

Hi, this is Ross from Learning without Borders and today we're going to learn about nursery rhymes.

In the last podcast we learned about *Ring-a-roses*, the popular children's song that is really about the medieval plague. Today we will learn about another children's rhyme that has a dark meaning. The subject of the song is Queen Mary I of England.

Mary was the daughter of King Henry VIII, the king who married six different women and executed two of them. It is not surprising that Mary enjoyed killing people too. In fact, she killed so many people that even today she is called "Bloody Mary". Mary was a Catholic, but lots of people in Britain were Protestant. She wanted to end Protestantism in her kingdom by killing as many as possible. This brings us to our song...

The song is called *Three Blind Mice*. You might have heard it, it goes: "Three blind mice, three blind mice/See how they run, see how they run/They all ran after the farmer's wife/Who cut off their tails with a carving knife/Did you ever see such a thing in your life/As three blind mice". I feel bad for the mice. At the beginning of the song they are blind, and then a furious woman cuts their tails off. Actually, the so-called "mice" are three Protestant priests who tried to stop Mary being queen. They were punished by Mary, whose favourite way of punishing people was tying them to a stick and burning them alive. So instead of cutting off their tails, she turned them into mousey shish kebabs. They weren't blinded however, so people think that the blindness refers to their Protestant religion instead of following Mary's religion - Catholicism.

I hope this has been eye opening for you. Listen to my other podcasts if you want to hear some more dark origins behind famous nursery rhymes.