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LICENTIOUS LEGENDS:

A FOLKLORE PODCAST

by

Alexandra L Haynes

A project submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

American Studies

Approved By

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Finally, I would like to extend my profound gratitude to my family and friends, who encouraged me through thick and thin. To Tony, my fiancé, the love of my life, I cannot express just how much your support and love has meant to me during this adventure. Thank you so much, and I look forward to continuing *Licentious Legends* with you.

Faye Haynes.

Abstract

Licentious Legends was created out of a need to both understand and educate about sexual contemporary legends; not just what they are and what defines them, but the effect that they have on those who experience them. The purpose of this podcast is not to shame, but to take what has been found and educate about the joys and dangers of these legends. These legends range from the everyday (such as "The Hook"), to legends about a young man killing himself with a plunger. In an effort to gather as many examples as they could, Faye interviewed several of their friends from across the country. Each of their guests experienced sexual contemporary legends inherent not only to their location, but their identities. For example, they interviewed two transgender pansexual men, one gay cis man, and a bisexual cis woman. This allowed common ground between not only the people interviewed, but the legends they experienced growing up. They also researched examples of the older legends, to find where they may have originated from, and how they have evolved over the past few decades. These sexual legends have not only shamed countless young people, but have also stunted their emotional and mental growth, at least in the realm of relationships and sex. Told through the medium of podcasting, Licentious Legends opens itself to listeners of (almost) all ages, and allows for those who would not have the time to read a typical thesis to still hear and digest the information presented.

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EPISODE ONE: JELLY BRACELETS

Jelly bracelets are back, and your children may soon fall prey to their colorful game. In a game called “snap,” a boy attempts to tear a jelly bracelet from a girl’s wrist. Should he succeed, he receives a sexual coupon for an act corresponding with that color. If your daughter is wearing these bracelets, it may be time to have *A Talk* with her.

[PLAY OPENING SOUNDCLIP]

Introduction;

Hey there, and welcome to Licentious Legends! Since this is the first episode, I’d like to take a moment to introduce myself before we begin. My name is Faye Haynes, and I am a folklorist studying contemporary legends at Utah State University. While many may believe folklore is a study of old cultures or old wives’ tales, there is actually so much more to this discipline. Folklore ranges from a community’s festivals to a family’s traditions and even include fun categories such as children’s jump rope rhymes. Folklore doesn’t just tell about a society’s past, but it also tells about the present, and reveal a society’s views, values, and virtues.

Hello, and welcome to Licentious Legends, a podcast featuring the sexiest and messiest contemporary legends of our time. I’m your host, Faye, a folklorist from Alabama currently studying folklore at Utah State University. For those of you just joining us, a folklorist is someone who studies folklore, or the comparative study of folk knowledge and culture. Specifically, I am a folklorist specializing in contemporary legends, which up until recently were known as urban legends. A contemporary legend is a, as the name would suggest, a modern form of folklore; it consists of stories that are often told as true, with the purpose of teaching a lesson to its audience through fear.

Contemporary legends are the legends you hear every day, and are often disguised as “friend of a friend” stories. These are the stories that you hear “didn’t happen to me, but to my friend!” or “my aunt’s next-door neighbor’s wife.” Their origins cannot be tracked down, but they still have that connection to the everyday individual. And through that connection, these stories are meant to reinforce societal beliefs through fear and anxiety. “This happened to my neighbor’s brother” becomes “but it could also happen to you!” Perhaps you’ve heard the legend of “The Hooked Man,” or “The Call from Inside the House.” These legends perpetuate the idea that the everyday person, in the everyday situation, can suddenly find themselves in a horrifying and dangerous circumstances. The legends we will be focusing on, however, are just as horrifying while also a bit more *scandalous*. Sexy and scandalous, these are our licentious legends.

I grew up in Alabama, where sex was a dirty word and a young woman’s shoulders always had to be covered. It was the rural south, where church was a regular occurrence, and sex toys are illegal outside of “educational” purposes. For my first sixteen years, I lived a sheltered life, and the older I became, the more I realized I knew next to nothing about sexual intercourse, contraceptives, or even how my own body worked.

When I was fifteen, I registered for a high school health course. I don’t remember much about the class, except for one remarkable day. Picture it: a hot, humid classroom full of anxious teenagers, all staring up at a school nurse as she discussed the consequences of becoming sexually active. STDs, pregnancy, death—all were viable consequences of sexual activity. It was like that scene in *Mean Girls* where the coach tells them “Don’t have sex because you will get pregnant and die. Don’t have sex in the missionary position. Kids, just don’t do it.” It was that for a solid hour.

But then, at the very end, that nameless nurse said something I have never forgotten. “Girls,” she said, “you hold the keys to your kingdom. It is your responsibility to keep yourself pure.”

Now, I knew next to nothing about sex in high school, and it took until I was in that classroom to even know what a penis looked like. But despite my ignorance and innocence, I still knew there was something wrong with what the nurse was telling me. Sex is a two (or more) person activity. It requires active and consenting participants. I also knew it couldn’t kill me; not unless I did something stupid. So why was this woman lying to us?

Over the years, I grew. I did my research. I was *determined* to learn what that woman refused to teach us. This podcast, Licentious Legends was created to teach others what I wished I had known all those years ago. Its main purpose is to educate without shaming either the ignorant or experienced. Licentious Legends is not a place of shame, but a place to empower all my listeners with their newfound knowledge.

In this podcast, I will be looking at contemporary legends dealing with sex and sexual topics. I will discuss what is fact, what is fiction, and what these legends say about society’s fears and values, and how society uses our ignorance of sex and the human body to keep us content in our anxiety and shame.

Today, we will be talking about *shag bands*, also called sex or jelly bracelets. I’m sure you’ve heard of these before, but just in case you haven’t, the idea is that girls in their early to late teens are wearing these cheap jelly bracelets in the hopes of having sex. Their arms are layered with multicolored bracelets, with each color corresponding to a different sex act. The idea behind this “game” is that boys will break the bands and use those broken plastic things as coupons for sex, which the girls will, of course, willingly give.

Joining me today is Tony Atkins, my husband and someone who experienced these rumors first hand. Tony grew up in Wetumpka, Alabama, and moved to Utah in 2015. Currently, he works as a data entry clerk-slash-writer and spends most of his time listening to me ramble about contemporary legends.

[TRANSCRIPT BEGIN]

Faye: I know we've discussed one-on-one, your experience with [jelly bracelets], but can you just recap it for me?

Tony: So when I was in middle school, like late middle school, I was going through my goth phase. And at Hot Topic, they had these, like, jelly bracelets. And they could be clear or black, red or a neon green—like, those kind of colors. Um, I had the red and black ones. I bought like a whole pack of them, and I would wear them with my outfits. I did not find anything sexual with them, because I was in middle school. I barely knew anything about any of that.

Faye: And they were just bracelets!

Tony: And they were just bracelets. There wasn't anything, like, nasty about them to me. I did not know that, at the time, there was a big hullabaloo about them. Where people thought that, like, middle school and high schoolers were going to these, like, parties, or doing stuff where one of their friends would snap one of the bracelets and—you know, you had to perform whatever sex act that color represents. I did know that people thought that was a thing.

Tony: And, like, if it was a real thing, I never heard about it until my school counselor pulled me aside in the middle of class, and pulled me into their office and was like "Did you know what this meant?" And after that, I just stopped wearing the bracelets altogether because I was in middle school in rural Alabama. I was in middle school, and I was not going to be seen as a slut, so.

Faye: Yeah. Yeah, so would you say, like, thirteen? Fourteen years old?

Tony: Yeah, I was thirteen or fourteen. I didn't know it was a sex act thing. I didn't know what colors meant what. I don't think I ever really figured out what color was supposed to mean what, until I looked it up for myself a few years later, after the embarrassment had faded. Like, "No, wait, hold on. What?" So, I don't think I ended up looking up any meanings until a few years later. I just knew they meant something sexual. My counselor didn't go into any details at the time.

Faye: Okay. So you were pulled out class, you were made feel embarrassed in front of one or two adults.

Tony: Yup.

Faye: And, obviously, you stopped wearing the bracelets. Was there any other impact? Like, did you tell others about the bracelets? Did you judge others who wore the bracelets? Like how did that knowledge affect your...

Tony: So I did tell my friend group 'cause they noticed I'd stopped wearing them, and I'd worn them every day for several weeks by that point. They noticed I'd stopped wearing them, they asked about it, and I told them. That's about as far as I went with spreading it, 'cause, like, I didn't have a lot of friends. I didn't gossip a lot. As for judging, I was a very nonjudgmental teenager. Like, probably more nonjudgmental than most teenagers were. I just genuinely—I didn't care what anyone else did. And if I did someone wearing them, I just assumed they were like me and didn't know what they were about.

Faye: Right, and it's come to light now that it's mostly adults that were aware of the stigma behind the legends, and it sounds like the adults who were telling you the legend believed it.

Now I know that you said you continued the legend on because you were asked about, so this comes back to that idea of... Did some part of you believe?

Tony: Oh, yeah. I fully believed it. I was, um—I was one of those kids who, up until a certain point, believed what any adult told me, and I didn't really want to question them.

Faye: Okay, it wasn't just that you didn't want to be seen, it was that you believed they were a sexual thing.

Tony: Yeah, I thought they were a sexual thing. I just thought I was an idiot for never hearing of it before. [4:30]

[TRANSCRIPT END]

Now, there's a lot to unpack there, but I'm going to start with one of the most important things Tony mentioned during this interview: a loss of innocence. For most adults, the idea of children having sex or losing their innocence is terrifying, and perhaps even a bit traumatic. Parents, especially, do not want to think about their children having sex, much less going to sexual parties and being sexually promiscuous.

However, there is a fine line between protecting your children from the world and exposing them to its horrors, between shielding them and shaming them. For Tony, and for other children in his situation, the bands were nothing more than a fashion statement; a chance to show those in their small world just how "cool" they are. The bands had nothing to do with sex. It was another teenage fad; one that would have inevitably faded in its own time.

In this situation, it was not the children who saw a trend and overreacted to it, but the adults. According to Joel Best's book *Kids Gone Wild*, the "shag band" legend did not gain popularity until after it had been featured on both Oprah and Good Morning America, and that is when adults panicked. Children across America, not just Tony, were confronted, and not one

could attest that their bands represented sex. In fact, many had no idea that these silly little bands could be something so vulgar.

Contemporary legends are meant to enforce societal values through fear, but there is another step just beyond that. Not only do contemporary legends teach fear; they also shame their targets. For Tony and all the others the school officials pulled into their offices, an innocent moment in their lives had been tainted. What was supposed to be a silly, fun fashion statement turned into a source of guilt and embarrassment.

Perhaps what is most fascinating about Tony's experience and the experiences of others like him is not their role in this legend, but the role of the adults. Adults have a habit of sexualizing children. Not necessarily in a pedophilic way, but in a way that, when looked at objectively, is disturbing. Dress codes are the direct result of the sexualization of children and their bodies; this idea that there is something so inherently sinful about bare shoulders, thighs, bellies is prevalent in Western society.

The idea that children are as sexual as adults has had many effects on the children they sexualize. These young people are just children, trying to enjoy their youth. It is important to acknowledge this sexualization of what children wear, down to their accessories. From cheap gelatin-based bracelets to a schoolgirl's skirt, children wear what they wear not for anyone else, but for themselves. They want to look cute, not sexually attractive.

I know it is difficult for adults to see teenagers as children, but that is what they are. In Tony's case, he was thirteen years old. He was barely old enough to go see a Rated-R movie with parental supervision. But despite his age, he was pulled aside and questioned and humiliated, when he had done nothing wrong. All he did was wear a handful of plastic bracelets to school and returned home clothed in shame.

Most adults only want to protect children. This legend is not spread to humiliate, but to protect. It is passed around by concerned mothers, fathers, teachers—adults in these children’s lives who truly do want the best for them. They say these things in the hopes that someone can stop this “trend” before their children are affected. They do not mean to hurt those in their care. But in the end, it is that need to protect and that jump to sexualize that can end up destroying children’s innocence.

EPISODE TWO: THE HOOK

Hello, and welcome to Licentious Legends, a podcast featuring the sexiest and messiest contemporary legends of our time. I'm your host, Faye, a folklorist from Alabama currently studying folklore at Utah State University. Specifically, I am focusing on studying contemporary legends, which, up until recently, were known as urban legends. These are the legends you hear everyday; the "friend of a friend stories that share society's fears, values, and beliefs through the medium of storytelling. Their purpose is to push conservative lessons onto individuals through fear and panic. The legends we will be focusing on, however, are a bit more *scandalous* than some of the more well-known and popular contemporary legends, such as "The Hook" or even "The Call from Within the House." Sexy and scandalous, these are our licentious legends.

The Hook is one of the classic contemporary legends, with written accounts dating as far back as the early 1950's. It has inspired movies, books, and countless other renditions. And while it has its origins in fact—something we will get into later—at its core, it is yet another legend meant to control and scare young people into obeying societal norms.

Though there are several variations, the most common legend goes:

So the story goes two teenagers are out on a date and decide to go out to Lovers' Lane for some intimate, private time. They pull up to the cliff, fog up the windows, and start making out. As things are getting hot and heavy, the music on the radio cuts out, and a newscaster comes on to make an important bulletin. A maniac has escaped from the local asylum, he says, and adds that the escapee has been convicted of robbery, rape, or some other violent crime. The most important part of this broadcast, however, is the "tidbit" that the maniac has had once of his hands replaced by a hook.

The two teenagers get freaked out by the announcement and quickly straighten their clothes and fix themselves up before heading back to town. Once they arrive back at town, the teenage boy gets out of the car and goes to be a gentleman by opening her door—only to realize in horror that there is a bloody hook buried in the passenger side’s door.

The legend itself is common knowledge now, and, as I said before, has its local variations. But upon taking a closer look, we can start to see where it becomes less of a warning about teenage sex, and more of a metaphor of the dangers of premarital sex.

If you’ve ever seen Nicholas Cage’s *The Wicker Man*, you undoubtedly remember the scene in which two girls repeat “phallic symbol, phallic symbol” over and over again, which is a very good description of this legend. A young couple are out, making out, and the girl becomes frightened of the man with a hook for a hand. She asks to leave, and later finds the hook embedded in the *door* of the car. If we look at the hook as a less vulgar representation of the boyfriend’s penis, then it certainly isn’t too far of a leap to see the door—the *opening* of the car—as the young girl’s vagina (Brunvand 1981: 47-50). The car is almost penetrated and ravaged by the hook and its owner, but the two teenagers manage to pull out just before they are assaulted and murdered.

The core of “The Hook” legend is meant to encourage teenagers not to have premarital sex, and to show them the perils of doing so. Therefore, it makes sense that the most dangerous object—the weapon of the maniac, if you will—is a phallic symbol. It is a phallic symbol that not only “hooks” into its victim, but can hurt, maim, and even kill. Its appearance doesn’t just ruin these children’s nights, but could also go as far as ruining their *lives*. After all, think of the

trauma these young people endured knowing they were mere moments from death, and only the quick thinking of the girl saved them both.

As I've mentioned once or twice before, contemporary legends walk that fine line between fact and fiction. While the message they are trying to convey can often be helpful, the methods in which they go about it are questionable at best. Though contemporary legends are meant to teach through fear, I've often found that fear is not the best teacher. Facts and evidence are more powerful than the legends that linger.

Unlike some of the more *scandalous* legends in this series, "The Hook" has its connections in real life and true events (Newton 2014). While no real maniac ever ran around getting his arm ripped out by a pair of excitable teenagers, there is a real case of teenagers being attacked and murdered while visiting Lover's Lane.

The year was 1946, and in the town of Texarkana, Texas, Jimmy Hollis and Mary Jeanne Larey decided to take a detour from their wholesome date and park along a secluded road. While in the middle of, presumably, making out, a man appeared in the driver's side window. The stranger was described as over six feet tall with a pillowcase over his head and holes cut out for the eyes. Neither survivor could confirm his race. This man knocked Jimmy unconscious, chased Mary Jeanne, and sexually assaulted her with the barrel of his gun. Despite the trauma they endured, both teenagers survived the attack.

They were the lucky ones. Their attacker, later dubbed the Phantom Killer by the press, would go on to attack three more couples for a total of eight victims. Of those eight, Jimmy and Mary Jeanne were the only survivors. Richard Lanier Griffin, Polly Ann Moore, Paul James Martin, Betty Jo Booker, Walter Virgil Stalks, and Katherine Ila Stalks were all be murdered by

this unknown assailant. What's even worse is that their killer would never see justice, and the families would never have closure.

These attacks would inspire terror for years to come. Texarkana's trauma was immortalized in the movie *The Town that Feared Sundown*. But before these movies were even a script in their writer's eye, the legend of "The Hook" was printed in 1960 in a Dear Abby column. While there is no evidence that the Dear Abby letter spawned the "Hook" legend, it can be said that the article helped spread it to the adult masses. This article warned of The Man With the Hook for a Hand, and reads as follows:

If you are interested in teenagers, you will print this story. I don't know whether it's true or not, but it doesn't matter because it served its purpose on me. A fellow and his date pulled into their favorite "lovers' lane" to listen to the radio and do a little necking. The music was interrupted by an announcer who said there was an escaped convict in the area who had served time for rape and robbery. He was described as having a hook instead of a right hand. The couple became frightened and drove away. When the boy took his girl home, he went around to open the car door for her. Then he saw — a hook on the door handle!

I don't think I will ever park to make out as long as I live. I hope this does the same for other kids.

So, as you can see, the legend doesn't seem to have changed too much since it was first printed in "Dear Abby," other than perhaps the wording and length. More recent legends have increased the levels of danger and gore, especially with including the fact that the hook was bloody, and sometimes even has ripped flesh clinging to the arm-end.

Interestingly, there is another, lesser-known version of “The Hook” that goes one step further. The couple, while making out, hear the legend and get scared. Though they attempt to make it back to civilization, their car breaks down in the middle of the forest, and the young gentleman leaves to get help. And this is where things get dramatic. Either the girl falls asleep in the car and wakes to find her lover slaughtered not far from the car, or the boy returns and to find his girlfriend murdered with a hook buried in her abdomen. Either way, the message of *sex kills* is imprinted on the youth who come across this version of the story.

Upholding the status quo is one of the biggest reasons legends such as The Hook originated and continue to be told. In the 1950’s and 60’s, nothing was more important to society than keeping up the perfect image, and this extended to all ages and walks of life. Teenagers were meant to court, but never seriously date. Boys and girls were supposed to wait until marriage to have sex. Sneaking off to lover’s lane was taboo, and any resulting pregnancies could ruin a young woman’s life.

Since sex education was frowned upon, the only method parents and educators could count on was fear. This method of controlling adolescent sexuality through fear continues even today, with misinformation about HIV/AIDs, sex, and teen pregnancy. It has permeated our entire society, and has even scared the medical field from accepting blood donations from any gay males for fear of receiving “tainted blood.” Fear is a powerful motivator, but it is often unreliable, unrealistic, and completely untrue.

While “The Hook” is still told today, its origins are often forgotten. During the mid-twentieth century, there was not only the relationship of a young person’s friends and parents to boost credibility of the story, but the deaths of six young people. To the teenagers of Texarkana

and the surrounding cities, Lover's Lane truly became a dangerous place, and it is important that we remember that.

However, it is also important that we not only acknowledge The Hook's origins, but remember that it occurred over fifty years ago. The Phantom Killer is long dead, but his legend lives on. To young people all across America, they unknowingly carry his legacy with them, and carry that fear of a second killer in the pack.

In conclusion, I'm not saying that legends like The Hook don't have their place within our society and our culture. They are wonderful for striking up conversations, or for causing otherwise clueless individuals to do a bit of research on their own. But the message I would like for you and all of my listeners to take away from tonight's episode is that we cannot allow for society's antiquated beliefs to control our actions. Teenagers no longer sneak off to "Lover's Lane." Purity culture, or the emphases placed on a woman's virginity before marriage, is something that can ruin the life of an average teenager. It can permanently damage a child and leave them afraid of perfectly normal physical activities. These stories have their place, and that is around the campfire, or during sleepovers; any place where scary stories are told, so long as those telling and listening to them know that they're only our society's licentious legends, not facts.

That's it for this episode of Licentious Legends! Thanks for tuning in, and until next time, remember to stay smart, keep it safe, and keep it sexy.

EPISODE THREE: VAGINA DENTATA

Before we begin this episode, I would like to give a warning that the following [insert timestamp] will discuss heavy topics, including but not limited to: sexual assault, rape, and misogyny. Please be careful.

Hello, and welcome to Licentious Legends, a podcast featuring the sexiest and messiest contemporary legends of our time. I'm your host, Faye, a folklorist from Alabama currently studying folklore at Utah State University. Specifically, I am focusing on studying contemporary legends, which, up until recently, were known as urban legends. These are the legends you hear everyday; the "friend of a friend stories that share society's fears, values, and beliefs through the medium of storytelling. Their purpose is to push conservative lessons onto individuals through fear and panic. The legends we will be focusing on, however, are a bit more *scandalous* than some of the more well-known and popular contemporary legends, such as "The Hook" or even "The Call from Within the House." Sexy and scandalous, these are our licentious legends.

In today's episode, we are going to explore one of the oldest and most popular vagina legends of all time: the *vagina dentata*, also known as the "toothed vagina." The myth of the *vagina dentata* is a common trope throughout historical myth and modern media. In folklore, the *vagina dentata* is one of the oldest motifs in vagina legends. For a quick refresher, a motif is a term used in folklore studies to describe distinctive narrative elements within a tale. Similar motifs may be found in legends and myths from all over the world.

The *vagina dentata* motif has a long history, dating as far back as Hindu mythology, when the goddess Shiva uses the teeth within her vagina to kill her own son during an assault. In

more modern media, the vagina dentata was the driving force behind the 2007 dark comedy *Teeth*, in which teenager Dawn O'Keef weaponizes her vagina to punish rapists.

When it comes to legends like the vagina dentata, it is important to remember that they are not just stories from the long-ago. The following legend was told by Americans and circulated through American barracks during the Vietnam War. The following legend, recorded in Elyssa Henken's book about sex legends, and called *Did You Hear About the Girl Who...?*, reads like this:

The story was that there was a group of Vietnamese prostitutes who traveled around Vietnam. These women were equipped rather oddly, for they put a razor blade sunk in gum inside their vaginas before intercourse with an American soldier, killing a few by bleeding, and seriously injuring others. I also heard this as just a warning of women hired by the Viet Cong, but at least two men heard it as a legendary set of women. (2001: 122)

Although this legend was passed throughout the American barracks with a number of variations, Henken's version reveals details that illustrate how unrealistic the legend actually is. For example, the women were said to keep the razors fastened to their vaginas with gum, which supposedly would protect one side from the blade, but leave the other vulnerable to harm. Yet when unstimulated, the vagina is typically less than an inch in diameter. No matter how much gum guards one side, the blades would tear into the women's own flesh before they ever got the chance to use them on the soldiers. Even if one believes the racist myth that Asian women's vaginas are "sideways," which is yet another legend about vaginas, there is no possible way for blades to exist in a vagina without killing or maiming the women first.

Contemporary legends like these thrive because they feed on fear, and there is nothing more terrifying than wartime. Likely in an effort to protect their young men from the seductive

ways of Vietnamese women, both captains in the army and the women waiting at home whispered to the young soldiers of the dangers Vietnamese prostitutes offered. According to these legends, the prostitutes were hired directly by the Viet Cong to seriously injure and kill American soldiers. In this legend then, they are characterized as not simply prostitutes trying to protect themselves from a monstrous John, but actively seeking out and murdering American men, most of whom were drafted and did not even wish to be in Vietnam. This contemporary legend was passed from soldier to soldier, and even became popular among the women these men left behind. It presumably was told with the intent to protect these soldiers, to keep them safe from the “dangers” of “exotic women” (Sychterz, 2013: 140). But in the end, intent does not matter. In this American version of the vagina dentata myth, the fear and hatred surrounding the Vietnam War leaked through to poison many soldiers’ views of Vietnamese women.

Legends involving the toothed vagina have been found in North America, Greenland, Hawaii, India, and elsewhere (Jackson 1971: 341). And while the previous example spreads fear to protect young soldiers, other examples of this myth are told as a deterrent against sexual assault. One such example is from a legend in Maori mythology. The demigod Maui, whom you might know from the Disney movie *Moana*, is a demigod whose quest was to earn humanity’s approval. To do this, he takes on the task of killing the female chief Hine-nui-te-po, which would grant the people of the world everlasting life. The only problem with his quest was that in order to kill her, Maui has to penetrate her vagina and destroy the teeth within. Many occupants of the island try to warn him that Hine-nui-te-po could not be killed, but Maui would not listen. And instead, according to the legend:

Then the young hero started off. He twisted the strings of his weapon tight round his wrist, and went into the house. He stripped off his clothes, and the skin on his hips looked

mottled and beautiful as that of a mackerel, from the tattoo marks, cut on it with the chisel of Uetonga, and he entered the old chieftainess.

The little birds now screwed up their tiny cheeks, trying to suppress their laughter. At last the little Tiwakawaka could no longer keep it in, and laughed out loud, with its merry, cheerful note. This woke the old woman up. She opened her eyes, started up, and killed Maui. (Raitt 1980: 417-418)

Maui, in his desperation to earn the devotion of the humans, rushes into a death sentence. While a lovable character in Maori mythology, it is important that one realizes why Hine-nui-te-po murders him the way she does. The chieftess wakes from her slump to find the demigod inside of her, raping her, and her vagina reacts. The teeth within her gnash down, defending her, and kill Maui. It is a moment of self-defense, with the *vagina dentata* killing the rapist to protect Hine-nui-te-po.

I wish I could say that all *vagina dentata* myths are about protection and safety, but that's simply not the case. Even in today's modern world, people are less educated about the vagina than they are about the penis, the eye, or any other bodily organ. Because of this lack of education, the vagina is surrounded by ignorance, and from that, humor blossoms. The *vagina dentata* is referenced less as a legend today, but instead emerges more in crude stories. The following are just a handful of these legends, with the vaginal "unknown" as the punchline:

My roommate told me this legend— he was convinced it was true. . . . This man took his wife to the doctor, complaining that something sharp and painful was in her vagina when he had sex with her. "There's some kind of monster or animal up there that keeps biting me!" The doctors did exploratory surgery and found a syringe left over from a hysterectomy a few months earlier (2001: 121).

The following legend isn't much better:

There was this Baptist minister and he caught his son in the act with the deacon's daughter and really let him have it. That night he got a call from this widow, who was trying to seduce him. She began masturbating with a whiskey bottle which got stuck. When she tried to get it out, it broke in the middle. When he got there, he started right in without waiting and got cut up. Later he apologized to his son and said, "Enjoy it while you can; they get teeth when they get older" (2001: 122).

Both legends involve a man intent on sleeping with his wife, only for intercourse to be cut short when something sharp from within the wife's vagina cut into their penises. The women are revealed to have a syringe, which is more than likely a needle rather than the actual syringe itself, stuck within their vaginas. These needles, much like the *vagina dentata*, did not bother the women themselves, but caused their husbands and partners unimaginable pain.

It goes without saying that both of these legends, and many others that surround the *vagina dentata*, are not just in poor taste, but entirely inaccurate. Those of us with vaginas can attest to the fact that if there is *anything* even remotely uncomfortable within our bodies, we would know instantly. We would not be able to go years or even days with broken syringes and bottles within our bodies, not just because of the pain, but because we would undoubtedly bleed out and die. These legends perpetuate ignorance and fear of the vagina by contorting them into something dangerous and otherworldly. Instead of being confined to typical physical constraints, these stories perpetuate the idea that women can withstand needles and glass within the vagina, almost as if they are incapable of feeling that pain.

But more than that, these legends offer a sense of *validation* for the men who hear and tell them. Bruce Jackson (1971) comments that the connection between the *vagina dentata* and

pain plays a huge role in the legend's pervasiveness, stating that many cultures "fear" damaging "the highly vulnerable penis." Men fear losing their penis to women, whether literally or figuratively, as it is the symbol of their manhood. They fear castration. They fear losing their masculinity, especially in this hyper-masculine world. To men, these stories affirm that there is something to fear, and women are lying in wait to remove their manhood. This can be seen even today, when marriage is seen as the end of a man's life. "The ol' ball and chain," they joke, and even spend a night reveling in their freedom for what they believe will be their last night.

The vagina dentata myth is not tied to one religion, one area, or even one continent. It can be found in nearly every corner of the world, coated in misogyny. That being said, it is worth noting there is nothing wrong with enjoying these legends. One can enjoy something while acknowledging its problematic nature. To lose these legends would be to lose a piece of history. But in a world where Presidents can assault and directors can rape, it is imperative that we remember the power legends hold. They are not just stories; they reflect our society's views, values, and most importantly, our actions.

That's it for this episode of Licentious Legends! Thanks for tuning in, and until next time, remember to stay smart, keep it safe, and keep it sexy.

EPISODE FOUR: MASTURBATION PART 1

Hello, and welcome to Licentious Legends, a podcast featuring the sexiest and messiest contemporary legends of our time. I'm your host, Faye, a folklorist from Alabama currently studying folklore at Utah State University. Specifically, I am focusing on studying contemporary legends, which, up until recently, were known as urban legends. These are the legends you hear everyday; the "friend of a friend stories that share society's fears, values, and beliefs through the medium of storytelling. Their purpose is to push conservative lessons onto individuals through fear and panic. The legends we will be focusing on, however, are a bit more *scandalous* than some of the more well-known and popular contemporary legends, such as "The Hook" or even "The Call from Within the House." Sexy and scandalous, these are our licentious legends.

Masturbation.

We've all hear the *legends*. You'll go blind, they cry. Hair will sprout all over your palms, and everyone will know your shame. It will give you acne, cause your penis to shrink, make you infertile—the list goes on and on and on. We get it; masturbation is a very uncomfortable topic for both adults and teenagers, and the best way to avoid it is to not have an open and honest conversation at all. It's better to simply tell your children or students that masturbation will ruin their lives and leave it at that. After all, what child wants to go throughout life with a scarlet letter on their palm?

So just to clear the air, it is important that we acknowledge there are countless legends about masturbation. Some are the stories whispered by overprotective adults, a few of which I've already mentioned, while others are legends children tell amongst themselves. And while I could write an entire dissertation on the legends mentioned above, the legend I want to discuss today is

one often told from one teenager to another. The following examples were collected by Marianne Whatley and Elyssa Henken and recorded in the book *Did You Hear About the Girl Who...?*

Several stories I heard growing up which made my vagina frightening to me. I remember one in particular which had several variations. A girl roughly my age (elementary school) stuck a hot dog/pickle/carrot into her vagina and part of it broke off. She was so embarrassed that she couldn't tell anyone. It rotted and killed her. The other version ended with the shame she felt when she broke down and asked for help, forcing her and her family to leave the town.

Another recorded by Whatley and Henken is:

A legend I heard in sixth grade . . . At this time there was a girl that supposedly was wondering [what] penetration felt like, so she tried a hot dog. I was told it broke off in her, and they had to take her to the emergency room. Although I can't remember her name, it was a particular girl. [...] She had large breasts and was teased about being easy with the boys.

And the list goes on and on.

What is so interesting to me about these legends is, while it is mostly teenage girls telling them, they all contain a masculine tone. In each of these stories, the only way the teenagers seem to masturbate is via penetration. There is no clitoral stimulation, no intimate touches, no preparation—just vegetable (or hot dog) directly into vagina. This shows a direct disconnect between simply understanding how masturbation works and realizing what actions can truly bring a woman to orgasm.

In fact, these legends so often push this masculine viewpoint that many young people grow up believing that women require penetration to orgasm. It is important to note that is not always the case. In preparation for this episode, I interviewed over twenty different people, both

cis women and trans men, of different ages and sexual experience. Out of this varied group, not a single interviewee said they could reach orgasm solely by penetration; rather, penetration was more of an aid than the actual cause of their orgasm. Despite this, society and sex education teachers continue to push this male-oriented narrative of women needing penetration—needing penetration to the point of risking and losing their lives.

Out of these twenty individuals, one agreed to a recorded interview. A friend from Illinois, TC, agreed to sit down and talk about this legend. TC is a twenty-three-year-old bisexual transman who grew up in a small, rural town and recently moved to Idaho after receiving his CNA certification. During his interview, I specifically asked TC if he had any legends regarding female masturbation, and he said that he had not, but that his grandmother had told him a number of gender-neutral masturbation legends.

[INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT]

Faye: So you mentioned that your grandmother was the one to actually tell you these legends?

TC: Uh, yeah. Growing up around my religious grandmother is actually where I heard about these. Me and my siblings and cousins were always told that if we masturbated, our hands would grow hair. It was always some different version here or there, but it always was the same thing: it would be like you had bear hands. It wasn't just the back of the hand that would get it; it'd be the entire hand.

Faye: Huh.

TC: We were also told that if we touched ourselves, our chests would itch. That alone wasn't the weird part of it, it was went with it. If our chests itched—if we were guys—our breasts would grow like that of a woman's, and if a girl, our chests would be flat as a board. Now, depending on

the kid, that spooked them off a bit. As we got older, though, we realized our grandmother was basically just an old prude trying to keep her grandkids from exploring.

[END TRANSCRIPT]

And what's fascinating about this is TC's grandmother's need to preach to both her male and female grandchildren. Instead of focusing on only the girls, as many of the legends we've discussed so far do, these legends preach to a general audience. And, yes, the hairy hands belief is one most have heard before, although TC's grandmother's version is slightly more disfiguring. Instead of just extra hair, TC described the hair as leaving the masturbator with "bear hands." And while that is interesting, it feeds directly into the second legend that TC told: the effect masturbation supposedly has on sexual dimorphism in humans, and what that has to do with humiliation.

Humans experience sexual dimorphism in ways similar to most animals. The differences between human males and females include height, muscle mass, genitals, and breast tissue. Females tend to have more pronounced breasts, while males have a flatter chest area. But with TC's example, masturbation perverts that natural dimorphism by "feminizing" men and making women more masculine.

These legends perpetuate shame and fear, but they do so in a way that continues the idea of humiliation that we discussed earlier. Instead of turning just your hands into furry paws, engaging in masturbation, according to TC's grandmother's legend, will alter your entire physical appearance, particularly your sexual characteristics. While there are people who prefer to present androgynous, most teens—the primary audience to whom this legend is told—are quite invested in the idea of looking traditionally masculine and feminine. The media itself feeds us this idea of sharp-angled men and women with pronounced breasts. This, we're told, is the

way each sex is supposed to present itself. This legend uses the threat of physical “deformity”—and plays on the insecurity teens feel about their bodies anyway to scare young people away from experimenting with themselves.

As I mentioned in the Jelly Bracelet episodes, American adults are profoundly uncomfortable with the idea that children might be experimenting with sex. These scare-tactic legends reflect that fact. While such legends are not meant to harm children, they can. These stories can prevent young people from learning about their bodies when they’re meant to, or perhaps even lead to them not knowing what they enjoy and what their boundaries are when they become sexually active.

Legends teach through shame, fear, and, in this case, threats of humiliation. Young women especially are susceptible to these legends, as both the audience and protagonist. But it is important to remember that teenagers and young adults have the same bodily urges as you and I. It is important to give teens the chance to figure themselves out before they become sexually active and are put in a position where they have to learn what they like and what they don’t on the spot. So before we go, I just want to remind you all out there, adults and teenagers alike, that your body is your own. No one can or should tell you what to do with it, and no one should ever make you feel ashamed for learning about yourselves. You are your own person. Do not take another’s shame as your own.

And that’s it for this episode of Licentious Legends! Thanks for tuning in, and until next time, remember to stay smart, keep it safe, and keep it sexy.

EPISODE FIVE: MASTURBATION PART 2

Hello, and welcome to Licentious Legends, a podcast featuring the sexiest and messiest contemporary legends of our time. I'm your host, Faye, a folklorist from Alabama currently studying folklore at Utah State University. Specifically, I am focusing on studying contemporary legends, which, up until recently, were known as urban legends. These are the legends you hear everyday; the "friend of a friend stories that share society's fears, values, and beliefs through the medium of storytelling. Their purpose is to push conservative lessons onto individuals through fear and panic. The legends we will be focusing on, however, are a bit more *scandalous* than some of the more well-known and popular contemporary legends, such as "The Hook" or even "The Call from Within the House." Sexy and scandalous, these are our licentious legends.

On the last episode, we discussed legends surrounding masturbation, specifically masturbation with vaginal penetration. These legends feature female teenagers using hot dogs, carrots, cucumbers, and other phallic foods to simulate sexual intercourse, and often conclude with the teenagers ending up in the hospital, hurt and humiliated. There is no clitoral stimulation in these masturbation legends, a theme we will see repeated today, but instead every single young woman requires penetration. This masculine view of pleasure—using the penis or penis-substitute to reach orgasm—takes the focus from the woman's act and makes the penetrator the judge, jury, and executioner of the story. They are the reason the young woman has to leave town, or has to go to the hospital where the hot young doctor recognizes her and what she's done, resulting in humiliation.

Many masturbatory legends, such as the ones covered in the previous episode, end with shame and disgrace, but the ones we explore today go one step further. These legends feature

teenagers who endure pain, pregnancy, and even death as a result of engaging in masturbation. But before we can tackle why these stories end in death, we need to look at *how* the characters in these stories come to their untimely end.

To do this, let's examine my favorite legend. This legend is a typical masturbation legend, but incorporates a level of absurdity that we have not discussed yet. One version, taken from the book *Did You Hear about the Girl Who?* goes like this:

A woman, while watching lesbian pornography, masturbated in the bathtub using a live lobster. The next day she experienced horrible pains and passed large numbers of baby mud shrimp from her vagina; the explanation is that the lobster defecated the mud shrimp eggs into her vagina. Seeing the toilet full of thousands of mud shrimp, she went into shock and fell, dying of head trauma and shock. (Henken and Whatley: 2000).

In other words, the woman uses a lobster to masturbate, which then lays eggs in her uterus, and she dies a few days later once she's "given birth." This legend combines the previously mentioned masturbation legends with a secondary trope that I like to call "monstrous births."

In today's modern view, babies are either seen as a blessing or a punishment. With abortion debates still a near-constant source of tension, it is an often-repeated thought that all pregnancies should be carried to term, no matter what the situation is. The above legend mirrors this conservative outlook, with the woman taking time to perform a "sinful act"—masturbation, with an animal, no less—and later suffering from her mistake by giving birth to these monstrous children and dying afterwards.

Although not as common as humiliation, dying can be and often is a consequence suffered by the main characters in masturbation legends. Here to talk with me about one of these deadly legends is one of my dearest friends, Ryan. Ryan is an internet streamer from Boston,

who is currently going to school for game design, and has a special insight on these dangerous masturbation legends.

[TRANSCRIPTION BEGIN]

Ryan: I've heard the one about if you masturbate, you'll grow hair on your hands. I don't know if this was one, but for some reason, when I was younger, I thought that if your masturbated, like, your dick wouldn't grow? Like it would stunt your dick growth. I don't know where that came from; I might have made that one up.

Faye: No, I've heard it.

Ryan: You have? Okay. It's interesting like, as a child, where all these things come from in your tiny brain. Yeah, y'know, the hair on the hand thing—That, y'know, it was bad, and you shouldn't do it. I think those are the only ones I know of.

Faye: Not to prompt you, but I remember you mentioning, when we were talking about it in our own chat, that there was one where someone masturbated with a broom handle, or like a girl did, and it, like--

Ryan: Oh! Yeah, I think there was—Yeah, it was a story about a dude masturbating with a plunger. Like, that story went around school. Not anyone we knew! But that story went around school like “Hey, man, you wanna hear a story?”

Faye: [snort] Oh, of course not. Do you—do you mind telling it?

Ryan: Uh, I think it was just a guy wanted to masturbate, and he put the plunger in the toilet and, like, sat on it. And like fell or something. It was supposed to be like “shock value” middle school horror, essentially, with like--

Faye: Did it kill him?

Ryan: It either killed him or, like, wounded him or something. I don't really remember. I also remember watching, like, 100 Ways to Die, or whatever that show was called, where a girl masturbated with a carrot, and it, like, killed her or something.

Faye: Oh, I remember that! Yeah, it, like, tore—it got like hair—or, not hair—it got air in the vaginal wall and, like, basically replicated like a heart attack or something.

Ryan: Yeah. Yeah, it like, pushed air into her veins or something. It was like an anti-queef to death.

Faye: Just a few more questions. You said you first heard about it in middle school. Who was it telling you these legends? Did they seem to believe it, or was it more of a “dude, you won't believe this ridiculous story I heard?”

Ryan: Uh, I think when I was younger, it, like, kinda impacted me? Like sometimes I was like “Oh, I probably shouldn't masturbate,” but then I was like “Oh, this is too fuckin' fun, are you kidding me?” I'm assuming I can swear on this.

Faye: I'll allow it.

Ryan: Oh, okay! You know, I was like, “Man, I shouldn't do this.” Like, I had that feeling that it wasn't supposed to be a good thing, but also, this is too much fun and I'm not going to stop. Um, in school, like, when I was younger, I wasn't as like “sexually woke” as I am now. I was definitely like more reserved and didn't really know—I didn't really understand things. Like our school's sex ed wasn't very in depth. Thankfully, we did have something beyond “Just don't do it!” celibacy. We had an actual sex ed course, but it was, y'know, very heteronormative. It wasn't very exploratory or spicy in any way. [...] And the—y'know, the like “hair on the hands” one, I was like “yeah, that'll never happen.” But, y'know, the guy masturbating and falling on a plunger, like, yeah that could happen! Shit happens.

[TRANSCRIPTION END]

This idea of people dying via masturbation is common, even with today's modern views on sex and sexuality. Ryan briefly mentioned the television show 1000 Ways to Die, which featured one story in which a young girl supposedly masturbated with a carrot, punctured her vagina, and died because the puncture wound allowed air to enter her veins. But what interested me most about the conversation with Ryan is that he mentioned a version of the insertion masturbation legend that I hadn't heard yet, and that is a masturbation legend that focuses not on a young woman, but a young man.

Contemporary legends teach through anxiety and fear. That is one of their defining qualities. They connect to the here and now, using modern teenagers in their to explore themselves and their sexuality. No longer are these legends only focusing on young girls, but have shifted to young men questioning their sexuality. Ryan's version is a wonderful example of this, with the specific example of a young man trying to figure out anal masturbation. That connection and relatability only emphasizes how believable these legends are, and they use that to drive home their message. With sexual contemporary legends, they connect through their audience by using unnamed classmates or peers to show what could happen to you if you choose to perform such a sinful act as masturbation.

The shift from female to male comes with its own degree of absurdity. Much like with the young woman and her lobster, this young man chose to masturbate with an absurd object (the plunger) and performed the act in an uncomfortable place (the toilet). All contemporary legends have a bizarre plot, with twists and turns that are meant to frighten you without sticking to the rules of reality. Masturbation legends have many similar moments. These moments can come at the beginning of the story, when the young teenager reveals what tool they are going to

masturbate with; the carrot, the plunger, and the lobster all come to mind for their lack of practicality. Another moment is the method of masturbation, such as when the young man chose to stick the plunger into the toilet or the woman made the lobster wriggle via her bathwater. The final twist that can occur is when the consequences of their actions are revealed, and the lesson is driven home. Sometimes, these legends do not contain just one of these twisted moments, but all three. This adds another layer of, as Ryan said, “shock value!”

Sexuality is not something to be feared, though society continues to try to tell us otherwise. Adults panic when they think children are having sex. They use fear to deter adolescence from having sex with others or with themselves, and this fear goes beyond the use of contemporary legends. Fear of teenage sexuality has affected our education system, as only thirteen states require sex education to be medically accurate. Instead, most sex education classes teach abstinence-only education, relying on the concept of teenage pregnancy, STDs, and even the possibility of death to deter young people from experimenting. As recent trends in these abstinence-only states have shown, this method doesn't work.

The purpose of Licentious Legends is to offer a chance for teens and others to move past fear and anxiety and educate themselves. Sexuality is fluid; some people really enjoy sex, some people only like to masturbate, and others don't want any sort of sexual contact at all. No matter what your sexuality is, it's valid. No one, especially not growing adolescents, should be afraid of experimenting with their own body. These legends can be fun or even funny, especially to people who are already educated in the ways of their own bodies. But these legends also circulate misinformation and fear, for example by promoting the idea that self-love can be deadly. So, before the episode ends, I would like to leave you with a bit of advice, as offered forth by our

guest speaker: Get out there, have fun, make good choices, and stay safe. Masturbation will not kill you, I promise.

That's it for this episode of Licentious Legends! Thanks for tuning in, and until next time, remember to stay smart, keep it safe, and keep it sexy.

EPISODE SIX: PERIOD LEGENDS

Hello, and welcome to Licentious Legends, a podcast featuring the sexiest and messiest contemporary legends of our time. I'm your host, Faye, a folklorist from Alabama currently studying folklore at Utah State University. Specifically, I am focusing on studying contemporary legends, which, up until recently, were known as urban legends. These are the legends you hear everyday; the "friend of a friend stories that share society's fears, values, and beliefs through the medium of storytelling. Their purpose is to push conservative lessons onto individuals through fear and panic. The legends we will be focusing on, however, are a bit more *scandalous* than some of the more well-known and popular contemporary legends, such as "The Hook" or even "The Call from Within the House." Sexy and scandalous, these are our licentious legends.

For many young women, their first menstruation cycle is a time of uncertainty. The cycle is a taboo subject in our society, spoken about in hushed voices around the corner. And if there is education available, typically in the form of high school health classes, it often comes too late. By that point, young girls have learned to hide their periods. They keep tampons and pads in their purses, for themselves and others, but will pass them discreetly. Hands turned over, fingers curled around them, the exchange of feminine hygiene products functions more like a drug deal than an everyday part of life.

A few examples from modern media touch on the ignorance that many girls face going into their first menstrual cycles. The Stephen King novel "Carrie" focuses heavily (no pun intended) on this trauma. After gym class, the titular character goes into the showers, only to find that she is bleeding profusely. She believes herself dying, which is not uncommon for both fictional and real-life young women. *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret.* by Judy Blume is

another example of this menstrual fear, and features the main character's friend seeing her first menstrual blood and screaming for her mother. These fictional women and their reactions reflect the cycle of fear and misunderstanding surrounding periods.

Despite being a constant for females everywhere, the menstrual cycle is still not openly discussed in many family homes. During the conversation with my schoolmates, one confided, "I didn't know what a period was until after I had my first one, and my mother refused to talk about it, so my sister had to teach me how to use a pad. That's all I knew about my period until I was sixteen." Several of my friends had the same experience, echoing the memory of their sisters having to teach them about how to take care of their periods.

Unfortunately, with ignorance comes fear and other negative responses. Men sometimes believe the menstrual cycle to be something dirty and disgusting. Women on their periods are occasionally seen as "untouchable," a view backed by some religious and modern beliefs. The folk beliefs that surround the cycle perpetuate these ideas. My college friends immediately provided several legends and rumors they heard while growing up when I asked about legends and folk beliefs about periods. These women all went to the same all-female undergraduate school, but came from varied backgrounds; some are the daughters of rural farmers, while others are the children of proud politicians. One young woman even came from as far as Vietnam, with stories of her own. It is important to note that, while these women did literally come from all across the world, the twenty women I interviewed is not a large enough sample size to make a generalized statement about women's experiences everywhere. The following examples are just a few of the folk beliefs we discussed:

Women on their period should never hold a baby or touch a pregnant woman. Otherwise, the baby will get sick, and the mother will lose her baby.

Women should never use tampons and instead should only use pads, since tampons are for whores or those sexually active.

Women should never use pads because they are unhygienic.

Women should never go swimming while on their period, especially not in the ocean.

This runs the risk of shark attacks and possibly losing your life.

Though those ideas do not fit the “friend of a friend” model for legends, they are still related to legends because they illustrate a folk belief, and folk beliefs are the core of all legends. They are often passed from mother to daughter, sister to sister. They hold very little truth, if any at all. They are meant to frighten young girls into keeping quiet about their cycles and avoiding everyday tasks while menstruating. They continue to not only teach through fear, but to teach fear itself to a group of young adults already unsure about the changes going on in their bodies.

As mentioned before, one attitude towards the menstrual cycle is that the cycle itself is dirty, and its inherent dirtiness is dangerous. According to some folk beliefs, pregnant women and babies can be hurt even if they so much as touch a menstruating individual. According to one of my previous classmates, whom I will call Martha, her father saw the box of pads she had left out on the bathroom counter and screamed at her, throwing the box of pads off the counter and into the trash. “Your brother shouldn’t have to see that!” He yelled. “It’s disgusting!”

Your brother shouldn’t have to see that. Her father reacted with such rage and disgust at the sight of a box, a clean, barely opened box of pads. He responded to the implication of a period as if the menstrual cycle is not a natural part of the human reproductive system. A person’s period cleans out the uterus monthly to prepare the body for childbearing and childbirth, which makes it one of the cleanest parts of the body. This negative attitude towards the reproductive cycle is part of the reason these folk beliefs continue to circulate.

Not only are periods a natural part of the reproductive system, but the legends surrounding them are a point of contention between men and women. “Is it that time of the month?” is both a question and an insult, used by men to belittle and undermine women’s emotions. Legends teach through fear and prey on society’s ignorance towards certain topics. Menstrual legends and folk belief keep the cycle taboo and unexplained, where men can simply blow off a woman’s emotions as being related to their physical state. This idea is perpetuated even in modern politics. During his campaign, Donald Trump was interviewed by Megyn Kelly, only to later criticize her by saying that “blood was coming out of her-- wherever.” In Trump’s view, it was Kelly’s monthly cycle suddenly changed this television personality into a raging, hormonal monster, who was also covered in blood. In this current political climate, it is important not only to talk about periods, but to do so without the fear or shame that surrounds the menstrual cycle. The more we talk about the cycle, the more we can begin to normalize it and increase education for women everywhere.

That’s it for this episode of Licentious Legends! Thanks for tuning in, and until next time, remember to stay smart, keep it safe, and keep it sexy.

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