



# CREATURES OF CHRISTMAS

MEET THE MONSTERS BEHIND GERMANY'S HOLIDAY MISCHIEF

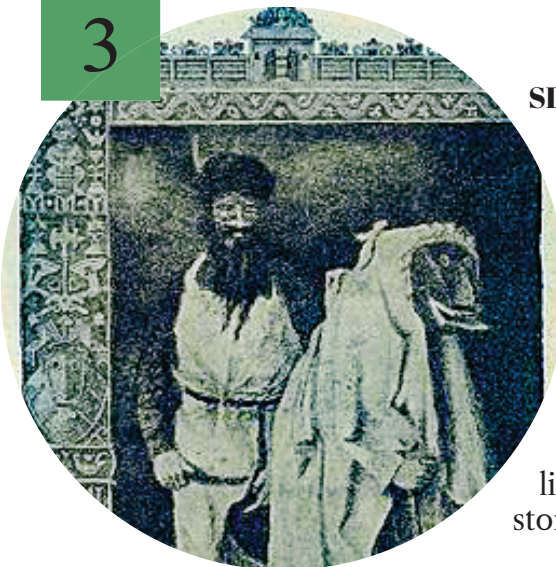
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Everyone knows the big guy in a red suit who squeezes down chimneys on Christmas Eve, but do you know these not-so-jolly creatures? Take a trip to Europe and meet some of Germany's mythical holiday legends.



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## SLEEP TIGHT, FRAU PERCHTA'S GONNE BITE

Unlike other fairytale Father Christmases, this German story involves beatings and getting stuffed in a burlap sack. Frau Perchta strikes fear even among the most daring of children.

“Frau Perchta was supposedly this figure that would come if you were bad and, you know, cut you open and take out your innards and scary things like that. But ironically she was supposed to be really nice otherwise. She was still this kind of monstrous figure,” German teacher Valerie Phillips said. “Similar to [other stories], she was just this story parents tell their kids in Germany.”

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**HO HO, OH NO!**

Saint Nicholas's most notable counterpart is most commonly known as Krampus. NHS German teacher Alison Carrier says this story has a dark past.

"Krampus is an ancient tradition, and he is coming back in full force. He comes around with Saint Nicholas, and his job is essentially to scare children into being good," Carrier said. "Parents would tell their kids stories of Krampus and him taking you away if you're bad. They would tell these stories of Krampus like bedtime stories to sort of scare the kids," Carrier said.

**SING HIM A SONG (OR ELSE)**

Another noel nightmare doesn't just reward or punish the children of Europe. This story from northern Germany threatens children with the possibility of a severe beating.

"Knecht Ruprecht was kind of scary in his own right, but he was more like a man, he just looked like a regular old man with a sooty face," Phillips said. "In Germany, what kids would do is recite a poem or sing a little song or something, and then they would get gifts from Saint Nicholas, or if they were bad potentially get the rod from Knecht Ruprecht."

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