



Lost DNA, The

2 x 60'

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

1. Origins

Some 9,000 years ago dark-skinned, blue-eyed hunter-gatherers roamed our forests and plains. Thousands of years later, a new wave of settlers washed into Europe from the Middle East and Mediterranean, bringing with them a dynamic new technology – farming. Now Lara Cassidy, a young geneticist at Trinity College Dublin, has uncovered a shocking secret about an early farmer who was buried in one of Europe's most sacred sites. Her discovery gives an astonishing insight into the culture and beliefs of the people of western Europe around 3000 BC.

2. Secrets of the Grave

Fast forward to the Middle Ages, and a critical time in Europe's history – the transition from paganism to Christianity. The records of the time don't give much information on the lives of ordinary people, but now DNA and other scientific techniques like palaeoecology, isotope analysis and osteo-archaeology are opening fascinating windows into the past. Evidence from burial sites in Ireland show that ancient pre-Christian beliefs continued long into the Christian era – including belief in the undead.