

Teen Ex-Witch Finds Freedom From 'Torment' After Collapse on Church Doorstep

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Witchcraft... astral projection... and a deal with the devil. Seventeen-year-old Victoria Batiste was heavily steeped in the occult, and her dive into darkness started when she began hearing strange voices when she was five years old.

It started as a little girl when she tried to escape a brutal home life, running to a made-up world where everything was perfect.

"Everything that happened in that world," said Victoria. "I was in control of it."

"It was always about me," Victoria said of her imaginative world. "People loving on me, people taking good care of me."

For little Victoria, it was a way to cope with the real world where parents were often drunk or high, and, at times, violent—especially her father who misused the Bible to justify his harsh brand of punishment.

"A few times of him slamming me on the ground and choking me, telling me, 'If thine arm offends me, cut it off,'" Victoria scoffed. "Like basically he was saying that 'I'll just cut you off and leave you behind.'"

Then there was the verbal abuse, the constant accusation that she was never good enough. "I hated myself," Victoria admitted. "Felt like maybe something's wrong with me."

When Victoria was five, other voices entered her life—voices only she could hear. "They (the voices) started to tell me

that I'm special and that I'm not like other people and I can never be accepted," recounted Victoria.

In the coming years, Victoria began exploring the supernatural, a search that led her to the study and practice of witchcraft. All the while, there were the voices, encouraging her, leading the way.

"I felt like they understood me," Victoria says. "The witchcraft became more to me than just play. It wasn't play because I knew that stuff was real. Deeper and deeper, I would go into it. Like I would... astral projection, that's where you project your soul out of your body and you travel in the spirit realm. That's where I felt like I had power."

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