

★ **Witch Hunt: A Traveler's Guide to the Power & Persecution of the Witch**

Kristen J. Sollée

Weiser Books (Oct 1, 2020)

Hardcover \$24.95 (256pp)

978-1-57863-699-0

Why witches? What accounts for our Western fascination with women who hex and heal, summon demons and project power, eschew religion yet embrace religious iconography, live contentedly in darkness, anonymity, and seclusion? Most tellingly, why have they haunted powerful, misogynistic men from time immemorial? Witches are cool, that's why.

And, in countless witch hunts and trials over the centuries, they have also been useful for religious leaders to establish their Satan-fighting bonafides as a recruiting tool. Indeed, the persecution of witches is a large part of the witch story, as we learn in *Witch Hunt: A Traveler's Guide to the Power & Persecution of the Witch*, Kristen J. Sollée's grand tour de force of Europe and the US's top witch haunts. A second-generation witch herself, Sollée's enviable travel itinerary was necessary for her "visceral need not merely to read history but to feel it in full-body immersion." She sought out the hallowed places of her historical brethren to experience the "magic of place," as well as to "honor the victims of the witch hunts."

But her good humor also finds her laughing aloud among the crucifixes, holy statues, bottles of holy water, and other ritual materials in the Vatican gift shop, with the realization that this most holy city "might just be the witchiest of them all."

This is a delightful romp through witchdom, and Sollée brings intimacy and a high level of witch reverence to its important history.

MATT SUTHERLAND (September / October 2020)

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