



0. THE HANGING CAGE - Story Preface

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Corciano, located in the Province of Perugia (in Italy), was a fortified medieval town. In this photo of the town's main gate—by Fradeve11—we can see a hanging cage. Image online via Wikimedia Commons; license CC BY-SA 3.0

After enduring preliminary torture like the rack, criminals convicted during medieval times - or religious dissenters who disagreed with the "required" point of view - were often locked in hanging cages. In fact, these cages could be found all over Europe's cities and towns.

Whether located outside Palaces of Justice, cathedrals or bridges, hanging cages were a part of the European landscape until the 18th century. In Münster, Germany three of these devices were still visible in the 21st century. Hanging from St. Lambert's Church, they are a reminder of man's inhumanity to man.

Victims of this instrument of torture died from hunger, thirst or the elements:

- If they were hanging in summer, victims could die of heat stroke.
- If they were hanging in winter, they could die of severe cold.

Victims were usually left inside the cage until their bones began to fall apart.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-HANGING-CAGE-Torture-Instruments-from-Medieval-Times>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-HANGING-CAGE-Torture-Instruments-from-Medieval-Times>

Media Stream

Medieval Torture - Hanging Cage

Image online, courtesy Medieval Criminal Museum collection, in [San Gimignano, Italy](#).

This instrument of torture, like others profiled in this story, is part of a collection owned by a group of independent scholars. The objects themselves - which have been viewed in numerous venues throughout the world - are maintained at the Medieval Criminal Museum in [San Gimignano, Italy](#).

The curator of the exhibition [tells us more](#):

The collection is owned by Italian independent scholars who have made these instruments available for traveling exhibits on the subject of torture.

...

Our commitment, which we share with all who are interested in combating violence, torture, and capital punishment against living beings, is to show how throughout the centuries human beings have been tortured, both in body and soul, in the name of the truth, its only justification often being submission to the authorities.

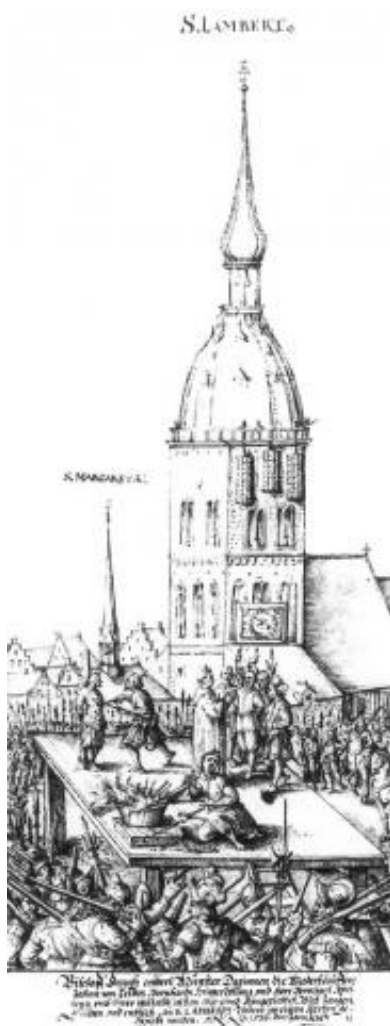
All over the world, in the past and in the present, torture has been practiced both against the body and the mind of the victim.

It is devastating and inhuman, in its effect. It certainly cannot be called a punishment, but is merely an exercise in brutality and savagery, akin to the crime often only allegedly committed by the offender.

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Execution Near St. Lambert's Cathedral

Pen-and-ink drawing by Georg Berger, from *Rathaus und Friedenssaal zu Münster*, at page 28. Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Hanging Cages at St. Lambert's Cathedral

Photo of hanging cages at St. Lambert's Cathedral, in Münster, Germany - taken on May 11, 2006 by Rüdiger Wölk - online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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