

Butterknot - tilberi

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If a woman wants to create a tilberi she has to dig up a human rib in a graveyard early on Whitsunday,



wrap it in grey wool and preserve it between her breasts. The next three Sundays at communion she has to spit the holy wine on the bundle which will then come alive. Then the woman has to carve a nipple inside her thigh on which the tilberi will hang on and nourish itself.

When it is fully grown the woman can send it into the neighbouring pastures to steal milk from cows and sheep. When the woman becomes old the tilberi becomes a burden and the only way she can get rid of it, is to order it to gather all the sheepdropping in three highland pastures. Eager to get back on the nipple the tilberi will overexert itself and explode, leaving only a human rib beside the heap of droppings.

The milk-stealing tilberi is the only magic in Icelandic folklore that can only be performed by women. A fully grown tilberi could lie across a sheep's back and suck two tits at the same time and when it would roll back to its farm it would spew the milk into its mother churn.



The butter made from the milk would fall into little pieces if the magical sign smjörhnútur (butterknot) was drawn on it.