:35,800

On October 29th, 1692, the witch hunt was officially over.

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00:14:35,800 --> 00:14:41,800

All the accused witches were let out of jail and the convicted witches were pardoned.

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00:14:41,800 --> 00:14:47,800

In eight short months, two hundred people had been accused and put in jail.

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00:14:47,800 --> 00:14:52,800

Twenty had been executed and five had died in prison.

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00:14:52,800 --> 00:14:57,800

They would be the last people in America ever to be put to death for being witches.

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00:14:57,800 --> 00:15:03,800

In the end, a lot of the accusers blamed their actions on the devil.

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00:15:03,800 --> 00:15:07,800

They claimed they had been tricked into believing their neighbors were witches.

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00:15:08,800 --> 00:15:11,800

We are apt to use all that good.

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00:15:11,800 --> 00:15:20,800

But many historians today believe that this dark chapter in American history was really the result of the Puritans' extreme views.

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00:15:20,800 --> 00:15:25,800

Views that helped create the kind of fear that can easily become hysteria.

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00:15:25,800 --> 00:15:28,800

Other people see a kind of evil plot.

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00:15:28,800 --> 00:15:36,800

They point the finger at the Puritans who used what happened on that cold February night to eliminate their enemies.

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00:15:37,800 --> 00:15:41,800

Could that explain the bizarre accusation of Rebecca Nurse?

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00:15:41,800 --> 00:15:46,800

She had once refused to sell some land to Anne Putnam's powerful father.

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00:15:46,800 --> 00:15:51,800

Had he now used his own daughter for revenge, the mystery remains.

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00:15:56,800 --> 00:15:58,800

The greatest mystery of all.

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00:15:58,800 --> 00:16:02,800

What did happen in the attic on that cold February night?

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00:16:06,800 --> 00:16:09,800

Next on Truth or Scare.

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00:16:21,800 --> 00:16:28,800

History has shown that no one in Salem was accused of being a witch, was a witch.

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00:16:28,800 --> 00:16:35,800

But there are still some unanswered questions, like what really happened to the girls in that attic in 1692.

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00:16:37,800 --> 00:16:47,800

No one questions that on that night, Betty Parris and her friends suddenly went into convulsions and had hallucinations they were being attacked.

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00:16:47,800 --> 00:16:55,800

But now that we know it wasn't their witch neighbors causing it, is it possible that the whole thing was an act?

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00:16:55,800 --> 00:17:02,800

Richard Trask is a descendant of one of the accused witches and an expert on the Salem witch trials.

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00:17:02,800 --> 00:17:08,800

He believes that even though what was happening to the girls wasn't the devil, it was real.

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00:17:08,800 --> 00:17:17,800

This wasn't kids pretending, this wasn't just a poor acting on the part of the kids, this was something that was physically happening to them.

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00:17:17,800 --> 00:17:23,800

It had been reported that some of the girls actually had strange sores appear in their bodies.

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00:17:23,800 --> 00:17:28,800

One theory says that the answer might be found in something they ate.

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00:17:28,800 --> 00:17:32,800

Could a simple slice of bread have caused these girls to see evil?

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00:17:32,800 --> 00:17:33,800

Maybe.

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00:17:33,800 --> 00:17:38,800

Back then, rye bread sometimes had a nasty fungus called ergot.

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00:17:38,800 --> 00:17:49,800

It's not a problem today, but according to historian Mary Matossian, in 1692, people who ate bad rye bread had bad things happen.

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00:17:49,800 --> 00:17:59,800

They have uncontrollable spasms in their muscles and uncontrollable writhing the whole body.

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00:17:59,800 --> 00:18:08,800

After that, hallucinations and the sensation that they are being bitten or poked by some sharp invisible force.

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00:18:08,800 --> 00:18:15,800

And they frequently attribute these hallucinations to supernatural forces, usually evil.

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00:18:15,800 --> 00:18:21,800

And if the Puritans believed one thing, it was that witches were evil.

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00:18:21,800 --> 00:18:26,800

And the rest, as they say, is Salem's tragic history.

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00:18:26,800 --> 00:18:31,800

But it's a history that the town has learned from.

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00:18:31,800 --> 00:18:35,800

Welcome back to modern day Salem.

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00:18:35,800 --> 00:18:42,800

But today, in the town where fear of witches destroyed so many lives, everything is different.

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00:18:42,800 --> 00:18:51,800

Salem has embraced its past, and over a million visitors a year come here to experience its history for themselves.

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00:18:51,800 --> 00:18:55,800

And maybe even get to meet a real witch.

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00:18:55,800 --> 00:19:03,800

That's right, because even though all those people in 1692 were falsely accused of being witches,

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00:19:03,800 --> 00:19:11,800

a growing community of people that openly call themselves witches feel right at home here in Salem.

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00:19:11,800 --> 00:19:16,800

People like Laurie Cabot. And Laurie Cabot's not just any witch.

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00:19:16,800 --> 00:19:19,800

I'm the official witch of Salem, Massachusetts.

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00:19:19,800 --> 00:19:25,800

And what does it mean to be a witch? According to Laurie, it's not spooky at all.

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00:19:25,800 --> 00:19:31,800

Just like the Druids, their ceremonies have nothing to do with evil or the devil, and never have.

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00:19:31,800 --> 00:19:38,800

We follow two major rules. Do what that will and harm no one.

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00:19:38,800 --> 00:19:42,800

Witches, like Laurie, also believe in the law of three.

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00:19:42,800 --> 00:19:52,800

It says that anything they do that sends out energy, like spells, are wishing for things, will come back to them three times more intensely.

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00:19:52,800 --> 00:19:57,800

The more generous you are, the more generous the world will be with you.

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00:19:57,800 --> 00:20:04,800

Put those two rules together, and it's pretty obvious that most modern day witches want to do good.

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00:20:04,800 --> 00:20:07,800

Just like the ancient Druids and those that came before them.

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00:20:07,800 --> 00:20:11,800

May all blessings be yours, so mo to be.

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00:20:11,800 --> 00:20:17,800

Modern witches perform rituals that they believe can solve problems and help to change things about their lives.

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00:20:17,800 --> 00:20:21,800

It's a lot like saying a prayer.

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00:20:21,800 --> 00:20:24,800

By earth, fire.

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00:20:24,800 --> 00:20:30,800

Laurie starts by casting a circle. This is a way of focusing her energy on the spell.

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00:20:31,800 --> 00:20:37,800

Modern witches like Laurie say they conduct their ceremonies outdoors to be closer to the earth,

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00:20:37,800 --> 00:20:43,800

and many of them believe there is an energy that flows through every living thing in the universe.

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00:20:43,800 --> 00:20:50,800

These mystical ceremonies celebrate and respect nature, just like they did in the times of the Druids.

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00:20:50,800 --> 00:20:56,800

And they link the witches of today with those who first practiced the mystical arts.

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00:21:00,800 --> 00:21:04,800

It looks like the history of witches has come full circle,

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00:21:04,800 --> 00:21:11,800

because both ancient and modern witches claim to harness nature through spells and rituals to improve their lives.

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00:21:11,800 --> 00:21:15,800

But is their magic real? That's up to you to decide.

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00:21:15,800 --> 00:21:23,800

But real or not, witches will always have the power to cast spells over our imaginations.

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00:21:30,800 --> 00:21:35,800

The magic of witches is a magic that can be used to make a magic spell.

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00:21:35,800 --> 00:21:40,800

The magic of witches is a magic that can be used to make a spell.

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00:21:40,800 --> 00:21:45,800

The magic of witches is a magic that can be used to make a spell.

221

00:21:45,800 --> 00:21:50,800

The magic of witches is a magic that can be used to make a spell.

222

00:21:50,800 --> 00:21:55,800

The magic of witches is a magic that can be used to make a spell.

223

00:21:55,800 --> 00:22:00,800

The magic of witches is a magic that can be used to make a spell.