In four episodes, we witness how Satan (Nissen), accursed by God, must walk the Earth and tempt men to do evil; he can only hope to be delivered from his curse if someone resists him, but few do. Episode 1 tells the story of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, enticed by Satan in the guise of a pharisee. Episode 2 takes place in 16th-century Spain; Satan is a grand inquisitor, who manipulates a young, tormented monk into committing an ugly rape. Episode 3 takes place during the French Revolution; a young man who has the opportunity to save Marie Antoinette from the guillotine allows her to be executed, because she reminds him of a misdeed he was tempted to commit by Satan, now a Jacobin leader. Episode 4 is set during the Finnish civil war in 1918. Here, Satan is a defrocked monk leading a bolshevik rabble. He threatens to kill the family of Siri, a telegraph operator, if she does not send a message luring the Whites into an ambush, but she resists and kills herself rather than turn traitor.

Carl Theodor Dreyer learned the craft of filmmaking at Nordisk, writing titles, adapting novels and plays, and editing most of the company's features from 1915 to 1918. His talent was recognized, and he was given a large budget to make this film, the biggest production of the year 1919.

Dreyer was not satisfied with the available resources, however, and he left the company in anger after completing the film. Yet, even though the script is unbalanced (the complicated French episode sags), this grandly conceived film impresses through its inquisitive close-ups, its austere and unembellished sets, its tight editing, and its carefully centered compositions. The script was written in 1913 by Danish author Edgard Høyer (the final episode was originally set during the Russo-Japanese War); it was an original work and (despite the claim in many credit lists for this film) owes nothing whatever to Marie Corelli's 1895 bestseller, The Sorrows of Satan, filmed by D. W. Griffith in 1926.

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**Basic information**

- **Original title**: Blade af Satans Bog
- **Danish title**: Blade af Satans Bog

- **Other titles**: Blade af Satans Dagbog

- **Director**: Carl Th. Dreyer
- **Screenplay**: Edgard Høyer, Carl Th. Dreyer
- **Director of Photography**: George Schnéevoigt
- **Production designer**: Axel Bruun, Jens G. Lind
- **Appearances**: Helge Nissen, Halvard Hoff, Jacob Texière, Erling Hansson

- **Production country**: Denmark
- **Production company**: Nordisk Films Kompagni
- **Production distribution**: Fotorama
- **Technical info**: 2900 meter, 35 mm, 1,33:1, Black/white, Silent
- **Danish theatrical release**: 24.01.1921
Cinemas

Palads Urpremiere i Norge, Victoria Teater (Oslo), 15. november 1920.

TV release

03.02.1964, DR

Find more

Vore Herrer: 1920 nr. 8 og 1921 nr. 2 og 4
Vore Damer: 1920 nr. 4 og 9
Mogens Brandt: Carl Th. Dreyer in Soc.Dem. 13.11.1943
Eric Danielsen: Jeg er egentlig ikke... in Land & Folk 08.12.1946
Åke Bengtsson: Ny syn på gammel film in Biografladet vinter 1948.

Danish rating

Allowed for all