

Facts and Stories of the

UNEXPLAINED

Myths and Legends
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Facts and Stories of the UNEXPLAINED

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The goal of this magazine is not only to uncover known myths and legends through exploring their origins and rumors but to also tell of new ones through stories and poems.

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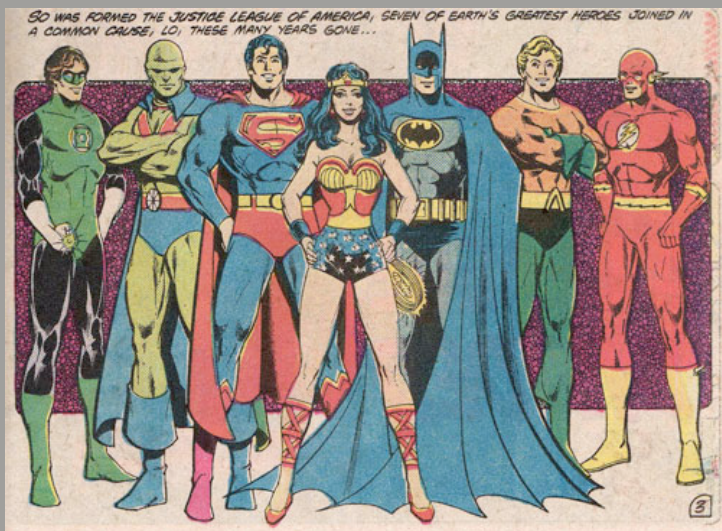
Superheroes: Molding and Reflecting Culture

For as long as there have been stories, we humans have been fascinated with the concept of heroes: men and women who possess ideal qualities and who are often capable of performing herculean tasks and triumphing over evil. Traditionally, heroes were men of high social standing who took some kind of quest or task upon themselves in order to serve a higher order and, although there have been variations of this formula, that trend has stayed largely the same throughout history. One of the largest and most widespread changes to this formula was the introduction of the “superheroes”, which generally fit the same criteria of a normal hero, but they have some kind of supernatural abilities that assisted them in their fight against crime, evil, or what have you.

The first, and perhaps most influential, superhero was the concisely named Superman. When the iconic superhero first appeared in *Action Comics #1* (1938), he was a rough and aggressive crime fighter who did not care what happened to his villains nor what kind of damage he caused with his super strength and blinding speed. He went around terrorizing wife-beaters and gang members, often causing fatalities (although these were all implied rather than explicitly shown). But in early 1940, Superman’s personality was altered to the one that people are much more familiar with; that of a virtuous, non-killing savior who selflessly protects Metropolis and asks for nothing in return. They also revealed him to be an alien that crash landed on earth as a baby and who was then raised by a typical mid-western couple under the name Clark Kent, and later grew up to be a middle-class newspaper reporter. The change was made in order to reflect typical middle-class American ideals of the time in an attempt to sell more comics. This was clearly a success, for the character was featured in the Thanksgiving Macy’s Parade later that same year. Because of his immense popularity, many similar superheroes were created in order to capitalize on his success, most of which shared similar powers and values with Superman, creating the

basis of the superhero genre and the comic book market. But that wasn’t the only way in which Superman affected popular culture. The phrase “I’m not superman” has come to be synonymous with “I’m not flawless”. Also, “kryptonite”, a type of radioactive meteorite that causes Superman’s powers to fail, is commonly used to mean “Achilles’ heel” and “Braniac”, an extraterrestrial android who is one of Superman’s most powerful enemies, is a term that came to be associated with an intelligent person.

In addition to shaping culture, superheroes have also acted as a reflection of societal issues during the time they were written. A prime example of this is the *X-Men*, a series about people who are born with a gene known as the X-Gene that gives them supernatural abilities encompassing everything from regenerating cells to shooting lasers from your eyes to being a completely immovable object. These people were labeled as “mutants” and often shunned from general society and forced to go into hiding, for in most areas of the world, capture could mean imprisonment or death. With such a premise, it should come as no surprise that the series was created in 1963, directly in the middle of the American Civil Rights Movement. The similarities between the series and the movement go even further than their surface elements, though. In *X-Men*, a man by the name of Charles Xavier (or Professor X), founds a school which he names “Xavier’s School for Gifted Youngsters”. At this institution, he offers mutants a safe harbor from humans, all the while trying to offer them the best life possible and teaching them how to control their powers effectively in order to prove that mutants are not a danger to society. In addition to this, Xavier teaches his students not to hate humans, but to do their best to understand them and try to live among them. In opposition to Xavier’s dream of mutants and humans living in harmony is his close friend Eric Lehnsherr (or Magneto). He believes that mutants, or *Homo superiors*, should dominate the so-called “inferior” *Homo sapiens* and in order to realize this goal of dominance he forms the “Brotherhood of Mutants”, a



group of mutants that share his goal and cause terror for human society. Because they both want the same goal – that is, peace – but have opposing ideas of how to reach that goal – namely acceptance and love vs. dominance and revenge – Xavier and Magneto are both thought to have been heavily inspired by Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, respectively.

The ability of superheroes to reflect culture transcends the time periods in which they are written. The X-Men make a good example for this idea as well. Because mutants don't have too much in common with any particular minority group, they have been used to voice opinions on the treatment of a wide variety of oppressed groups of society. Most recently they have been compared with homosexuals and their fight for social equality, but they've been repeatedly used to offer commentary on just about any issue in which the United States government is thought to be infringing on the rights of its people. This is something rather common amongst superhero stories; writers use their widely popular characters in order to voice their opinions on various political, social, or environmental issues at the time. Some do this rather subtly, like the X-Men, in which the problem at hand is not usually explicitly mentioned. But other times, the message can be embarrassingly heavy handed, such as the absolutely idiotic *Batman: Fortunate Son*, in which Batman faces off against a rock-and-roll star who uses his music to hypnotize his teenaged listeners into becoming criminals.

But the ways in which a comic changes with time go beyond simply creating new stories that coincide with current events. Sometimes, as has been the case with many of the movies recently produced by Marvel Studios, a character's origin story can be altered in a way that better reflects the values of modern times. For example, in the original Spider-Man story, unpopular high school student Peter Parker is bitten by a spider that had been rendered radioactive by nuclear radiation. The result of this nuclear energy is heightened intelligence, strength, speed, and intuition (his so-called "spidey senses"). This source of power makes sense because Spider-Man was created in the early 1960s, not too long after World War II and still in the midst of the Cold War in which nuclear bombs were an enormous looming threat and therefore nuclear radiation was seen as a major source of power. But in more recent years, at least in America, the terror caused by the idea of nuclear power has substantially subsided. So in order to make Peter Parker's story more current for the 2001 film, the spider that bites Peter is a genetically engineered "super spider" as opposed to a radioactive one, showcasing our era's current fascination with biotechnology.

Superheroes are among the longest lasting pop culture icons around, and with good reason. They have shown the impressive ability to endure a changing world time and time again, and even when they do feel a little dated, we still find ourselves going back to enjoy their stories whether it be through comics or television or movies or video games. The impact of these characters has been very long lasting – nearly a century at this point – and they don't show any sign of slowing down. In fact, with the recent success of the superhero movies like *Iron Man* and *The Dark Knight*, they seem to be showing signs of growth as they reach out to a longer portion of society, so it looks like they we'll be seeing the likes of Spider-Man, Batman, Captain America, Superman, and so on and so forth, reflecting and shaping our culture for decades, if not centuries, to come.

-Jordan Severns

The Holiday Myth: Santa Claus

Thick, powdery flakes of snow are falling to the icy ground, the overwhelming sweet yet spicy scent of baked goods is wafting through the air, the uncommon jolly attitude of people is filling the atmosphere, and the twinkling lights are beaming off of the fresh, green tree. What do these descriptions bring to mind? Christmas time! But what important person seems to be missing in this perfectly modified wonderland? Santa Claus, of course! It seems that not only the concept of Christmas but also the mythical figure of Santa Claus have evolutionarily been warped into an idea of a time when everything is perfect and everyone is happy (in Western society).

Despite the encompassing rumors and myths that Santa Claus is based on, the origin of his development began at about 270 A.C.E. when St. Nicholas was born. He was the Bishop of the Roman town, Myra, which is now located in Turkey. He was rich yet compassionate towards children and he showed this affability by tossing presents into the children's homes, or leaving coins and other treats in their shoes, which they would sometimes leave out for him in exchange for some carrots and hay for his horses. Some even believe he had the assistance of a young orphan boy. His popularity began to drop in the 16th century during the Protestant Reformation when Catholic saints were being suppressed in many areas of Europe; however, his reputation as Sinterklaas was kept alive by the Dutch. Already here the details of St. Nicholas started to become more and more unclear as they depicted him flying rather than riding his horse and having the help of an elf rather than the orphan boy.

Santa Claus was first introduced to America as Sinterklass by Dutch settlers in the colonies of the 17th and 18th centuries. The name "Sinterklass" began its transformation to "Santa Claus", as we most commonly know it today, through a New York City newspaper in 1773 where he was referred to as "St. A. Claus". Then, in 1809, Washington Irving described the Saint as portly, referring to his round abdomen, and pipe smoking



compared to the lanky bishop he really was. The Dutch-American molded saint became further changed in 1823 in the poem "The Night before Christmas" by Clement Clarke Moore. In the poem, St. Nicholas is described almost exactly as he is seen today with his rosy cheeks and fur lined clothing. The poem is also the first introduction of the flying reindeer and Moore even mentions Santa bounding down the chimney. Santa's friendly demeanor and possession of a cigar in the poem supports the previous rumors of Saint Nicholas.

It was not until the Coca-Cola advertisements in 1931 that Santa Claus fully developed his entire ensemble consisting of the iconic red suit with white fur trim, a black belt, and black leather boots. As the existence and development of Santa gradually became more popular and widely known, children began to ask questions about Santa such as where he resides. Rumors spread that when he wasn't dispersing presents, he and his busy helping elves were making them in a factory in the North Pole. Nonetheless, in 1927, "Uncle Markus", a Finnish radio host, revealed

over a public radio station that Santa in fact lives in the hills of Finland where the reindeer can graze. The hills are shaped like ears which represent Santa listening to children around the world so he can know who has been good and who has been bad. This judgment of ethics on children is most likely a fib developed by parents to encourage their children to behave properly.

Currently, the typical American tradition regarding Santa is roughly the same. It starts out by parents telling their young children to behave themselves or else Santa will not grant them their wishes. What a neat trick, or rather threat, parents have come up with in order to possess control over their young during the excitable and sometimes hectic time of Christmas. As December 25th approaches, some parents bring their children to go Christmas shopping so that they can get a chance to sit on a stranger's lap, or rather "Santa's" lap and either ask or demand for particular presents they have in mind. Then, on the eve of December 24th, families set out a plate with a few cookies and a glass of milk for Santa to enjoy as a thank you for his gifts. At some point, the carrots and hay for Saint Nicholas's horse became cookies and milk for Santa Claus instead. Once the children have unwillingly given into sleep, parents often take a couple bites of the cookies, sip the milk, and place some presents under the Christmas tree.

The presence of the Christmas tree has quite a history of its own which has somehow molded with the myth of Santa since in Moore's poem, Santa places the presents on the mantelpiece, not under the decorated tree. With Santa Claus as an American household name, nearly every child seems to squeal with excitement come the winter months for that means they will get to see him and receive the gift they so greedily demanded. Even if one does not celebrate Christmas, one cannot escape Santa. He is featured in commercials, books, songs, movies, television series, posters plastered on buildings and busses, and he even makes those personal appearances at the local shopping malls. What used to be a nice and personalized tradition has become a widely commercialized, profitable and impersonal one in most of America.

Is Santa known worldwide? It is highly unlikely that every person alive knows the myth of Santa Claus, yet many countries other than America partake in the myth

based on the real acts of kindness done by Saint Nicholas. In Germany he is seen as the Christmas man, in France and Spain he is seen as a father figure of Christmas, and in other countries such as Croatia, he is seen more as a Grandfatherly figure. Even some Asian countries have forms of gift giving, just not in the exact form of Santa Claus. Santa's name in various languages includes Sinterklass, Wihnachtsmann, Juleman, Pere Noel, Papa Noel, Papai Noel, Shengdan Laoren, Viejo Pascuero, Joulupukki, Kanakaloka, Babbo Natale, and Hoteiosho. Not every country celebrates the exact depiction of the Americanized Santa, but overall, the figure is relatively similar.

Lying in general is frowned upon; however, parents lie to their children about the existence of Santa Claus all the time. Granted, Santa is based on a real person, Saint Nicholas, but the truth has become far stretched from the original occurrences that he has now become a complete figment of the accumulation of people's imagination. A likely argument is that the lie is necessary for the joy and fun of imagining such a sweet, caring grandfatherly figure who gives people something to look forward to each year. Yet, aren't the people who partake in the tradition and know the truth about the existence of Santa, enjoying themselves?

So what is the point of lying to children to make them believe he is real? Lying has become a tradition in itself compared to what used to be a tradition based on selflessness and compassion. Eventually, children grow older, become less naïve and realize that he is not real. Some react to the discovery graciously, while others are genuinely hurt. The media, which played a critical role in persuading these young children to have full belief in Santa, is sometimes the very reason as to how they uncover that he is not real. In the case of this myth, it is hardly a myth at all since most know that it is not real, yet due to humanity's own faulty claims, children believe it to be true. At least it is a myth which brings excitement and joy to families around the world.

-Katarina Kent

The Truth About Ghosts

At the turn of the 21st century many people would not have expected the increased fascination with paranormal creatures. Creatures such as vampires and werewolves, but there is one paranormal being that has always been a part of American history and tradition, the ghost. From early America to the America we live in now, stories of ghosts have been passed from generation to generation. But, even with all these stories not all the information about ghosts are given. Many people do not know what forms a true ghost can take, where they can be found, are they evil like in the Paranormal Activity movies, can they be contacted, or even if a ghost was haunting their house, is there a way to remove it from the premises. So, for all those people who are interested in ghosts and want to learn more about them, this is the article for you and it all starts with what is a ghost.

A ghost is the disembodied spirit of a once breathing organism. Humans are the most common type of being that is seen, but there have been sightings of ghost cats and other types of animals, such as dogs and birds. Though this is not always true, for there have been sightings of ghost cars, trains and ships. There has been no reason found, as of yet, for why these non-breathing objects appear. However, for the ghosts that were once breathing, there are two distinct types of ghosts that could be found, residual and interactive. Residual ghosts are like an iPod stuck on repeat, forever doing the same action over and over again. Usually this action is preformed at the same time and place each night, but it can be related to the day. For instance, a residual ghost may only appear on Wednesdays, but it will appear on all Wednesday. They are not able to talk or interact with live humans and are usually attached to an object or place. Now, typically the movies that are made about ghosts are not based upon residual ghosts, but the interactive ghosts. These types of ghost have the ability to interact and communicate with the people who enter into the haunted area. Ghosts like this have many forms that they may appear in, like orbs, ectoplasms, and apparitions. Orbs are described as translucent balls of light that travel around in the air and are the most common image of a ghost found in photos. The next most common entity seen is ectoplasm, which may look like a vaporous fog, usually

white or grey, or it may even take the form of a very blurry body. Finally, the most talked about and known type of ghost, the apparition. Ghosts that take the form of an apparition are usually a full figured, clearly detailed form of the being that left the ghost. Also, these are the ghosts that people want to see when they decide to go looking for ghosts.

Now, when people decide to go looking for ghosts the most common idea on where to find one is go looking in an abandoned building. It is true that abandoned buildings do have paranormal disturbances, but ghosts can be found in many other places. In the case of residual ghosts, they can be found in places where the being who left the ghost, had an extreme emotional attachment too. But, it is unsure why everyone do not leave residual ghosts, for you do not have to experience a death to leave this type of ghost. Interactive ghosts are best found in places where the spot either was beloved by them or it is the place where they passed away. Some of the most famous places where interactive ghosts reside are the Winchester Mystery House, the Queen Mary, Rose Hall and the Tower of London. These areas are a few of the most well known haunted spots, but there are places in your own town that may be haunted. Places such as hospitals, nursing homes and mental health facilities are common places to find ghosts, because they are usually the last place that the person was living in. Parks, sporting arenas, bars and homes also contain ghosts, for these places are surrounded by fun and enjoyment and ghost like to go back to the places reminds them of the good old times. Though, sometimes the ghosts that return to the land of the living are not here to remember the good times, but to cause the living to gain bad times.

Most ghosts do not mean to scare the people that live in the area where they are haunting, they generally just want to remember the good time. But, there are some ghosts that do like to cause problems for the human inhabitants. These types of ghosts are classified as shadow ghosts, or demons, and are the ones that cause human possession or abuse the inhabitants of the house. Ghosts such as Bloody **7.**



Mary and the Bell Witch are two of the most famous ghosts that cause harm to people. These two ghosts are so famous because of all the turmoil and deaths that they caused. Luckily, these types of ghosts are the rarest to find, even though they are the ones everyone talks about.

I am happy to say though possession is not the only way to be in contact with a ghost. There are other ways and devices that can be used to sense and talk to ghosts. No, I am not talking about PKE meters, neutrino wands or proton packs, I am talking about EMF meters, motion detectors and infrared thermometers. These devices allow ghost hunters to search suspected haunted areas and find evidence of ghostly activity. EMF stands for electromagnetic field, and ghosts are known to generate their own EMF fields. Motion detectors help notice objects that move in a room and if a presence has recently moved past the detector. Finally, infrared thermometers are used to see the change in thermo radiation, a radiation that is given off of all living things and ghosts. When a ghost is present in front of an infrared thermometer it will either show a drastic drop in temperature or a gradual increase in temperature. It is not known why the temperature drops or increases, it just does. But, you don't need to have these types of high tech equipment, you could use an Ouija Board. More often than not people think of the Ouija Board as a game, but it is not one. There have been cases when the user of the Ouija Board has summoned a true ghost and even brought for a shadow person who took possession of a person residing in the house. But there is help for people who have been possessed for there are ways to remove ghosts from a person and a house.

8.

So now, here are the answers for all of you people who are possessed and/or haunted by ghost. The ways to get rid of a ghost problem. Now, residual ghosts cannot be removed unless the object that they are attached to is removed. Interactive ghost need a bit more pushing to get rid of. Usually a strict word from the landowner telling the ghost to leave will push the ghost to move on, but sometimes that does not always work. Priest's can perform blessings or even exorcisms to get rid of ghosts. This is the most drastic measure, but it does work the best, but if you don't want to involve your friendly neighborhood priest you could also use holy water, say a prayer, paint the area where the ghost is red, spread around blessed salt or even use garlic. Some of these items may not work, for each ghost is different, but a priest's blessing is usually the best and safest bet when trying to get rid of a malevolent ghost.

Ghosts have haunted the American public's minds ever since the United States was formed, and even before that. Many movies have been made about ghosts and how scary and horrible they are, but people are just uninformed about how ghosts truly are. Now with this article hopefully people will finally understand that most ghosts are not out to get people. They are just here either to remember the good old times or are residual memories left lying around. So hopefully now that people know more about ghosts they will not be feared anymore. All a ghost wants is to be with its beloved again.



-Tanya Miloslavich

The Urban Legend of Bloody Mary

On a late stormy Halloween night, you and your friends decide to play a fun, entertaining game...“Truth or Dare”. When it comes for you to pick either truth or dare you, wanting to be brave, choose dare. Your friend then tells you to go to the bathroom alone, have the lights turned off, hold a lit candle while you are in the bathroom and say Bloody Mary three times. Even if you are trembling with fear, you must take on the dare. You then enter the dark bathroom alone with nothing but a dim, flickering candle in your hand. In front of the mirror you hesitantly chant three times the forbidden words, “Bloody Mary...Bloody Mary... Bloody Mary”. After a few seconds of standing there petrified, you decide to leave wondering if the little séance worked or not. And, as soon as you open the door to let in the hallway light, there she is, standing in the mirror, waiting to murder you in your sleep. This is the urban legend of Bloody Mary so many of us know of but are too terrified to try ourselves.

Like most folklores, Bloody Mary has been told



numerous times for centuries, each time said with a different origin. Though there are many versions of who Bloody Mary is, the same is true of how to summon her. She is either a ghost or a witch that can only be summoned if you call out her name three times, sometimes more, in front of a bathroom mirror alone in the dark. Some towns claim that Bloody Mary is the spirit of a widowed mother who killed her children or a young mother who had her baby stolen from her. In both stories, this grief drove her to insanity which then caused her to commit suicide. To summon her, people might say “Bloody Mary, I killed your baby”. This would make her to either scratch your eyes out from the socket or rip your face entirely off, or you would be found dead with claw marks all over your body and completely drained of blood. However, what I think of as the worst torment is if she pulls you in the mirror with her where you are trapped for eternity with her ghost and never found by your friends or family. Another depiction of Bloody Mary is the story of Mary Worth.

Mary Worth is believed to be a child murderer and was burned to death for her actions, whether she was guilty or not it is still unclear today. People would chant “I believe in Mary Worth” as a test of courage. However, with the taunting of Bloody Mary’s baby, most people believe Bloody Mary to be Queen Mary Tudor.

Mary Tudor was cursed with having many miscarriages or false pregnancies, which was later believed to be happening deliberately by her husband. It was believed if she had a child, that child would have put a stop to their religious persecutions. Nevertheless, the loss of her children drove her to insanity. At around the same time Countess Elizabeth Bathory Nadasdy, a woman who was believed to have not only drunk but bathed in the blood of young virgin girls in order to retain her youth, is believed to be Bloody Mary for her cruel and evil actions. Since both of these women were alive during the Tudor period, their stories were probably combined to make Bloody Mary.

Also, some townspeople believe that Bloody Mary see's the future. This is why when we chant Bloody Mary we do it in front of a mirror. Mirrors are believed to be able to see into the future. Bloody Mary will tell you your future, mainly about marriage or children, by showing you the face of your husband or wife in the mirror. However, if you see the skull of the grim reaper it means that you will die before you ever get married. Since it is obviously unclear where the urban legend of Bloody Mary originated from, it is still a terrifying myth that tends to scare the life out of most of us when we are in a dark bathroom alone.

This is a story of a young girl who encountered Bloody Mary at a sleep over with her friend. "I was ten years old and my friend and I were having a sleep over. After gossiping about every boy in school, we got bored, and we started talking about our favorite horror movies. When that got us thoroughly freaked, we tried to come up with things we could do that would freak us out more. I would pretend I could hear someone knocking on the door on my back patio (my whole back yard was forest, so this was particularly creepy). My friend kept on pretending she'd hear someone coming down the stairs (my bedroom was on the bottom floor of my house, so being in the basement, pretending someone was coming down the stairs, was really scary even if it sounds silly). Then I remembered Bloody Mary and we both squealed appropriately and I got the candles. We went into the bathroom and lit the candles. I decided to be the brave one and I spun in circles a little more than three times, but we were giggling at this point, so the dizzier the better. We both went to the mirror, and I said, Bloody Mary, Bloody Mary, Bloody Mary. I couldn't focus; I was so dizzy, so I asked my friend if she saw anything. She said no. And then...in the reflection of the mirror we both saw the window that faced my backyard, and there, staring at us from outside, was a girl with her hands plastered on the window, her mouth was open like she was screaming. We screamed and ran as fast as we could up the stairs to my parent's room. We wanted my dad to go check it out. When he went down there, there was no girl, no nothing. We didn't sleep a wink that night and to be honest I didn't sleep for a week after. I kept the curtains down and put earplugs in my ears. But that moment has stuck with me

forever". This is how most stories go, it happens at a sleepover, you are bored and want to get frightened. Though some are lucky to escape the death of Bloody Mary, some are not so fortunate.

A friend of mine lost her cousin to this game, whether coincidental or real, she died a few days later after summoning Bloody Mary. They were both thirteen at the time and very close. The two of them were sleeping over at my friend's house, Tisha, when her cousin, Jessica, suddenly blurted out that they should play Bloody Mary. Tisha, being afraid of summoning the spirit, after hearing many horror stories about what she does to you if you see her, decided that she did not want to partake in the séance. Still wanting to do it, Jessica goes into the bathroom alone and calls Bloody Mary. After standing in the dark for a few minutes, Jessica comes out and tells her that she did not even see anything, sounding a little disappointed. Everything seems normal for the rest of the night. About three days later, Jessica is found dead in her bed. She went to bed and never woke up again. Tisha, shocked at what happened, was too scared to tell her parents because she felt guilty for letting her cousin go in and to summon Bloody Mary by herself. She finally told them and they said that Bloody Mary is just a myth, it is not real, they also said to not feel guilty about what happened, and that her cousin died because it was her time to go. Tisha still unsure of what to believe does know one thing...that she will never play the game of Bloody Mary.

Bloody Mary may or may not be true, but she is real. She was at one time a real person who lived many centuries ago and was given her nickname because of her evil actions. Though she is dead now, is it possible that she may be living in our mirrors, waiting for us to chant her name so that she can get us as we sleep. If you are brave enough to want to find out, try it the next time you are alone in a dark bathroom, but be careful and watch your back, for she might be behind you ready to attack.

-Brittany Solis

Zombies: More Than Flesh Eating Ghouls

Four years books, moves, and now videogames have created numerous insane and sometimes unfathomable stories of how human life will someday violently end. One of the most popular of these outlandish theories is the sudden rising of the dead, also known as “zombies”. In almost every case, zombies are depicted as gory, decaying, stumbling corpses with a largely unexplained hankering for human flesh. Sometimes their specific appetite is directed towards the human brain. In modern media, the ways they come into existence can vary from anything, like fictional super virus, nanobots, or even magic. Some of these explanations even have a bit of scientific basis despite this seemingly ridiculous idea.

One of these is the idea of parasites invading the human body and turning their victims into mindless flesh eating cretins. In many zombie films such as *Night of the Creeps* by Fred Dekker, supernatural parasites suddenly appear either from an alien invasion or experiment gone wrong. They make their way into unsuspecting towns and cities, slowly taking over the bodies of each and every human until they are all mindless ghosts.

As highly disturbing and unrealistic as a crazed mind controlling parasite may seem they really do exist, at least to some extent. Zombie enthusiasts sometimes like to theorize that a more advanced version of already existing parasites could lead to the creation of zombie hordes. Take the *Toxoplasma gondii* for example. Cats usually host these little protozoa, but they can make themselves at home inside of any warm-blooded animal, including humans. That is not even the most interesting part. The *Toxoplasma gondii* breeds inside the intestines of cats, but sometimes they are stuck inside the bodies of rats or birds. The parasite rewires the brains of these small animals so that instead of fearing cats, they go straight to them. When the rat or bird is eaten the *Toxoplasma gondii* is back in the cat’s intestines where it wanted to be. Even more astonishing is the fact that more than sixty million people in the United States are said to be infected by these microscopic parasites and are unaware of it.

Another popular method media uses for creating zombies is reanimation, which is a fancy term for saying, “reviving the dead”. It almost sounds like something out of a science fiction movie, but there are research facilities trying to make it possible. It states with the Soviet scientist Dr. Serge Bryukhonenko who created a machine called the autojector in the 1920’s. The autojector has several components. It has a vessel (used as an artificial lung) in which blood is supplied with oxygen, a pump that circulates the oxygenated blood through the arteries, and another pump that takes blood from the veins back to the “lung” for more oxygen. Experiments started small, reviving clinically dead dogs. The dead canine blood was replaced with a hypothermic oxygenated saline solution. Three hours later, the dog’s blood is reintroduced, and he is revived with an electric shock. The autojector could also keep a dog’s heart beating outside its body. It kept a decapitated dog’s head alive for hours. However the machine was incapable of reviving a whole dog more than about fifteen minutes after its blood was drained. Body cells then begin to die.

However, experiments much like Bryukhonenko’s are still performed today. In a series of experiments, doctors at the Safar Center for Resuscitation Research at the University of Pittsburgh managed to plunge several dogs into a state of total, clinical death before bringing them back to life using a machine similar to Bryukhonenko’s autojector. The Safar Center team took the dogs, quickly drained their bodies of blood, and replaced it with a cool saline solution laced with oxygen and glucose. The dogs quickly went into cardiac arrest, and with no demonstrable heartbeat or brain activity, died. After three full hours, the team reversed their steps, withdrawing the saline solution, reintroducing the blood and thereby warning the dogs back to life. The researchers believe that this is proof that the method will soon be able to be applied to humans. This is just a mad scientist away from being a classic horror film.

That brings us to a more “traditional” view on zombies. The word “zombie” is a Haitian term used to denote an animated corpse brought back to life by mystical means such as witchcraft. In Haiti, evil practitioners of vodou magic (often called “voodoo” in English) are called



the bokor. In vodou lore the bokor traps his victim's soul by sucking it out of the body and sealing it in a bottle. After the victim's death, the bokor goes to his or her grave at night, opens it and calls the victim's name. The bottle containing the victim's soul is passed under his/her nose to revive the body, and the zombie is led away. Haitians who believe in the power of vodou so greatly fear that the bodies of dead loved ones will be stolen and turning into zombies they will often dismember a dead relative before burial. Others will stand guard over fresh family graves until decomposition makes the body "unusable".

Edmund Wade Davis, a Harvard ethnobotanist and anthrobiologist, revealed in 1982 that the bokor used a slow-acting poison to paralyze his victims. A substance that contains tetrodotoxin, a chemical that lowers a person's metabolic rate to the point where he or she appears to be dead, creates the zombie-like state. If the name sounds familiar, that is because tetrodotoxin is a powerful and frequently fatal neurotoxin found in the flesh of puffer fish. Its pain-killing effects are 160,000 times stronger than that of cocaine. The toxin drops victim's temperature and blood pressure, and puts him/her into a deep coma. The chance of survival is slim and the victim often does die either by the poison or asphyxiation after the burial. If he or she is still alive when the bokor digs up the grave, he/she will be forced to eat a mysterious paste containing a powerful psychoactive substance such as datura stramonium also known as the zombie cucumber. This plant causes memory loss and hallucinations. The "zombies" are in state of semi-permanent induced psychotic delirium. They are sold to sugar plantations as slave labor and given datura again if they seem to be recovering their senses.

With all of these very real ways of turning animals and humans into mindless undead drones, one would think the appeal of zombie films, books, and videogames would suffer in favor for a less terrifying genre. However, it seems the idea of the living dead has become more popular than ever. Films like *The Crazies* (1971) and *The Evil Dead* have gone from being box office letdowns to "cult classics". There are whole books and websites dedicated to what some call "zombology". Why are these undead flesh eaters so popular today?

It all began with George A. Romero's 1968 horror film *Night of the Living Dead*. The film redefined the work "zombie" all together even though the reanimated creatures

were never actually referred to as "zombies" in the film. Through the movie was heavily criticized during its release because of its explicit content, it had earned between twelve and fifteen million dollars at the American box office decades after its release and has been translated into more than twenty-five languages. Romero took the zombie from being a vague creature of Haitian lore, to a full-blown horror film monster. Many films and books afterwards drew inspiration from the film and its successors.

Still, why are there so many zombie apocalypse themed fictions? A theory for why zombie fiction has become so popular in modern entertainment is that hordes of ravenous dead people somehow appeal to our more aggressive nature. Zombies are legions of faceless enemies that no one has to feel bad for killing. All our aggression and fears towards the world's problems can be released onto these decaying drones. The reason for loving zombie fiction can vary and can be more complex and metaphorical than just pure violence. The struggle of the human survivors in this genre's books and films is relatable and intriguing to us. Bret Hammond, author of the story *Rural Dead*, responded to the question of zombie appeal on tor.com. He explained his belief by saying, "I think we live in a world with big problems that have complicated solutions . . . zombie fiction allows us to approach the idea of a very frightening pandemic outbreak with a very simple solution—shoot 'em in the head."

There are still many more ways a zombie can suddenly pop up from a six-foot grave. Whether it is via God defying experimentation or sudden supernatural mischief, a zombie apocalypse is not as impossible as we like to think. Parasites can take over brains, or a well-intended experiment could go horribly wrong, or a vacation I Haiti could end in drug-sedated labor. The films and games we all know and love are not as outlandish as we believe. They are still very unlikely, but not totally baseless. They are popular for a reason. Many can relate to the idea of survival against staggering odds. Maybe we can learn a thing or two from those fearless heroes and heroines in zombie games. Who knows, it could someday save us from being devoured alive.

- *Danielle Bullock*

The Ghost Ship Queen Mary

The former luxury liner and World War II military transport, the Queen Mary, has seen its share of adventure, glamour, and destruction throughout its seafaring days, but now sits as a famous hotel and museum attraction in Long Beach, California. The ship has had many different functions over the years, carrying a variety of passengers.

Its maiden voyage took place in 1936 as a round-trip cruise liner carrying travelers across the Atlantic Ocean. The Queen Mary not only carried the rich and famous which included Winston Churchill and Queen Elizabeth, but for a time it was also a home to sailors during World War II. In 1940 its name was changed to “The Grey Ghost” and was fitted into a troopship. During the war, the famous vessel participated in the D-Day invasion of Europe, and by the end of the war the ship had carried more than 800,000 troops, traveled more than 600,000 miles, and had even survived a collision with another vessel. After the end of the war, the Queen Mary continued as a very popular cruise liner until air travel became more affordable to the masses and the once vibrant cruise ship became outdated. During the year of 1967, the historical ship was sold and permanently docked in its current home. Part of the Queen Mary’s popularity comes from its impressive history, but it also receives plenty of attention for another reason. The famous ship is said to be haunted. Some are convinced by the fact that the Queen Mary has played host to nearly fifty deaths on board, but others have personal experiences to verify their beliefs. There have been numerous tales of ghost sightings and unexplainable events all around the massive ship (which is larger than the Titanic), and for some visitors a possible ghost encounter is the reason for their stay. One of the most popular ghosts residing on the Queen Mary is John Pedder. John was an unfortunate victim of the infamous Door #13, and was crushed to death during a routine fire drill. The watertight door, which was used in the filming of the Poseidon Adventure, has killed two men during the ships history and is located fifty feet below water level in the Queen Mary’s



engine room. John Pedder has been described as a young man, about eighteen years old, wearing dark colored coveralls and sporting a black beard. Visitors say they have spotted him in the shaft alley and riding the engine room escalator. One haunting ghost story is one of a woman that wandered down into the engine room alone. She suddenly got the feeling she was not alone, and turning around was shocked to see a dark haired man standing behind her. She then ran from the area and later identified the man from an old photo as John Pedder.

Many ghostly guests have also been spotted lounging around the first and second class swimming pools, but of the two, the first class pool seems to be more of a paranormal hotspot. Over the years, passengers have spotted a woman dressed in old fashioned swimming attire wandering around the pool, and occasionally the sound of people having fun in the pool is heard, but upon investigation the area is always

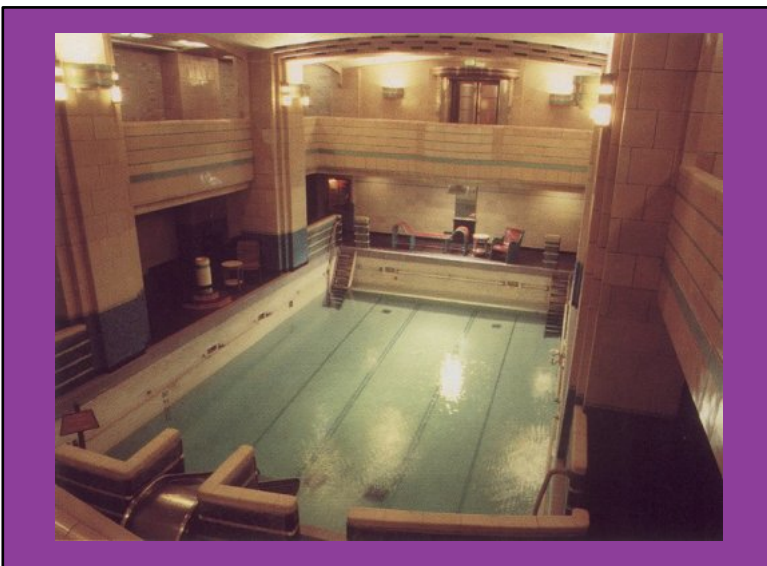
but upon investigation the area is always empty. The swimming pool dressing boxes (which resemble today's typical dressing rooms) are said to be the center of paranormally activity on the Queen Mary. Many years ago, a medium that was invited onto the ship identified one of the dressing boxes as being "a portal to another realm". It is because of her comment that guests staying in the hotel are only allowed to view the haunted boxes in guided tours.

Other haunted areas of the ship include the lower bow and boiler room, the Queen's salon, and the bridge where the ship's first captain who died on board has been seen pacing. Situated at the lowest part of the ship is the boiler room which was considered the most dangerous area on the ship when it was in operation. Unfortunately, one crew discovered how hazardous it could be when some pipes containing high-pressured steam exploded and killed several of the crew members. After the Queen Mary was permanently docked in Long Beach, the dangerous boiler room was gutted out completely, but regardless of this fact, many paranormal sightings have been reported in that area. In the Queen's Salon, which once served as the first class lounge, a woman in a white evening gown has been observed dancing alone in a corner of the room and hanging around the piano. In the lower bow there have been reports of the sound of men screaming for help accompanied by rushing water and crunching metal. These spooky screams are believed to be connected to the Queen Mary's collision during the war with the British vessel the H.M.S Curacao. On October 2nd, 1942, while trying to avoid enemy ships, the Queen Mary zigzagged her way into



the smaller ally ship, nearly cutting it in half. The Curacao's crew was then thrown into the water to be drowned, and the Queen Mary, having direct orders not to stop in fear it would be caught under fire, continued on her way. The screams still heard today are believed to be the cries of the three hundred dying men from the H.M.S Curacao.

Now, there are ghost tours available to guests brave enough to stay at the hotel; and some still do despite the continual reports of paranormal activity. Common phenomenon occurring throughout the Queen Mary hotel include the sounds of distinct knocks, doors slamming, high pitched screams, drastic temperature changes, and phones ringing early in the morning with no one on the other line. The haunted hotel attracts many visitors; some find it so comfortable, they never leave.



-Nichole Garner

White House Ghosts

For more than 200 years a prominent symbol of the American people and its government has been the White House. In addition to this, the White House has also served as the home to most of the nation's presidents and their families. With such a rich past, it is no wonder that the White House is rumored to be a haunted by some of its former inhabitants. The most mentioned sightings in the White House have included the ghosts of past presidents. Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Jackson, as well as the ghost of first ladies Abigail Adams and Dolley Madison.

One of the most active ghosts said to appear in the White House is the ghost of the United States' sixteenth president, Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was president during the Civil War and died on April 15, 1865, only six days after the war had ended. According to Ward Hill Lamon, who was one of Lincoln's close friends, the president had had a premonition of his own death in a dream. Prior to his death Lincoln told Lamon that in his dream he had awoken and walked down the stairs only to see people crying and the body of a dead man in the East Room of the White House. In the dream when Lincoln asked who had died, a soldier answered "The President. He was killed by an assassin." This dream came true when Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth at the Ford's Theater.

Since his death, Lincoln has been seen by many people who have either lived or worked in the White House. The first sighting of Lincoln's ghost was by Grace Coolidge, wife of thirtieth president Calvin Coolidge. She reportedly saw him in the Oval Office as he looked out the window with his hands behind his back. The president's ghost was most likely stressed about the Civil War. Another person who was said to have seen an apparition of Lincoln was Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands. She reportedly heard a knocking at her door and opened the door only to faint at the sight of Lincoln. Winston Churchill and a white house maid also claimed to have seen Lincoln's ghost sitting in his room. When the maid reportedly saw the former president he was simply taking his shoes off. Churchill's sighting happened after he had taken a bath and supposedly he even talked to the president's ghost. The story goes that when Churchill saw Lincoln, he said "Good evening, Mr. President. You seem to have me at disadvantage," referring to the fact that Churchill had just taken a bath. The ghost then disappeared and Churchill no longer stayed in the Lincoln bedroom when he visited the White House. Lincoln's ghost is also said to have been the most active during Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency. It is speculated that this was because Roosevelt was president during the Great Depression and World War II. This was similar to the time of crisis that Lincoln faced during the Civil War.



Another ghost known to appear in the White House is that of First Lady Abigail Adams. She and her husband, President John Adams, were the first presidential couple to move into the White House. When the Adams' moved to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave, the White House was still under construction and it was only half finished. It rained frequently in Washington D.C. and that posed as a problem to Abigail Adams when it came to hanging laundry up to dry. She found that the East Room was the best place to hang up the clothes since it was dry and warm. Because of this some have said they have seen her ghost with arms outstretched as if carrying a laundry basket towards the East Room. It is claimed that when she was spotted, she was wearing her signature cap and shawl. It is also said that when her ghost is seen there is also a smell of soap and damp cotton.

Abigail Adams is not the only first lady to continue to reside in the White House. Dolley Madison wife of President James Madison is also a spirit known to appear in the presidential house. While living in the White House Mrs. Madison was a socialite and she cared deeply about the rose garden she had designed at the White House. Her first sighting was recorded as being when First Lady Edith Wilson moved into the White House and wanted to have the rose garden removed. When workers began to dig up the garden they claim to have seen the angry ghost of Dolley Madison. The workers stopped the destruction of the garden and the Rose Garden still stands today.

Andrew Jackson, the seventh president of the United States, is yet another ghost that has been seen in the White House. When Jackson ran for president against John Quincy Adams, Jackson won the majority of the people's votes. Though he had the most votes, he was not elected president. Instead the House of Representatives decided that Adams would become president. Jackson did not win that election, but in 1828 he was finally victorious and became the country's seventh president. Though he had won, he still seemed to have been bitter because of his initial loss. When Mary Todd Lincoln saw his ghost in the White House's Rose Room she claimed that he was cursing which could express Jackson's angry attitude towards those who voted against him becoming president. Others who have seen Jackson say that he laughs loudly in the Red Room. Today his bed remains in the Rose Room where he has been heard stomping around and swearing.

Among other supposed and lesser known hauntings in the White House is the spirit of British soldier from 1814 when the White House had been burned down. People who claim to have seen these ghost say that he carries a torch and stands on the area surrounding the White House. Visitors in the White House also said that the soldier tried to set fire on the bed they were sleeping in. William Henry Harrison, the nation's ninth president, is another lesser known ghost that is said to be heard in the attic looking for something and no one knows what exactly he is looking for. Finally, the ghost of Anne Surratt is said to be seen at the White House on July 7. Anne was the daughter of Mary Surratt, who played a part in the assassination of President Lincoln. Mary was executed on July 7 and that is why Anne is seen pounding and pleading for her mother at the door of the White House.

1600 Pennsylvania Ave or the location of the White House as it is more commonly known is a place rich in history. It has been actively lived in for more than two hundred years and it is no wonder that it is considered one of America's most haunted houses. No one knows for certain if the White House is really haunted or not, but the legends of the ghosts of people such as Abraham Lincoln, Abigail Adams, Dolley Madison, and Andrew Jackson keep the memory of the people who shaped American history alive.

Melissa Palomino

Area 51: Pop Culture Phenomenon

Aliens: these visitors from another planet have captured the imaginations of people worldwide. Many have dreamed of that amazing moment of contact between man and alien and some even claim to have witnessed such an event. There have been several reported sightings over the years and alien mythology has become a part of popular culture.

Purported extraterrestrial sightings have fueled and shaped that segment of pop culture into what it is today. Dreamland, Paradise Ranch, Home Base, Groom Lake, Area 51; the secret government facility located within the Nevada Test and Training Range, formerly known as the Nellis Air Force Range has been used to test jets and bombers among other things and many have speculated that top secret aircraft have also been tested there. Still others say that testing on extraterrestrial beings and their technology is conducted within Area 51. Stories of a downed alien space craft in Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947 fueled the idea that aliens have been kept within the Groom Lake facility. From that moment on, Area 51 became engraved upon American pop culture and would continue to have an impact upon it for years to follow (“Area 51”).

In order to understand how Area 51 has affected past and present past culture, one must first understand more about aliens and their role in pop culture. Beginning at the most basic level, the question is asked: What is an alien? Or perhaps a better question: What is an extraterrestrial? Dictionary.com defines “extraterrestrial” as “outside, or originating outside, the limits of Earth”. An extraterrestrial being, or alien, is a creature from another planet that many believe not only exists, but that they have already visited the human race. There have been numerous reports of unidentified flying objects (UFO) throughout the world during the past. Other reports include mutilated cows (blood drained and removed organs, etc.), time loss, crop circles, and abductions. Claims of alien sightings have existed for thousands of years. Some believe that early Australian aborigine cave drawings from the year 8,000 B.C. depict alien-like creatures with antennas. Moreover, in the year 4,000 B.C., the Sumerians reportedly claimed that there are “others” who live on

Mars. Five-hundred years after that, ancient Egyptian art seemed to have portrayed jets and helicopters, technology that would not be created for many years to come. Supposed evidence that the Incan empire made extraterrestrial contact came in the year 2,000 B.C. Similarly, in 1,000 A.D., the Mayans wrote about aliens calling them “masters of the sky”. In 1878, a Dallas farmer reportedly saw a UFO hovering in the night sky. A suspected nuclear explosion rocked 1908 Siberia, Russia, years before the Atom bomb was invented. Claims of sightings would continue throughout the years to be capped in 1947 by the claim that an extraterrestrial space craft crash landed in Roswell, New Mexico, after which it was allegedly taken to Area 51 for further study and testing (“Welcome to the Aliens”).

Area 51 began during World War II as a few runways, built by the United States Army Air Corp, and was used as a gunnery school until the 1940s when it was shut down and abandoned. The 1950s brought about a partnership between the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Lockheed Corporation, an American aerospace company, to create aircraft for surveillance missions. Kelly Johnson led the project and his group of engineers and test pilots were known as Skunk Works. Kelly Johnson began looking for locations to place a new secret government facility that could be used to test the most highly classified technology available. The placement of such a facility was a vital and tricky step for Johnson and his team, having to consider the need for secrecy as well as the need to be conveniently placed within reach of resources. Aircraft accessibility and size were also essential features of the location that would eventually be chosen, and made a considerable difference when the choice was made by Kelly Johnson and his team of experts. Kelly Johnson, accompanied by test pilot Tony LeVier and CIA representative Osmand Ritland, traveled to Nevada in 1955. Ritland, who had trained in the original site at Groom Lake, recommended the area to Johnson who agreed that the site would meet the needs of their operations. Four months later the initial construction was completed and the air space above the base was restricted (Strickland).



area 51



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Pointer 37°14'41.57" N 115°49'12.33" W elev 4452 ft

Streaming ||||| 100%

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Much of the history of Area 51 has been shrouded in secret. However, we know that in 1957, information about Area 51 was given to the press stating that the base at Groom Lake, also known as the Watertown Project, was designed to test the weather and in 1961, the restricted airspace above Area 51 was expanded to reach into space, allowing no plane, commercial or military, to fly within the restricted zone (not including the test planes from the base). In the year 1962 the first A-12, an early version of the Blackbird reconnaissance jet, arrived to the site at Groom Lake and five years later the first MiG 21, a quick durable jet, arrived for testing. With 1977 came a new secret project in the form of the F117 prototype, a stealth fighter, a type of jet which at the time was unknown to the public. In 1982, a new stealth vehicle called the "Tacit Blue" was launched and within only two years of this revealing, the base petitioned for another 89,000 acres of restricted land, which it was granted. In 1989, a man named Robert Lazar stated on television that he worked on reverse engineering alien technology near Area 51. Two more areas known as Freedom Ridge and White Sides Peak respectively were added to the base in 1995. In order to preserve national security, President Bill Clinton signed an executive order that allowed Area 51 to be an exception to the rule of legislation and investigation. In 1996 Nevada renamed Route 375 to the "extraterrestrial Highway" and in 1997, Area 51 was declassified, however, all that goes on within has remained a secret (Strickland).

By far the most well-known alien related incident to involve the installation at Groom Lake, Nevada was one that occurred in Roswell, New Mexico. It was the first week of July 1947 and an unidentified flying object reportedly fell from the sky and smashed into the ground. A New Mexican rancher named W.W. "Mack" Bazel along with his son and a few neighbors, while tending to their sheep, found scraps of metal debris. Bazel took a piece of the debris and reported it to the local sheriff who in turn reported it to an intelligence officer in the 509 Bomb Group. The huge crater left by the wreckage was closed down to allow the workers to clear the debris from the site. On July 8, 1947, a press release was issued which said that a "crashed disc" had been discovered and on July 9,

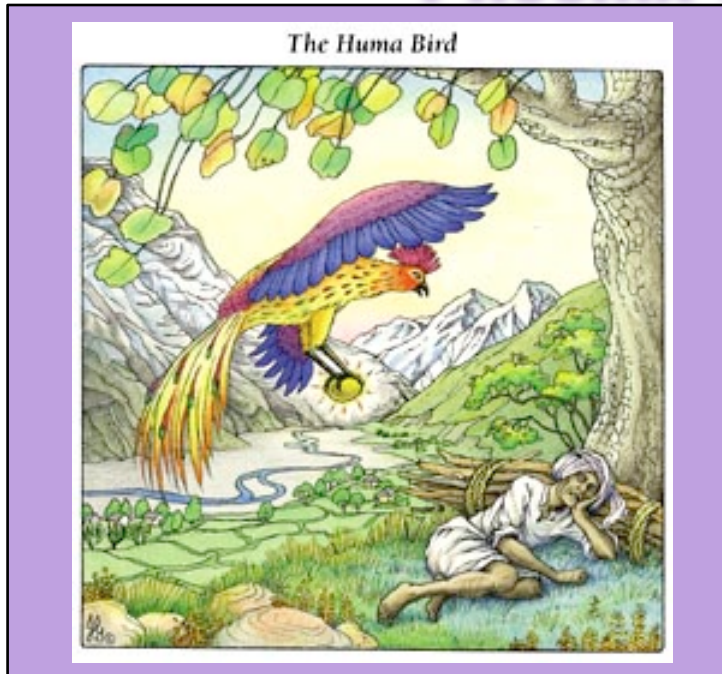
1947, a second press release was issued correcting the first stating that the 509 Bomb Group mistook a weather balloon for a flying saucer. Many believe that the government covered up a true UFO discovery and transported the wreckage to Area 51 where it is being studied and tested ("Roswell").

It is these alleged sightings and conspiracies that fuel the curiosities of all alien enthusiasts everywhere and is the basis for their love of these extraterrestrial visitors. Over time, the idea of extraterrestrial visitors became engrained in our collective subconscious and it has stuck. From the movie greats like Alien, 2001: A Space Odyssey, and E.T. to astounding books like War of the Worlds, The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, and H.P. Lovecraft's At the Mountains of Madness, aliens have frightened and entertained people the world over. During the 1950s, film special effects were just emerging and thus alien films were ready to be pushed to their potential. Alien movies during that time were generally lizard like while resembling the form of a human being. Over the years, the common alien image evolved into what we see today with large-headed figure with dark eyes. An interesting fact to note is that reported alien sightings tend to reflect the appearance of aliens in movies and other media. Alien mythology within our popular culture allows us to connect with that old sense of wonder and mystery; a sense that the truth is out there for those who truly believe.

Dreamland, Paradise Ranch, Home Base, Groom Lake, Area 51; a wonderland of the unknown and a place filled with many a dark secret. From the secret aircraft tested and the purported top secret alien technology being reverse engineered to the alleged alien autopsies that have been performed inside, one thing is for certain- Area 51 has had an irreversible effect on popular culture, one that shall be felt for many years to come. One might even say that alien mythology will never die, forever set in stone as an enigmatic part of our diverse pop culture.

-Michael Watson

Phoenix the Polaris



Usually the first thing we think of when the word Phoenix is brought up is the city in the state of Arizona and not the legendary bird of fire. The legend of the Phoenix has been around for centuries, but how much does a person truly know about this bird, besides what we have seen on television. The basic knowledge of the Phoenix is that it is a fire bird that will build a nest when its lifespan is coming close to an end. The nest is then set on fire and the bird is reborn through the ashes. That bit of information is only a small part of the long history of the Phoenix.

The Phoenix has always had a part in some culture's history. It can take various physical forms and is known by a list of names throughout the Middle and Far East, the Mediterranean, and Europe. Although there are multiple descriptions of this glorious creature the most common description is written by Ovid Pliny which states that the Phoenix is, "The size of an eagle, with gold plumage around the neck, a purple body, and an azure tail. The throat has a crest, and the head has a tuft of feathers." Even with the different accounts of how the Phoenix looks; the physical appearance is relatively the same, differing slightly in only the color.

When it comes to the Phoenix's lifespan, that also changes depending on which version that a person accesses. It can live as short as five hundred years or as long as one thousand four hundred and sixty years. While its lifespan is still a mystery

that can be debated, one thing is for sure, there can only be one Phoenix at once.

The symbol of this bird has varied with the different cultures. It can represent immortality in one area of the world and it can represent rebirth after death in another. It can also represent eternal youth. According to the Chinese, the Phoenix was a bird sent to earth to perform extraordinary works and to help the development of man. It appears in different stages of the world's progress, and then returns to heaven. The general consensus is that the Phoenix is a bird that is revered around the world as a symbol of immortality and re-incarnation.

The Phoenix lived a life of solitude in a far-away land, coming only to human-inhabited land when it was ready to die. In other telling, the bird lived among civilization, but remained out of the public eye. The Phoenix was a friendly bird that was pleasant toward human beings, but did not care for their affairs.

There has been debate on the actual process of its reincarnation. People have speculated that it rises moments after it has been burned into ash. Others describe it as a process that takes days before the Phoenix rises again. The last theory states that it stays in a worm-like form for three days before it takes the form of the glorious Phoenix.

The thought of this mythical creature fascinates so many of us simply because of its immortality. Humans have always speculated about being able to live forever and this is what this bird has accomplished. If we look at it through a religious aspect, the Phoenix is something to be held in high esteem. In certain religions, re-incarnation is the path that people take after their deaths. There is no proof that it is necessarily the next step after death. We do not know if there is a heaven, another life to live, or if we just die and that is the end of it. The Phoenix though, gives reason to speculate there is life after death. People are fascinated with the Phoenix, because it is a myth, but they wish that it is real. If it was real then the thought and ideal of being able to live forever or re-incarnation is something to desire.

The Phoenix is not the first of its kind. It did not come about without any association to any other **21.**

creature. It can be related to birds of Egyptian, Persian, Greek, Oriental, and Christian origins. The differences between the birds are there, but they are more homogenous than heterogeneous.

In Egyptian tales, the Phoenix comes from a large heron named the Bennu. The Bennu created a nest just like the Phoenix, then lit it on fire where it burned into ashes. From the ashes, a young Bennu would arise.

From the Persian culture, the Phoenix is related to the Huma bird. The Huma lived for a few hundred of years, and then ignited itself on fire only to rise from its ashes. The symbol of the Huma compared to the bird is slightly different. While the Phoenix represents re-incarnation, the Huma was a symbol of great fortune. If a person were to come in contact with the Huma then he or she would come into great blessings. The Greek's version of the Phoenix was similar to the Huma.

To the Chinese, the Phoenix is called Feng-huang. In the Chinese culture there is a more detailed description of this bird. In the article "Phoenix" by Mark Schumacher, the Phoenix "symbolizes completeness, incorporating the basic elements of music, colors, nature, as well as the joining of yin and yang. It is a symbol of peace, and represents fire, the sun, justice, obedience, and fidelity. The Feng-huang, unlike the phoenix which dies and is reborn, is truly immortal although it only appears in times of peace and prosperity."

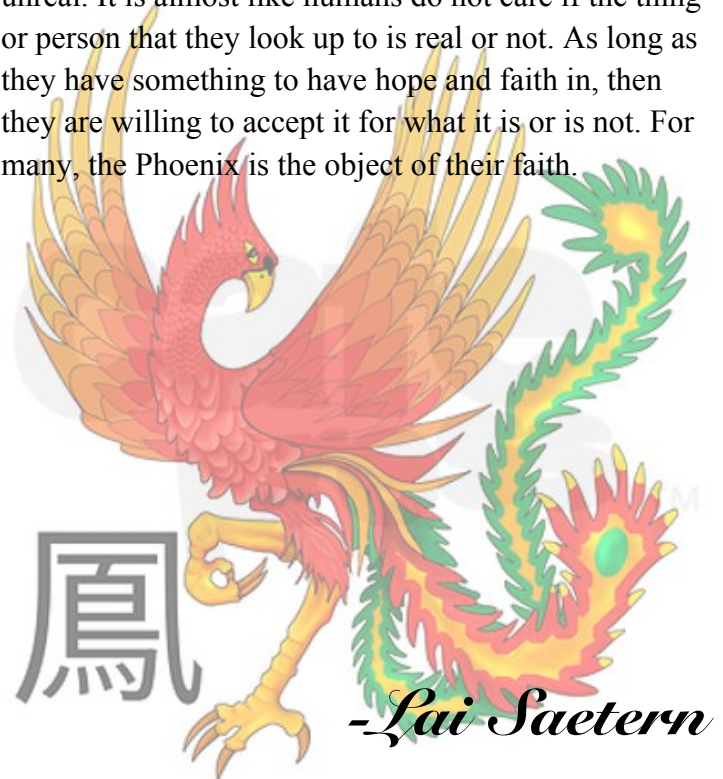
Another type of bird that the Phoenix is related to is the Avalerion. This bird comes from India. It differs from the Phoenix in that there is a pair of them instead of a singular bird. Also instead of re-incarnation, these birds have parents. Every sixty years, the Avalerions would produce two eggs, when those eggs hatched, the parents would drown themselves.

The Phoenix used to be a large fixture in religious and cultural stories, but as the years passed by, the Phoenix was slowly leaving the limelight. Nonetheless, it still has a place in literature. Some writers that have included or alluded to the Phoenix are: William Shakespeare, Sylvia Plath, and more recently J.K. Rowling. The reason that writers use the Phoenix is because it is a mythical creature that brings with it a sense of hope and redemption.

The Phoenix represents more than just life after death and immortality. The Phoenix is a creature that was blessed by the gods to live eternally. The Phoenix is lives throughout centuries to overlook the disasters and tragedies of history. It is there to see the advances in our society. It is there to witness everything that happens. It even comes in to play during times of distress and peace. During times of distress, the Phoenix will make an appearance to remind humans to keep faith and hope up. It reminds us to push on through whatever is that is stifling our progress and overcome it.

It comes in times of peace. It brings fortune when one deserves great blessings. It boosts the morale of human beings. The Phoenix, a single being, no larger than an eagle can incite so much hope and enthusiasm from people around the world is amazing. That alone, makes the Phoenix something to be revered. While some truly do believe that this creature exists in our world, it does not matter if it is an actual living creature. The idea of the Phoenix itself brings great stories and hope to our world.

In history, people have always looked up to a god, animal, or some deity for hope or guidance. The existence of a god or mythical creature may be palapable to some, while others pass it off as being unreal. It is almost like humans do not care if the thing or person that they look up to is real or not. As long as they have something to have hope and faith in, then they are willing to accept it for what it is or is not. For many, the Phoenix is the object of their faith.



Southeast Asian Mythology

Many stories of mythical creatures have passed between Asian cultures. The origin of these creatures may or may not be easily found as the story of the creature can change over time and during the passing between cultures. However, most mythological creature stories retain the original symbolism they are meant to represent. For example, if the creature is supposed to be a protector rather than an evil terror, that creature is likely to be seen as a protector in the cultures that know its story.

Chinthe, a lion-like creature, is often seen outside pagodas or temples in Burma, almost always in pairs. The Burmese mythological creature is said to be the protector of such buildings. This creature is even shown on the Burmese currency, the kyat. The story of why the Chinthe is the protector of these buildings goes as follows: A princess married a lion and had a son, but later abandoned her lion husband. The lion became so enraged that he began to terrorize the lands. The son later set out to slay the terrorizing lion, and did. The son returned home to tell his mother of what he had done, and was told that the lion was actually his father. The son built a statue of the lion as guardian of a temple to atone for his sins; thus the origin of the Chinthe statues is told (“Chinthe”).

Similarly, the Chinese have lion protectors called Shishi lions. This is possibly the origin of the Chinthe from Burmese mythology, though the Chinese Shishi lion was simply a typical looking lion. First appearing during the Han Dynasty, the Shishi lion was also known as the Imperial Guarding lion, meant to protect Imperial buildings such as palaces, tombs, and government offices.

Imperial Guarding lion, meant to protect Imperial buildings such as palaces, tombs, and government offices. Temples and homes of the wealthy also featured Shishi lion statues because they were believed to have mythical protective powers. As in Burma, the Shishi lion is often featured in pairs, common today in front of or around restaurants, supermarkets, or other places where Chinese people live, such as Chinatowns. The male lion is always one having the world under one paw, while the female lion has a cub lying on its back under her paw.

The Chinese, and in time other Southeast Asian countries, are said to have heard of lions from the

peoples of Sogdiana, Samarkand, and Yuezhi, who inhabited parts of the area we know today as central Asia. This can easily occur through word of mouth by travelers and merchants taking the Silk Road, bringing with them pelts or even live lions to trade, and stories from Buddhist monks and travelers who have seen lions on their travels. Consequently, the Chinese word Shi is similar to the Persian word Shiar for lion (“Chinese guardian lions”).

Jenglot, a small vampire-like creature comes from Indonesian mythology, mainly from the Javanese people. According to Indonesian legend, the Jenglot is an ascetic wanting to learn how to obtain eternal life, or immortality. Other stories say it is a hermit who worships demons and gains certain powers, and yet another says that a person with great supernatural powers can meditate in a cave and become a Jenglot. Some psychics and supernatural researchers from Java claim to have found or seen these creatures, even to be keeping them in a collection. The keepers are said to feed the vampire creature goat or human blood, though the Jenglot does not move or touch the blood. There are no explanations given as to why these creatures exist or what the keepers do with them (“Jenglot”).

Toyol, or Tuyul, another small creature, comes from Malaysian and Javanese mythology. This creature is said to be made from the spirit of a small child, specifically that of an unborn baby, the fetus, and looks like a newly born baby, comparable to a “goblin.” A dukun, an Indonesian shaman, or a bomoh, a Malaysian witch doctor, supposedly uses black magic to summon the spirit to the physical world from the dead. This specific type of black magic is called “pesugihan tuyul,” which is used to make a person rich in some way. This tells the reason a Tuyul would be summoned: to steal.

Most people who summon the Tuyul will use it to cause mischief and steal valuables from people, but in exchange the owner must keep the Tuyul happy by performing rituals or by sacrificing something. According to the Javanese, a family may keep a Tuyul as if it were a pet, helping the family to prosper through its thievery, but a female member of the family must

allow the Tuyul to breastfeed from her, sucking her blood instead of milk. Of course, being the spirit of a fetus, the Tuyul is not intelligent: Tuyuls are easily distracted by play things as marbles, beans, sand, etc. and may forget its task. This creature also fears its own reflection and of being pricked by needles (“Toyol”).

Similarly in the Philippines, the Tiyanak, a vampire creature, takes on the form of a newborn or small child to attract travelers passing through jungles or forests and attacks them. There are many versions of this creature, but all agree that the Tiyanak has the ability to imitate a crying infant, which is how its victims are lured. One version says the Tiyanak is always in a baby-like form, forming claws and fangs when ready to attack. Another version says its original form is that of an old man, having similar characteristics as dwarves from German mythology.

According to the people of Mandaya, this creature came to be after a mother died before giving birth, the baby being “born in the ground,” which is why it is in the baby-like form. The Filipino people believe to avoid being lured by the Tiyanak, various precautions or countermeasure may be taken: one can turn their clothes inside out while they are traveling through the jungle, which simply humors the creature to leave the traveler alone; the Tiyanak supposedly does not like loud noises, causing it to be driven away; anything that is meant to repel vampires, like garlic, are also said to work against the Tiyanak (“Tiyanak”).

In countries practicing Buddhism and Hindu, such as Cambodia and India, have the Garuda, a bird-man creature associated with the divine. In Sanskrit, Garuda means devourer; this is because Garuda is the devourer of snakes. This creature typically has the upper body and wings of an eagle and lower body of a human. Its body features a gold color, red wings, white face with a beak, two or four arms, and a crown on its head. Garuda may also be holding an emblem of Vishnu (supreme preserver deity of Hindi), the pot of amrita (immortality potion), or nothing at all. Other names for the Garuda are Amritaharana (stealer of amrit), Gaganeshvara (lord of the sky), or Suparna (having beautiful wings).

Originally in Hindu mythology, the Garuda is similar to Syena, Sanskrit for “eagle,” though the two may possibly be the same creature. This creature is of lesser divinity compared to the Vishnu, but has its own Upanishad (sacred text) called the Garudopanidad.

The story of the Garuda begins with the creator-rishi Kasyapa and Vinata, its father and mother, respectively. When Garuda was hatched from its egg, it resembled a flaming inferno that was supposed to end the world; this struck fear in the gods and Garuda diminished its size and vigor at their request. Garuda’s sister Kadru, mother of all serpents, won a bet between the two and made Garuda her slave. Garuda wanted Kadru to free their mother from bondage and asked Kadru to do so; Kadru responded by sending Garuda on a quest for the amrita, the elixir of immortality. The amrita was guarded by the gods of heaven, behind a wall of fire, razorblade contraptions, and two poisonous snakes. Garuda invaded heaven, defeated the gods, and took the amrita; upon leaving heaven Vishnu offered to make Garuda immortal without drinking the elixir, to this Garuda accepted and offered to become Vishnu’s mount. Garuda also had an encounter with Indra, the king of gods; Indra realized Garuda was immortal and he could not harm Garuda. The two made peace with one another and Garuda had a plan to keep the amrita away from the serpents: Garuda would give Kadru the elixir but tell them to lick darbha grass first, but before this they must pray before consuming the elixir. When the serpents when to pray, Indra came down to repossess the amrita; the serpents still licked the darbha grass, cutting their tongues (according to the myth, this is why snakes have split tongues). For this, Indra allowed Garuda to eat any snakes it wants. This is why Garuda may be thought of as a symbol to ward off snakes (“Garuda”).

In Buddhist mythology, the Garuda is known as Suparna. The Suparna is an intelligent race of large birds that prey on the rival creature, the Nagas, who are serpents; Buddha was said to have made temporary peace between the two. Suparna live in groves of silk-cotton trees, organized into large cities with a king. They are beings meant to protect Mount Sumeru and heaven from attacks from the asuras (evil creatures). Some are supposed to have magical powers that allow them to take on the form of a human, necessary when dealing with humans.

-Sonny Pok

The Bermuda Triangle

For as long as man has acknowledged his conscious, he has been on a never-ending pursuit for knowledge. From classifying plants and animals to naming oceans and mountains, man has attempted to identify and explain every physical aspect of this world in order to fully understand where he lives. While much has already been discovered in this pursuit of knowledge, there are some things that man has not and may never understand. These things usually referred to as “paranormal phenomena”, continue to baffle people around the world to this day. One of these “phenomena” is that of the Bermuda Triangle. The Bermuda Triangle, much like other popular legends, is a topic that is surrounded with much speculation and hearsay, however most people only have a vague idea of what the Bermuda Triangle actually is. For people to really understand the mystery of the Bermuda Triangle phenomenon, more light will have to be shed on the subject in order to separate truth from fiction.

To start, the Bermuda Triangle is part of the mid-Atlantic ocean in the Gulf of Mexico. It is referred to as a triangle because of the triangular shape of the area, made by connecting dots between southern Florida, Puerto Rico and the island of Bermuda. The Bermuda Triangle covers approximately five hundred thousand square miles of ocean and resides within the Sargasso Sea. The reason that the Bermuda Triangle is clouded with so much history and controversy is that in this portion of the ocean many ships and aircrafts have disappeared over, most of the time without explanation, since most of their crews vanish as well. According to the Bermuda Triangle Research Organization, it is reported that around five hundred ships have been lost within the Triangle, a good portion of these being American and British Vessels. One would think that people would just avoid this area of ocean unless flying overhead, however it is reported that aircrafts have been lost to the Triangle almost as much as ships have.

The Bermuda Triangle was first discovered in the late eighteenth century by naval commander S.D. Sigsbee. However, not much attention was paid to his research until the aviation age, where aircrafts with radar would go down when they flew over the triangle, helping to “triangulate” the area where the mysterious occurrences were.

The Bermuda Triangle is truly an eerie place in itself, as the area is known to have a few derelict ships, long abandoned by its crew, floating aimlessly through the Sargasso Sea. Because the Sargasso has a circular current flow, the abandoned ships have been known to float in circles around the sea many times before being sunk for safety reasons. Other ships that do not catch the currents of the Sargasso end up running aground on the American coastline, creating a truly eerie sight for locals who have to board the ships and check for survivors.

Because of the mystery surrounding its existence, the Bermuda Triangle has encountered a large amount of skepticism despite the obvious presence of eerie events within that area. Skeptics have tried to denounce the triangle’s existence in many ways, such as discrediting writers who have reported disappearances or they blamed other causes for the events besides those of a paranormal sense. Writers who are opposed to the triangle’s existence suggest that there is a natural cause for each one of the ships that was lost in the area, such as tropical storms, human error, piracy, and rogue waves. While these explanations are plausible when it comes to ships going missing, it does little to explain the disappearance of aircraft over the area, as aircrafts are typically not subject to rogue waves or piracy and only the dimmest of pilots would fly through a tropical storm. In one event, a total of five military bomber pilots went flying together on a training mission and disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle all in the same afternoon. This incident further clouded the mystery as malfunctions happening in all five of the planes are highly unlikely. But, the more radical theory that surrounds the disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle explains that it is all caused by aliens and alien abduction. It is reported that, in the journals of Christopher Columbus, one night when he was traveling through the triangle that his crew members and he saw flashing lights exit the water and hover alongside with the ship for many miles before vanishing into the sky.

There have been quite a few notable disappearances in the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries. In March of 1918, a US submarine was lost within the triangle and the vessel's 309 crew members never to be seen again. Now, this event was attributed to possible enemy fire as it was during the First World War, however no German documentation was ever found to support this theory. In the disappearance of Flight 19 in 1945, an airplane that was lost over the Bermuda Triangle, a mariner search and rescue team was sent out to find the missing airplanes, however it too was never seen again. In 1963, two air force strato-tanker aircrafts collided within the triangle. The crash was attributed to a failure in the aircraft radar systems, something that has been quite common within the Bermuda Triangle. Even before the aviation age, it was said that the Bermuda Triangle also affected compasses, causing them to malfunction. This was even said to have happened to Christopher Columbus's vessel as it passed through the area, as it was written in one of his journals during his adventures in the Americas. In 1919, a schooner known as the Carroll A. Deering ran aground abandoned in North Carolina and it was seen only two days earlier with full passengers and cargo. In 1941, a ship named the USS Proteus AC-9 was lost along with all of its 58 crew members. Even more interestingly, the next ship, named USS Proteus AC-10 was lost just a month later while it was traveling the same path and carrying the same cargo aboard, this time losing 61 crew members. Besides these examples of larger vessels sinking or crashing with large amounts of lives lost, there has also been countless times where smaller yachts and boats with smaller crews have gone missing and were not reported. The Bermuda Triangle is also said to have some relation to the mystery surrounding the City of Atlantis, which was supposedly an island nation that ended up sinking into the ocean and was never found.

Whether one believes in the Bermuda Triangle or not, it has mesmerized the American nation as a whole for quite some time up into the twenty first century. From the late 1960s up until the early 2000s, there have been almost a dozen books written on the phenomena that is the Bermuda Triangle. In addition to books written by authors such as Charles Berlitz, John Wallace Spencer and Richard Winer, there has also been three movies and one television series made specifically about the Bermuda Triangle, the latest being in 2009.

26. To conclude, the Bermuda Triangle is one of the



world's most mysterious and intriguing phenomena. While many skeptics try to blame ship disappearances on factors such as hurricanes and human fault, it is clear that there is more going on than meets the eye when it comes to the five hundred square mile stretch of the Bermuda Triangle. Whether its five US air force bombers going down while on a training mission or two US ships sinking one month apart while on the same path, or even problems being reported with navigation back to the time of Christopher Columbus, the triangle is definitely one of the mysteries that man has yet to understand. Unlike many other legends and folk tales that have no legitimate basis, there is no denying that when a plane with radar goes down within the triangle, without a trace or a signal for help, that something paranormal and possibly supernatural is going on.

Max Tobeck

Demeter and Peresphone

Greek mythology originated as part of ancient Greek religion, largely spread by word of mouth and recorded in the medium of paintings and decorations. The earliest, most familiar literary sources of Greek myths are the epic poems: the Iliad and the Odyssey, accredited to Homer. Like most religions and myths of other cultures, Greek mythology began to explain "phenomena's" in the world. Gods were created to justify the existence of death, life, lightning and other elements that were unexplained in the BC time era.

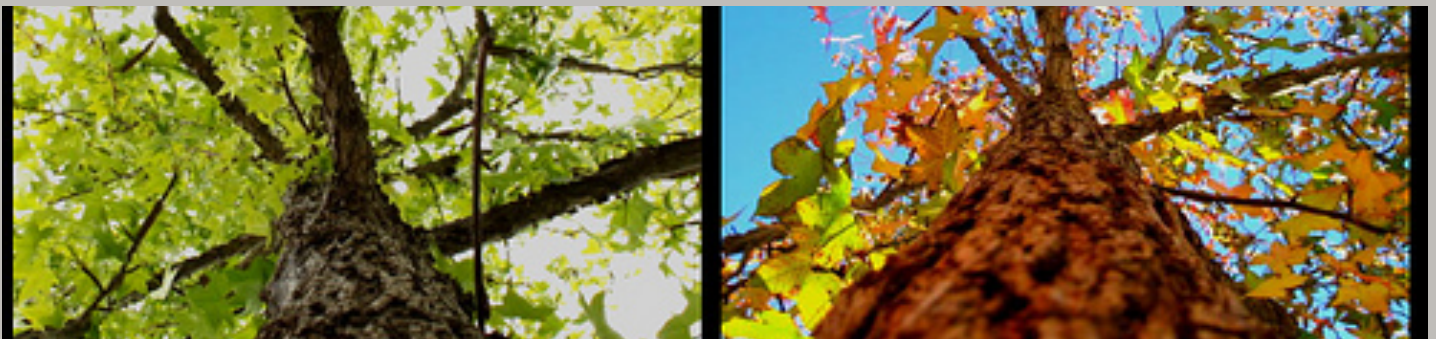
Three of the most widely known and recognized gods in Greek mythology are Poseidon, god of the seas; Hades, god of the underworld; and Zeus, god of the skies. These three gods are brothers and together they regulate the three largest regions of the world. Although each of the brothers contained their own powers and qualities, Zeus was revered as the highest god, consequently given the privilege ruler of the Olympian gods, and all of mankind on Earth. His weapon is an almighty thunderbolt that he propels at those who aggravate him. He is married to Hera however he is famous for his many affairs, most notably one with Demeter. Zeus' affair with Demeter resulted in the birth of their daughter, Persephone.

On Earth Zeus controls the beautiful flowers sprouting, the sun rays beating down, and the clouds slowing vanishing from sight marking the beginning of springtime. Six months later Zeus transforms the Earth into another state of weather. The leaves change in color and fall off the trees, a breeze starts to come in, and rain begins to cascade down, marking the beginning of fall. The evolution of the seasons is a remarkable change some contribute to the Greek myth of the goddesses Demeter and Persephone. Demeter is the both the sister and wife to the

almighty Zeus, with Persephone being the offspring of the two gods. Demeter is known as the goddess of the grain and harvest, while Persephone is the goddess of spring, who also later becomes the queen of the underworld.

Demeter and Persephone possess many powers. They both bear the commonplace powers that the other Olympian gods have including inimitable strength, endurance, and resistance to injury. In addition to that they each possess their own respective powers. Persephone can cure the sick and influence the growth and health of flowering plants and other vegetation. Demeter can amend her appearance and her emotions are said to be in tune to the harvest. The harvest is bountiful when she is happy and aridity occurs when she is distressed.

Demeter and Persephone had a very fond mother-daughter relationship, so close in fact that Demeter could not tolerate allowing her precious Persephone out of sight. Whether Demeter was sitting on her throne or going down to Earth to tend on crop, Persephone was always close by her side. Persephone grew up on Mount Olympus and was always a beautiful, delightful goddess. On one radiant day, Persephone was out in the meadow. As myth says, whenever Persephone would dance in the fields, flowers sprang up. She gave out such a lively and vibrant ambience that Hades, her uncle and king of the underworld, noticed her and instantly fell in love. Hades' physical attraction to the beautiful, young goddess gave him an immediate desire to make her his queen. The only solution to this immense longing was for Hades to come and seize Persephone then proceed



to take her to the underworld.

Naturally troubled about the disappearance of her daughter, Demeter searched for Persephone everywhere. For nine days, she wandered the Earth, a torch in each hand, neither eating nor drinking. Not finding Persephone, Demeter then continued to mourn over the loss of her daughter for weeks after. Consequently, the crops of Earth begin to diminish. Without the survival of crops, humankind would not survive. Fearful of not having any subjects to reign over, Zeus decided he needed to barter with his brother Hades. His solution was to send Hermes, his youngest son, the messenger, to crack a deal.

Hades had his niece Persephone locked in a room in the underworld, where she preceded to cry for hours at a time. Persephone was devastated about being apart from her mother, and she refused to eat. Legend read if you ate anything in Hades' underworld, you could never depart. Without knowing if the legend was true, she did not want to chance eating in case someone came to liberate her from the horrible chains she was placed in. Persephone spent nearly a week in Hades' incarceration. Finally, unable to control her hunger, Persephone preceded to consume six pomegranate seeds. Legend stated that her fate is secured; she is now embedded in the underworld for eternity.

When Zeus and Demeter heard became aware of Persephone's consumption of six pomegranate seeds, they had to devise a new plan briskly. Knowing Hades' relentless personality, Zeus knew the only way to regain control over his beloved daughter was to make a compromise that would delight both his brother Hades and his wife Demeter. After devising many plans, Zeus became discouraged about his inability to please both parties. Subsequently, the bargain made with Hades was that if Persephone was to be wed to Hades, she would be granted permission and approval to live and reign as queen of the underworld for six months out of the year. This clause of their agreement satisfied Hades greatly, yet Demeter was devastated. To amend this Zeus added a catch—each spring Persephone would return and live on Mount Olympus for the remaining six months of the year. Adding this pleased Demeter and Persephone tremendously. With all parties in consensus, this agreement was confirmed.

Although the initial transition was arduous, Persephone slowly began to accept her fate. Ruling the underworld was a new and daunting task to her, considering she was accustomed to solely reigning as goddess of spring. Over the course of time, Persephone accepted and embraced her double life. The by-product of the arrangement of Persephone's time spent half and half in the underworld and Mount Olympus is the seasons we know and recognize now. Each spring, Persephone embarks on a journey back to Mount Olympus; in celebration of her daughter's arrival home Demeter allows all the flowers on earth to bloom and all the crops to provide bountiful supplies. Each fall, when Persephone returns to her husband Hades and the underworld, Demeter weeps and falls into a deep depression. During her mourning period, she allows all of the crops to die until spring, when the cycle begins again.



- Courtney Van Horn

Banshee

Late at night, one is awoken from his slumber by a wail echoing through the still air. He sits up in bed, frightened. He stands, and walks to look out the window. What he sees shocks and terrifies him. What could it possibly be? He looks upon a Banshee, letting out her cry. "What is this being that you speak of?", one might ask. The answer can be found in Celtic folklore.

The Banshee, whose name derives from the Gaelic "bean si", comes from a country which is rich with stories and myths of ghosts, fairies, leprechauns, and other strange creatures. The country I speak of is Ireland. This "female fairy" goes by quite a few other names. These include Banshi, Woman of Peace, the Angel of Death, Benshee, Lady of Death, the Nymph of the Air, the White Lady of Sorrow, or the Spirit of the Air. One can call it what one wants, but the Banshee is simply a disembodied spirit, or in other words, a ghost.

These spirits are still tied to earthly matters. They follow their old families, either with good or bad intent. They do not follow the families if they leave the country, though. AS long as the family does not leave, Banshees will follow them until each member of the family has died and been buried. Before death, they had strong ties with their family, hoping to look after them after death, or they had reason to hate their family in life. Due to this there are two types of Banshees: a friendly Banshee or a hateful one.

The howl of a friendly one is long and sorrowful. As a warning to her loved ones, it is filled with concern and love towards them. These cries are often heard at night and said to be near natural forms such as trees, rivers, and stones. In Waterford, Carlow, and Monaghan, there are even wedge shaped rocks known as "banshee's chairs" where Banshees are thought to sit. The Banshee's wail warns her family of the death of a loved one. When one is asked to picture a Banshee a common mental picture is that of a scary, horrible misty figure floating through the woods. Banshees, though, are rarely actually seen, but sometimes do show themselves. When the friendly Banshee does show herself she is described as a beautiful, young woman, with a pale face and either golden or black hair, who wears a white, long, flowing garment.

The hateful Banshee had reasons to hate her family in life. In death, she is a dreaded visitor to family members in which she holds anger or hate. The image of this Banshee is that more resembling one's common mental picture. When seen, she is described as being twisted and ugly with distorted features due to the hate she feels. Her howl is more of a blood-curdling scream instead of a mournful cry. The scream is that in spiteful celebration of the end of a family member's life instead of more than just a warning. A common sighting is that of her combing her long white hair. Because of this when a comb is found on the ground in Ireland no one will pick it up with the fear that the Banshee will come after them.

Other believed jobs for the Banshee were sin and consequences. If a person lived a life of decadence, selfishness, or committed cruel acts in life, then his soul would suffer in penance and remain close to the earth. On the other hand if a person led a life of good deeds and selflessness their soul would remain close to the earth, but in peace and contentment. It was the Banshee's job to make sure one of these two things happened.

Part of the tradition is that the Banshee can only let out her cry for five Gaelic families. These are the O'Gradys, the O'Briens, the O'Neills, the O'Connors, and the Kavanaghs. However, Intermarriage has lengthened that select list. It is said that in 1437 King James I of Scotland saw an Irish Banshee who told him that he would be murdered at the instigation of the Earl of Artholl. There are also records of Banshees attending the courts of local Irish kings and the great houses of Ireland.

It is unsure how the Banshee gets prophetic knowledge. One belief, which is not widely held, is that each family member has a silent attendant, or observer, that reports back to the Banshee. There was a time in Ireland that Banshees were held as a firm belief and to not believe was considered blasphemous. This belief is fading though with the passage of time due to the disappearance of quite a

few noble Irish names which have either died out or moved to other lands. The Banshee has since been considered a myth and superstition.

The myth is believed to have begun due to the Irish tradition of the lament. During a funeral women would sing a lament for the dead. This would carry through the air and serve as the first signal to some in the village that someone had passed away. These singers were known as “keeners” and they were in high demand. This was because in the past the deceased's respect and stature in the community was measured by the number of mourners at the funeral and how much they grieved. Professional women keeners were paid in drink to weep at the funerals of eminent figures of the community. These women were looked down upon by the church which may have given rise to the theory that Banshees are ghosts of former professional keeners who, because of their insincere grieving, are doomed to unrest.

Another version of the Irish Banshee can be found in Scotland. There she is named the Bean Nighe, or the Washer at the Ford. She can be found wandering by deserted streams. It is here where she washes the blood of the dead, or soon to be dead, out of her clothing. It is thought that Mnathan Nighe (plural for Bean Nighe) are women who died during childbirth and are now doomed to wash the blood of the dead from their clothing until the day their lives would have normally come to an end. This version of the Banshee is said to be ugly, with one nostril, a big protruding tooth, long hanging breasts, and webbed feet, who is dressed in green. A difference than that of the Irish Banshee is that Mnathan Nighe would grant wishes or questions if approach in the right way. What is the right way to approach her? Some sources say one would have to sneak up to her while she was washing and suck her breast, while claiming to be her foster child. Others say all one had to do was get between her and the water she was washing at. When this was completed one would be granted three wishes and three questions, but three questions would have to be given truthfully in return. This is the form of a traditional exchange between humans and supernatural creatures.



Over time the myth of this “female fairy” has become more elaborate and supernatural. This is seen with the different versions and descriptions of Banshees, all of which having their unique qualities, but an underlying similarity at the same time. I will not be surprised if this legend carries on for many more centuries, growing and changing as time passes.

Echo and Narcissus

Greek mythology is a group of stories about, gods, heroes, titans, nymphs, and humans. Plato, one of the many famous Greeks, recognized that these were all fictional, but most Greeks actually believed them to be true. In Greek mythology you can find many moral lessons and see how the western culture has taken some of it and spread it throughout our culture in art and literature. There are numerous creatures but none are as beautiful as the nymphs.

The word nymph is closely associated with the Greek word for bride. Nymphs are mystical spirits who appear in the form of beautiful women and are the protectors of nature. They are the trees and rivers all over. These beauties are mostly known for being lovers with the heroes and gods. When gods like Dionysus and Zeus were in trouble nymphs such as Echo and Thetis helped them. Echo was the most beloved nymph of them all and has quite an interesting story.

Echo was a dryad nymph and she was not only very beautiful but she has the most amazing voice. Other creatures of the forest flocked to hear her sing and tell stories for them. Echo had a great friendship with the beautiful goddess Aphrodite. The goddess would come from Olympus just to talk with Echo. They enjoyed talking

about gossip (what women don't?), and since Aphrodite was the goddess of love there was much to talk about. Echo never asked the goddess for any love favors because she was waiting for the perfect man. Aphrodite said she would give her one whenever she asked.

At that same moment, in the woods, there was the most beautiful boy in the entire world lost. His name was Narcissus, and he was searching for a way out. He was perfect in every physical way possible and had very little problems, but he had never been able to talk to a girl. His beauty was so stunning that women fainted before him before even muttering a word. This made Narcissus quite self centered and he held an extremely high opinion of himself. He believed that he will never be friends or lovers with anyone any less beautiful than himself. Although this led to loneliness he felt it was better than lowering his standards. He continued to wonder around the woods getting more lost with every step.

Back in the other part of the forest Echo said goodbye to Aphrodite and was headed back to her tree house. She stopped short when she saw Zeus talking to a river nymph as he leaned on his lightning bolt. Echo thought to herself how much Aphrodite will enjoy



hearing this. Just then she saw the queen of the gods Hera walking toward where Zeus was. Echo quickly went and greeted the queen. Hera said she was looking to surprise someone (Zeus). Echo said that Zeus had just come by looking for Hera and went back toward Olympus to find her. The goddess thanked Echo and left.

Zeus over heard the conversation and came out from the bush and thanked Echo. He gave her his huge sapphire ring. Hera realized Zeus was not at Olympus and returned to the forest hastily. She saw the ring on Echo's finger, recognized it was Zeus's, and became furious. She realized she had been deceived. She told Echo that because she had used her beautiful voice to lie, she would lose it and would only be able to speak the last words of others. Echo cried and fled to her home in the trees.

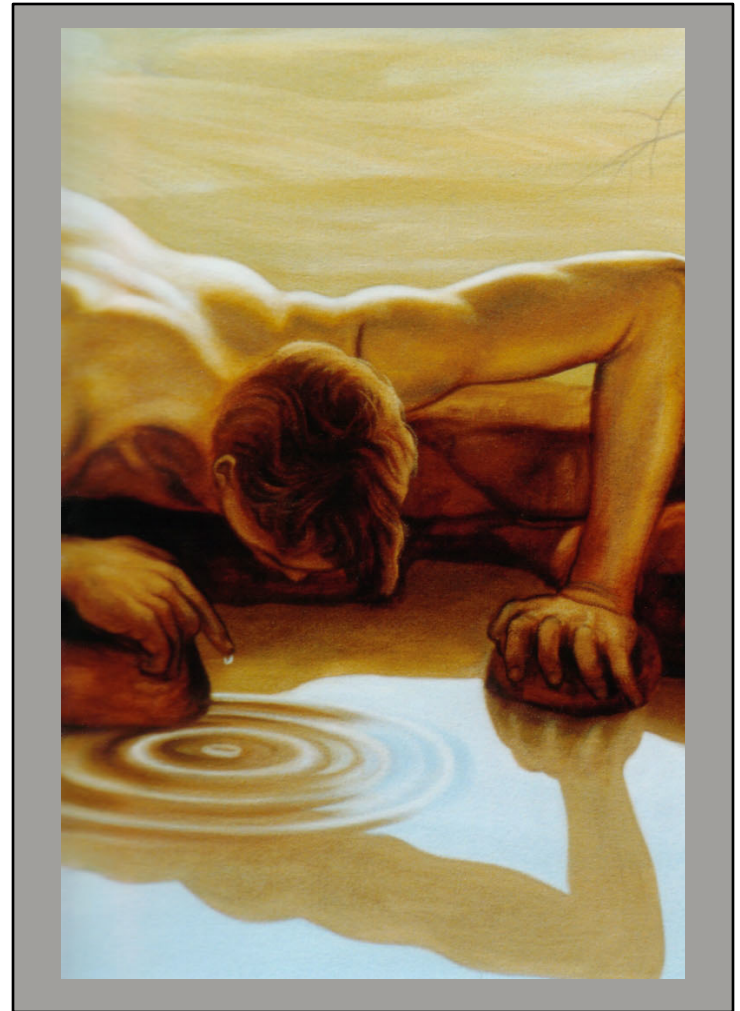
As she was running, she once again thought she saw the face of a god, but it was actually a boy her age with blonde hair and eyes as beautiful and bright as the sapphire ring from Zeus. It was the boy of her dreams the one boy she would love. It was Narcissus, who was still lost. He asked her for directions out of the woods but Echo could only say his last words. He asked several times only receiving his same last words back. Narcissus became very frustrated and started to walk away. Echo grabbed him and tried to kiss him, but he pushed her away. She tried again and he fled.

Echo was heart broken and full of sadness. She prayed to the goddess Aphrodite, since prayers don't have to be said aloud, asking for her one favor promised to her. She asked that she disappear so the pain of losing her true love would be gone. Aphrodite heard her prayer and granted it. All of Echo evaporated into the air except her voice. Aphrodite wouldn't let a voice that beautiful be lost.

The Aphrodite put vengeance upon Narcissus making it so that he would fall in love with someone who will never return love. All this time Narcissus had no idea any of this was going on. He was still searching for someone as beautiful as himself. He looked at a river and saw a face in it. He believed it was a water nymph. He called her lovely and Echo's voice answered the same. Narcissus believed that the water nymph would eventually come out. He fell in love and stayed there gazing into the stream for a long time until his legs became roots, his hair became leafy and his face became yellow and white flowers. He became the flower Narcissus which peers over the banks edge looking

at its reflection.

The words narcissistic and echo are derived from these stories. The moral of this story is that no one is perfect. No one person should ever think of themselves as more beautiful or more than any other person. Do not take for granted the gifts of your voice and speak the truth because if you speak a lie you never know how much trouble you will get yourself into.



Mark Holm

The True Tale of Dracula

"I am Dracula; and I bid you welcome, Mr. Harker, to my house."

This is a famous line from Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* where the Count introduces himself to Jonathan Harker. This novel is famous for introducing the Count and ever since he has become a popular figure among those who are fascinated with vampires. Dracula, however, was not a character that Stoker created completely on his own. There is a historical model behind the bloodthirsty vampire and that figure is Vlad the Impaler

Vlad the Impaler, or known at that time as Vlad Dracula, was a fifteenth century prince of Wallachia, a province of Romania bordered to the north by Transylvania and Moldavia. After his birth, Dracula's father, Vlad Dracul, was appointed by the Romanian emperor to be the military governor of Transylvania. He was also inducted into the secret society known as the Order of the Dragon. This was a religious organization whose goal was to protect Christianity and to fight against the Islamic Turks. However, Dracul betrayed the Order of the Dragon and formed an alliance with the Ottoman Turks. Dracul even gave to Sultan Murad II Dracula and his younger brother Radu as hostages to prove that he will not break their new alliance. Many believe that Dracula's brutal and merciless character was shaped during his years as a hostage. He suffered much because of the Turks. He was kept in an underground dungeon and was often whipped and punished for being stubborn and rude. This was also believed to be where Vlad started to have a fascination with the art of torture. Vlad witnessed the Turks torturing other prisoners many times. In 1447 Vlad Dracul was assassinated, which was orchestrated by John Hunyadi, a general of the Hungarian empire who devoted his life to fight against the Turks. He strongly disagreed with Dracul's alliance with the Sultan and believed that he had to be killed. Soon after, Dracula was also told that his older brother Mircea was tortured and killed by his political enemies at Târgoviște. These deaths filled Dracula with hatred and he vowed to avenge his family.

After the Sultan found out about Dracul's murder, he invaded Wallachia. During this time, the boyars (those with the highest rank in the Wallachia aristocracy, second

only to ruling princes) had taken over the kingdom. The Sultan defeated the boyars and put Dracula as a puppet ruler until Hunyadi invaded Wallachia and defeated the Turks. He then replaced Dracula with Vladislav II. This man was actually the one who killed Dracula's father. Dracula made an alliance with the Hungarian general in hopes that he could convince him that he was the rightful ruler. But Dracula grew impatient, and in 1456 he made his move and killed Vladislav. Not only he reclaimed his kingdom but he also avenged his father's death.

Dracula's thirst for blood grew and he believed that the boyars, who happened to participate in Dracul's assassination, had to be punished. So on Easter Sunday in 1459, he arrested all the boyar families who came to his feast. He impaled the old and the weak while the others were to build a fortress at a ruined outpost overlooking the Arges River. This fortress is known today as Castle Dracula. Many died during the process and all were treated brutally and without mercy. Dracula despised the weak and believed that he could make a kingdom where only the rich and powerful would live. This belief of his would soon cause more than 40,000 deaths to occur.

One of his first brutal massacres was with his own people. Dracula wanted to "cleanse" his kingdom by getting rid of all the lazy and unproductive people such as the handicap, the sick, and the poor. By doing this he will invite all these people to a banquet in the great hall in Tirgoviste. He declared that no one shall go hungry in his kingdom. After the feast, Dracula made his appearance and asked them if they would enjoy not having the pain of hunger again. They agreed and Dracula made their wish come true. He ordered his men to lock the doors and to set the whole room on fire, killing everyone in it. No one escaped from that massacre. Another event was at St. Bartholomew's Day, where he impaled 30,000 merchants for disobeying trade laws and he let the bodies rot around the city as a reminder of what will happen to those who oppose him.

Dracula was immensely fascinated with the art of torture. He had people decapitated, skinned alive, boiled, burnt, dismembered, eviscerated, or sometimes

have them physically disfigured for his own entertainment. He particularly enjoyed torturing and killing women and especially enjoyed mutilating their breast and sexual organs. One such example is when he had his mistress disemboweled publicly for having lied about being pregnant. There were even rumors that Dracula forced mothers to eat their babies. Though he used many methods of torture, his most famous method is impalement. He would have his male victims impaled through the anus and the female victims through the vagina. Then he would have them hoisted up, causing the victims own weight to drag them down through the stakes. This painful process would last many hours until they would finally die. Dracula enjoyed putting the stakes in a circular pattern around the city. There are rumors that Dracula ate the flesh and drank the blood of his enemies and had dinner parties surrounded by the impaled. He also lengthened the stakes depending on the social status of the victims. Although his methods were horrible, he managed to keep total order in his kingdom. No one dared to break any of the laws in his land because they fear that they will be punished or killed. Dracula proved this by placing an unguarded golden cup on display in the center of central square of Tirgoviste. The cup remained there every night.

Even the Sultan of the Ottoman Turks at that time was horrified by this. When Sultan Mehmed II invaded Wallachia due to Draculas' raid in his country before, he saw thousands of Turkish prisoners impaled. He was so horrified by this that he ordered his army to retreat. Eventually the Turks came back under the rule of Dracula's own brother Radu. They successfully conquered Wallachia, causing Dracula's wife to commit suicide in fear of being captured by the Turks and Dracula fleeing to Transylvania to seek help from King Matthias Corvinus. Later on they were able to reconquer Wallachia, whose ruler at that time was Prince Basarab the Old since Radu died of syphilis. Dracula's rule was never the same however. The boyars still remember his wicked ways and would not support him. Dracula learned that the Sultan was preparing his forces for another invasion and even though he did not have much support from his allies, Dracula was ready to defend the throne. However, Dracula actually ended up dying in battle during this invasion. No one is sure how Dracula died. There are rumors that Dracula was killed by his own men while others say that Dracula was decapitated and his head

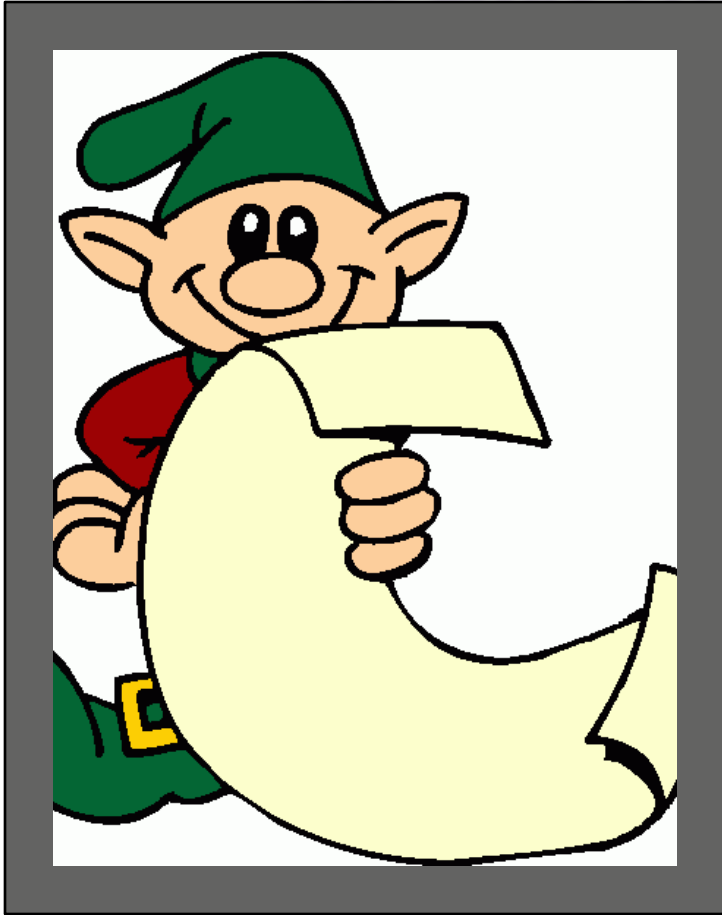


was taken to the Sultan to show the world that the Impaler is dead.

Thus Stoker was inspired to give his famous character the name of Dracula. The historic Dracula was a perfect model for Stoker's character. His many evil actions and the rumors about him make the historic Dracula a perfect vampire for Stoker to create in his novel.

-Aron Madrigal

Our Little Friends, the Elves



I say elf and you think what? The cookie making Keebler Elves? Santa's friendly little toy-makers? Maybe even Will Ferrell who was the Star of the movie "Elf". Whatever you may think of, the mythological creatures have been part of many different tales and folklore as well as being documented in classic works of literature and have a unique history behind them.

To give a bit of a foreground, there is a book of Old Norse mythology called The Norse Edda. Written in the thirteenth century, it gave the world the first "documentation" of Elves. In this mythology, elves were simply formed as maggots from the decaying body of the giant mythological God Ymir. They are said to be either light or dark elves that either lived in the sun or during the night. Light elves were described typically as light colored hair with bright clothing and night elves were dark in clothing and hair color. In Scandinavian myths, Elves were the guardians of a person's home and were actually referred to as House Gnomes. If you were "good" then the elves would treat

you well. Consequently if you misbehaved, the mischievous creatures would play tricks on you and your household. There was a way to appease the elves from playing their antics; a bowl of porridge on the front step of your home would spare you the night and from your sausage being stolen (which interestingly is said to be a favorite trick of elves).

Physically elves resemble humans very closely. Of course, they have the pointy ears and as many would assume, elves are short. In fact Elf is an Old English interpretation that means "midget". But the definition from the Norse Edda claims that elves can be anywhere from 4'8 to 5'8 in height. Using that definition, I could be an Elf myself (5'7½ and proud). Physically elves are said to be just as "strong" as humans and possibly even stronger. Age is said to not affect an elf the way it does a person. Apparently age makes the elf more "fair", to borrow the term and there is no decline in physical attributes. There are stories, from the Norse Edda, where the lives of elves fall between 100 years to over a thousand in a "regular" life times. The Norse Edda says that often times elves will die of a natural cause because they are said to be extremely quick healers and are able to overcome some serious injuries. Death is an interesting thing to elves because some elves are said to be willing to end their own lives when they feel their life goal has been accomplished. Also elves are not said to fear death, they have been thought to think of death as a "return to nature". The opposite would obviously be the birth of elves, it is said that elves are pregnant for a year because it is "magically taxing" on them. For the same reason, elves do not reproduce very often which guarantees there will never be overpopulation.

It is believed by few people that there is a society of elves living in mystic places on earth. According to these few, there was actually a war between the elves and humans based on different views of Mother Nature or "Gaia". Humans wanted to gain profit by logging and using resources in these magic places but the elves stopped us and have hidden themselves. Unusual? Yes. Appropriate for this article? Maybe, but the point being that there are several perspectives of elves, their lives, and their society in mythology and "modern" stories. As one goes through different countries and their old myths and stories, there are

stories that differ and sometimes even conflict with each other. Most of the “general knowledge” is universal between stories is the same through the world but specifics on certain things such as abode, lifestyle, and various other small aspects of elves are subject to the story and the writer.

Modern perception of elves can be seen in movies and even classic literature. In William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, The king of the elves, Oberon, and his wife Titania are among the most important characters in the play. Going back to the Scandinavian perspective, the perception of “Christmas Elves” can be explained. Writers such as Viktor Rydberg had popularized such elves in stories about what some think about during Christmas; little smiling elves make toys. On a side note, there are people who believe Santa, Mrs Claus, and the elves live somewhere in Lapland, Finland and that there is a secret passage that leads to a village where they all live. A more recent showing of elves, in movie form, is in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Elves are not among the main characters but are part of the movies. For a more childish and humorous look at Elves, the movie *Elf* directed by Jon Favreau. The movie is a comedy based on the stories of Santa’s elves. Disney is actually in the process of making a movie, “The King of Elves” that is set to debut in theatres during the 2012 Christmas season. There will be a trailer coming out for the movie soon, but this is another example of elves finding a way into the arts, which in this case is a movie Elves may not seem to be the most well-known mythological creatures but are certainly ones that have left a mark on today’s mythology.

Because Christmas elves are almost common knowledge to Americans, the British, and even Scandinavia; it would be wise to look a little deeper into the history of how they came about. Besides the information given earlier, there are little parts that we do not usually hear in the story. A common vision of such elves would be a factory-like environment with hundreds of elves. But most of the original stories reveal that Santa only “employs” up to thirteen elves at the maximum. Each elf in charge of one task alone whether it be the Naughty and Nice list, maintenance of the sleigh, or toy making. In European countries it is sometimes believed that the elves will make appearances leading up to Christmas and are quite mischievous. Some blame nightmares on the Elf

“Albtraum” taking a seat on the persons head resulting in a bad dream. There are several stories around elves and the Christmas season but they are simply entertainment to children who are always told to not be naughty in fear of getting coal for Christmas.

Besides elves there are many other types of creatures that people seem to think are connected or related to the “species”. Such may include gnomes, dwarfs, or even leprechauns. Scandinavia had called them gnomes for a while but soon were placed in their own category. In some cases people will lump them all together and assume they are basically the same. Although all are relatively short and appear throughout the same mythological stories, there is nothing that actually connects elves and any other “small” creature in the Norse Edda. There have been some stories that say elves and dwarves may have cooperated to construct Thor’s hammer, but besides that story there really is no other connection between any of the other mythological creatures.

The history of elves is not as widespread as the more well-known creatures of myth but still can be an interesting topic to look at. Elves are not on the same level of interest as other mythological creatures today (vampires) but have actually been fairly well kept in even American stories and fairy tales. As a matter of fact, if not for the forms of literature and movies there may not have been much of elves in society. In a way they are being kept “relevant” in some of our stories. These creatures definitely have a “stereotype” about them but are clearly much more than toymakers when consulting the actual mythology of elves. Whether or not you still think of cookie making elves in a forest next time you hear elf, at least now you know a little more about them.

-Nathan Ortiz

The Story of Paul Bunyan

A man who is of an unnatural size and walks around with an equally giant ox doesn't seem to be such a good person to be around. To some a man like this would be intimidating and avoided at all cost. However, this man is actually a very nice and generous person who goes by the name Paul Bunyan. Paul Bunyan is an American tale that many Americans have heard the story about him and his giant blue ox named Babe. Many depict this man as a giant lumberjack who has unusual skill. Although this story is common amongst the culture of America the origin and history behind the story is unknown to most people. The when, where, and why, questions behind the story are not commonly asked yet there is an answer to each one of these questions.

The story of Paul Bunyan seems to have been around for many generations yet no one really knows the true origin. Some would said that his story was brought about by some loggers and lumberjacks just sitting by a fire, that it doesn't really have a significance behind it all besides the fact that is a fun little folklore told verbally from person to person. Although the story first appeared in print in 1906 the story telling verbally started long before. His story has been printed many different times throughout the years. Each time they are written with a small alteration or a completely different plot line. Depending on who is telling the story will be the reason behind which one of his stories one would hear. Now, the tale that was first told about him was the one about his birth. He was born and delivered to his parents by three storks and he was as big as his father at only a couple weeks old and continued to grow into the giant known today with each day that he lived.

Where this story of such a giant man with his giant blue ox originated is something that no one is really sure of. Although it is known to be a story created on the North American continent, some say it was created in the hills of Minnesota. Others say that it originated somewhere in the French part of Canada. Many of the states in the United States of America try to claim the story of Paul Bunyan as their own. It seems that they all want to be the ones responsible for creating such a story of a wonderful heroic legend in the American culture. Regardless of the place in which this story is said to come from it can be agreed that it has made an impact on the culture and the sense of being an American, because

living on the North American continent is something that comes along with knowing Paul Bunyan's story. Although it is a very popular story there, it is not so common in other parts of the world.

The story itself although many may have heard it not all are very sure exactly what his story is. Paul was a giant man who one winter was walking out in the Winter of the Blue Snow. While he was out in the snow, he stumbled upon the ox and decided to bring him home. As Paul tries to warm up the little ox he realizes that the ox is staying blue, hence how he came up with the name Babe the Blue Ox. Since Paul himself was of such a giant stature, the ox seemed to adapt to him and also grow to such a giant state. Although Paul and Babe were both of such great stature, they were both very generous in their life. Both very friendly and always looking to help out the community in which they resided. Paul used Babe to pull the cart that covered the road with ice. One day though the cart sprang a leak and the ox along with Paul



created what is now known as the Mississippi River. It is this part of Paul Bunyan's story that explains why the story itself is fictional and that the man and the ox were never based off of living or dead men that once made an impact in the world.

Some people would like to think that all folklores should have a specific meaning behind why the story came about. For the story of Paul Bunyan the reason behind its creation is one that is unclear to most people. His name is said to come from the French Canadian word "Bonyenne" which means my goodness, or good grief. And some would like to think that he was created during a time of revolt for the French Canadian heritage. No one is really sure as to how these stories all developed as a whole. The main character of Paul Bunyan and the sidekick of a giant blue ox is something that may remain a mystery for many people but it is something that does not really need an explanation because regardless of how the story had started he became a symbol and a hero in the American culture, and heritage.

Paul Bunyan was original just a story passed down verbally from generation to generation but now has developed into a well-known story by many. How did this story become so popular is something some may ask themselves. There are a few different reasons as to why this story has become so famous. A journalist during the early eighteenth century created the start of the development of this story. The writer by the name of James MacGillvray was the first to publish a story behind the legend of Paul Bunyan and from this point on there had been many more publications on the story of this young man. MacGillvray wrote two different stories of Paul Bunyan, one building off the other in such a way that helped develop the story more. Although he put a lot of work into making this verbal story one that would be published for years to come, he was not as successful with the idea of the story resulting in the slow fading of the story itself.

As many people know the story was not one that faded completely. After the publications done by MacGillvray the story did fade for a little amount of time and then it was rejuvenated a few years after the last publication. The Red River Lumber Company would be the ones to thank for the revitalization of the story of Paul Bunyan.

They took a different approach to the story telling Paul Bunyan and created an illustration of the man himself along with his giant blue oxen. It was not until this lumber company came around that a shared image of the legend had been created. The Red River Lumber Company used Paul Bunyan as a friendly face for their business. Therefore this image of Paul Bunyan was one that was used as an advertising technique. They hoped that if society saw a familiar face of a legend they would be more likely to purchase the lumber from such a company. Thanks to this company a man named William B. Laughead, brought about the stories of Paul Bunyan in an advertisement pamphlet for the Red River Lumber Company. Therefore the story of Paul Bunyan had been saved even if it meant that he was used strictly as an advertisement technique. Paul Bunyan received his fame all thanks to this company and his story is now one of the best-known stories across the American nation.

Although no one really knows where Paul Bunyan truly originated from, his popularity can all be credited to a small group of people. Without the writings of Laughead and MacGillvray and the illustrations brought about by the Red River Lumber Company the story of the giant man and his giant ox would have faded and been a story of the past. Paul Bunyan is now a giant part of the American culture, if one has not heard his story they are someone that has not been around true American families. He will always be looked at as a hero in the eyes of many Americans even though he is clearly a fictional character made up one night and passed down through the generations to coincide with the actions that take place in today's time.

-Emma Bennett

The Legend of La Llorona

Legends are a very important part in the history and culture of Mexico. Their legends are combined of real happening situations and fantasy. Many of the Mexican legends are several decades old. One of those many legends that is still present and is mostly known and told amongst the Mexican families is the legend of La Llorona. The legend of La Llorona is frequently told to small children to scare them, it is similar to the bogymen except La Llorona is a woman. It is almost impossible that a Mexican child has not been told La Llorona legend by their parents or a family member.

The legend of *La Llorona* came about during the Aztec times, but the more modern upgraded version of these particular legend takes place in a small village in the outskirts of Mexico City. Though there are several versions of La Llorona it vary from source to source, the one portion of the legend that all the versions have in common is that she is the spirit of a condemned mother who drowned her children and now spends eternity searching for them in rivers, lakes and even canals.

La Llorona was a young woman named Maria. She was born to a peasant family in a poor village. Maria was a beautiful looking girl and because she was beautiful she believed she was better than everyone in her town. As Maria grew older she became even more attractive with her magnificent physical looks and her pride increased. Her beauty captured the attention of both the rich and the poor men of the area. However, because Maria thought she was better than everyone else in her village she did not pay attention to any of the men in her town. Maria said that the day she got marry it would be with the best looking man in the entire world. She was said to have spent most of the days in her modest surroundings of her village, but in the evenings, she would put her best white gown and walk around outside of her village and to other wealthier villages to impress a particular man she had laid eye on. This particular young man was very handsome and the son of the wealthiest ranchero (farmland owner) in the town near Maria's village. Maria had determined that this man was the one that she wanted as her husband. Eventually Maria got what she wanted and married the

wealthy man who lavished her with gifts and attention. However, he got bored of her and his two sons the couple had. He began to change, returning to a life of womanizing, alcohol, and often leaving her for months at a time. He seemed no longer to care for the beautiful Maria. He even talked about leaving Maria to marry a woman of his own wealthy class. When he did return home, it was only to visit his children and the devastated Maria began to feel resentment toward her two sons. Maria decided that it was enough of this man betraying her and dishonoring her. One evening, as Maria was strolling with her two children on a pathway near the river, her husband came by in a carriage with an elegant lady beside him. He stopped and spoke to his children, but ignored Maria. Then drove the carriage down the road without looking back. After seeing this Maria went into a terrible stage of anger, and turning against her children, she seized them and threw them into the river. As they disappeared downstream, she realized what she had done and ran down the riverbanks to save them, but it was too late. Maria broke down into inconsolable grief, running down the streets screaming and wailing.

The beautiful Maria weeps them day and night. During this time, she would not eat and all she ever does was to walk along the river in her white gown searching for her boys hoping they would come back to her. She cried endlessly as she walked the riverbanks and her gown became filthy and torn. When she continued to refuse to eat, she grew thinner and appeared taller until she looked like a walking skeleton. She finally died on the banks of the river.

Not long after her death, her restless spirit began to appear, walking the banks of El Rio Grande when darkness fell. Her weeping and wailing became a curse of the night and people began to be afraid to go out after dark. She was said to have been seen drifting between the trees along the shoreline or floating on the current with her long white gown spread out upon the waters. On many dark nights people would see her walking along the riverbank and crying "Mis hijos, Mis hijos" meaning "my children, my children". And so, they no longer spoke of her as Maria, but rather as, *La Llorona*, the weeping woman. Children are warned not to go out in the dark or, *La Llorona* might



snatch them, throwing them to their deaths in the flowing waters

Though the legends vary, the apparition is said to act without hesitation or mercy. The tales of her cruelty depends on the version of the legend you hear. Some say that she kills indiscriminately, taking men, women, and children whoever is foolish enough to get close enough to her. Others say that she is very barbaric and kills only children, dragging them screaming to a watery grave.

Even though, this is a legend their of stories of people who have swear to have seen La Llorona. There are a lot of stories that vary in different place but near the rivers, lake or canals. The story of this young boy in Santa Fe, New Mexico whom as a boy says to have seen La Llorona. He and his family saw her on a creek between Mora and Guadalupita, New Mexico. As the family was sitting outside talking, they saw a tall, thin woman walking along the creek. She then seemed to float over the water, started up the hill, and vanished. However, just moments later she reappeared much closer to them and then disappeared again. The family looked for footprints and finding none, had no doubt that the woman they had seen was *La Llorona*. Others stories say that La Llorona has taken children and men with her. Some people say that is you have an encounter with Llorona you are very lucky if you live to tell the story, but she will be hunting you for the rest of your life.

At the age of nine I was for the first time told the legend of La Llorona. At first I thought that my grandmother was telling my sister and I this story to scare us of going to river at night. So my sister and I decided to go out to the river bank proof to our grandmother that La Llorona was just a myth and a lie. As the night descended my sister and I prepare ourselves to go out next to the river. Once there we heard a very loud and irritating voice coming from a woman. As soon as we heard this we remember La Llorona story and so we ran back to our grandmother's house. Ever since that day we never ever have gone out during the night to play.

It is up to you if you believe this legend or not, but the only thing that you should be aware of is that she is out there and is encounter by people in the night and near the rivers waiting for the next person to kill. Never walk alone in the dark always have a friend.

The Myth of the Soulmate and the Origin of Human Love

In the face of death, humans are met with a tremendous amount of pain and longing. From this pain stems three great desires in which to cull this great suffering. The first is a desire to transcend our conscious self and reunite with the gods. The second desire is to exist and share among brothers and sisters. The third is the desire to unite with another human being in a love relationship. Through this last desire is the longing to leave behind the limitations of pride and the physical body and therefore transcending death itself.

Aristophanes gives the origins of human love and the nature of soul mates in Plato's *Symposium*. He says that this yearning for love arose from an act of divine punishment for human's arrogance. It is from this story that we get the term soul mates today.

He first begins with the mystery of Love and man's incapability to understand its power that could heal the illnesses that impede man's happiness. He then tells the story of human's nature before our separation, where we were not single beings but two with a single soul.

In the beginning, there existed three separate parents: the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth. The Sun, full of strength and representing power and light, created man. From the beauty, life, and compassion of the Earth, woman was created. And from the Moon, the planet between Earth and Sun, came the andrgyne, or those who were both male and female.

Each of these creations were a double, with two pairs of arms and legs, two sets of genitalia, and two faces set in opposite directions upon a single head. Because they were the pairs of the Sun, Earth, and Moon offspring, they consisted of three pairs; man-

-man, woman-woman, and man-woman. These humans were far more powerful than humans today. They could walk upright as humans do now, backwards and forwards on each of their limbs, or roll over their four hands and four feet like a tumbling gymnast. It is said that this was the form they used to move great speeds upon the earth giving them more freedom over the land than any human today has even known.

The creations were strong in heart and will, and thinking themselves more powerful than the gods, they decided to scale Mr. Olympus and strike at Zeus and his Olympians.

Doubt reigned among the gods with what they should do with these foolish creatures. Should they destroy the race with a swarm of thunderbolts as they did the giants? If they destroyed these defiant creatures, they would be without the sacrifices and worship that the humans offered them. The gods, however, could not let this defiance go on unpunished.

After a great deal of reflection, Zeus came up with a plan to subdue the arrogant humans. He decided that if the humans were split

in half, their strength would be diminished and their population would be increased which would further profit the gods. They would walk on two legs and only be half as fast and half as strong. And if they should continue to be defiant and arrogant, Zeus would merely separate them again until they would only have one of each limb.

The king of the gods cut each human in two and called upon Apollo to help repair the now deformed creatures. He first turned the neck and the head forward so that the humans could look upon the spilt section of themselves and remember their punishment for their



arrogance. Then, he pulled the skin taut around the stomach leaving a small opening- the naval- as a tribute to their previous state. Apollo then smoothed over the skin breast and the stomach taking out the wrinkles in the skin as one smooths out cloth over a table.

The newly formed humans frantically scattered around desperately looking for their other halves. When they finally came into contact with them, they threw their arms around them, embracing and hopelessly yearning to join together again. Unable to, they began to die of hunger and sorrow for they couldn't bear to do anything without their other half. When one of the halves died, the survivor would find another partner to cling to until they ultimately met the same fate. And so the new race of humans began to destroy themselves through despair and self-neglect.

Zeus, full of compassion and pity for the creatures, decided to create a new means in which the halves could join together temporarily. Before, the humans procreated by dropping seed on the ground. He instructed Apollo to turn the human genitalia inwards towards the belly so that the new race might continue to reproduce, and created a way that the two halves could join together as one, if only for a short time.

The creatures that had been sections of the double women before naturally sought out women as their companions as did the creatures that were born as double men seek men. Those born from the sections of the humans with both a man and woman sought out the opposite gender as their mate.

So strong is this bond between the two halves that it is said that once we reunite without our double, this connection is said to alleviate the affliction of man. This experience is what Aristophanes describes as complete unconditional love and intimacy with their partner and they will not bear to be out of each other's sight. He continues on to say that it is not merely from sexual desire and fulfillment that one gets from his or her partner, but the need to reunite with the other half of the soul they had lost.

It should be known, however, that this condition of love is almost completely mysterious to each of the partners. The feeling is one of longing towards the individual, an unmistakable connection to the other that one has completely no control over. Aristophanes gives an example using the god Hephaestus who comes along two lovers lying together and asks what each want from the

other. Yet, even with their abounding love, they were not able to answer. Sensing their confusion, he suggests that he would use his tools to melt and fuse the two together so they would share one body. They would be wholly one; all day and night always in each other's company. And in death, they would leave this world as one soul instead of two. Aristophanes says that no one who has found his or her true soul mate would refuse this offer; it is the expression of the ancient need to be one's other half. This need comes from a human's original nature of being whole and the pursuit to be complete is called love.

Aristophanes' story ends with a dark warning. Make love the leader and commander of all things in life and practice obedience with the gods at all times. For if we choose to be defiant, Zeus may decide again to split us and we will be cursed forever to search again for our soul mates.

-Amelia Ram

The Legend of a Human Monster

There is a reason why there is only one thing that comes to mind when a long and lonely howl is heard echoing through the moonlit sky in the middle of the night. Hearts race and imaginations run wild with fear as the oldest and most legendary monster comes to mind: the werewolf. Tales of these creatures have been told throughout history, from the ancient times to the present. Both befriended and feared, the stories of these monsters have played a great role in many cultures over time; including modern culture. Popular beliefs, myths, and legends of the werewolf can help to better understand why this powerful being has become a part of our culture and history as humans.

To begin with, most people agree that the history of the werewolf can be traced back to Greek mythology and literature. Publius Ovidius Naso, a Roman poet known as Ovid, wrote about King Lycaon in his poem *Metamorphoses*. King Lycaon wanted to test the mighty Zeus' divinity, so he served him a dinner which contained a plate of hidden human flesh. When Zeus discovered the poisoned plate, he was so angered that he turned King Lycaon into a wolf so that he may feast on human flesh without it being such an atrocious act. Therefore, the name "lycanthrope" is derived from King Lycaon, who is the first human to have been recorded turning into a wolf.

Although this is the oldest instance involving man and wolf, there are some cultures who have their own mythology and therefore have their own birth and origin of the werewolf. One such story comes from Native American mythology near Wisconsin. Wisakachek was a shapeshifter who had the ability to turn into a wolf, and one day he was roaming around in his human form when he ran into Keme and Matchitehew of the Fox tribe who had just hunted a deer. Wisakachek told them he was lost and hungry man from another tribe, and the boys offered him some freshly caught deer before taking it back to the village. Soon after, Wisakachek was in the same are when again he ran into the same two boys hunting. This time, however, the boys explained to him that they had not caught anything since the last deer that they had shared with him. The boys had been so kind to Wisakachek

last time, that although he had no food to give them, he offered to share his shapeshifting powers with the boys so that they may hunt more and easier. After having been skeptical, Wisakachek proved to the two boys that he really had something to offer them by turning into a wolf in front of their eyes. The two boys eagerly and excitedly accepted Wisakachek's gift under the condition that they must use their new powers for hunting and not for harming humans. The boys were then able to catch almost enough deer for the entire village in months! However, one day Matchitehew grew very angry at another boy in the village, and out of anger he turned into a wolf and killed the boy. The village banished them into the woods, now in fear of their unique powers. When Wisakachek found out about the incident, he was very angry. He changed Matchitehew's powers so that he was no longer able to have control of his transformation. He would therefore live as an ordinary human by day, and turn into a violent wolf creature every night. Keme was not punished because he had not done anything, but he feared Matchitehew's random transformations so he wandered out into the woods alone. Matchitehew is considered the Father of Werewolves because he was the first one, who produced more. Many stories of large human-like wolves hunting in the woods came to the Native American tribes thereafter, including horror stories of the bloody destruction of the animals of the tribes.

These are only two stories discussing the origin of the legendary werewolf. From stories like these branched out more stories and tales of their existence. However, the myths did not only come about in the form of stories, but in bits and pieces of "fact" that can be observed as signs of werewolf activity. Many different ways began to be recognized and known for becoming a werewolf. A common way of transforming into a werewolf seen in many stories is wearing a belt made of wolf skin. This was usually seen as a voluntary transformation. In some myths it is also told that a person could turn into a werewolf by rolling around in the mud and letting their face be covered in moonlight for a certain amount of time. One could also take many mixtures and potions to become a werewolf, as well as casting spells and curses. Another more modern belief is transformation by moonlight or by gazing at the

full moon. It is easy to see why all these methods were easily associated with dark magic and evil. It was a firm belief that werewolves had made a pact with the devil for their special potions and abilities to transform. They were believed to have this desire of transformation in order to indulge in violent and cruel acts, such as murder and cannibalism. A distinction was made between voluntary and involuntary werewolves; involuntary werewolves existed by birth or by being victims or slaves of a witch, while voluntary werewolves were those who had made a pact with the devil or the witches themselves. This association with witches allowed for the “werewolf trials” along with the witch trials of Europe.

Mostly in the 16th century, many cases such as the case of Peter Stumpp began to arise. Peter Stumpp was a man who was accused of black magic. When he was being prepared for torture, but before torture actually began, he confessed to his use of black magic as well as several other crimes. He said that the devil had given him a girdle that allowed him to transform into a monstrous werewolf. In this form he murdered and devoured animals, as well as several men, woman, and children. One of his victims included his own son, who was murdered and whose brains were devoured. Stumpp was also guilty of having incestuous relationships with his own daughter. Stump was executed in a gruesome way in order to give an example to the public. His skin was burnt and torn on the wheel, his limbs were shattered so he could not come back from the grave, and he was finally beheaded and burnt on a pyre to end his life. His mistress and daughter were also tortured and burnt at the stake with Stumpps body because they had known of his evil deeds. Stumpps severed head was displayed at the top of a flag with a wolf on it to demonstrate the consequences of such actions.

Another similar case was that of Gilles Garnier, known as the Werewolf of Dole. Garnier was just recently married after having lived alone for many years. He found it very difficult to provide for two people rather than only providing for one person. Soon there were many reports of children going missing or found dead, until one day there was a sighting. A group of working men said they had seen a wolf like creature that resembled Garnier holding a dead child while walking back to their neighborhood. Soon after Garnier was arrested, he confessed that a ghost had appeared to him and given him an ointment that would

allow him to transform into a werewolf and hunt for food. He confessed to having killed the children and eaten flesh from their thighs and bellies and taking limbs for later meals to satisfy his appetite. Garnier was sentenced to death by burning at the stake.

It seemed that the hunt for werewolves trapped many violent serial killers such as Stumpps and Garnier, however the fear that these cases brought to Europe had severe consequences. Just like the witch trials, many were accused and put trial for almost no apparent reason other than having to blame someone for dead livestock. About 30,000 werewolf trials took place in France alone in the 16th century, where most of the accused was severely tortured and killed as a sentence.

The existence of werewolves was obviously taken very seriously in our history as humans, and the legend certainly lives on in our modern life today. Being more accustomed to the concept of “evil” in our present day allows us to watch films about demons, devils, spirits, and monsters without being accused of worshipping the devil. As the boundaries of the media grow and the interests of the masses change, so does the image of the werewolf.

For example, something that is commonly depicted in modern media is the tension and hatred between werewolves and vampires. The argument that they are sworn enemies is often backed by the Trajanic wars. These are wars between the Roman and Dacian civilizations in ancient times. This is a true event in history, however, most people loosely tie a story of vampires and the betrayal of their servant werewolves to Rome in the plot of the war. There is not much evidence, other than this example, of a feud between the two creatures. In legend, they are actually seen to have a significant amount of similarities. Both monsters transform and take humans for prey. In some cultures, werewolves are known to become vampires after their deaths because of the evil they had committed in their lives.

All of this shows how much our modern world has embraced and built the legends of the werewolf. Although there is a huge difference in believing in their existence and accepting them as a myth, it seems that they are receiving just as much attention in the media today. From cartoons, to the Underworld films, to the premiere of Breaking Dawn of the Twilight saga this Friday, werewolves have become a comfortable topic in our homes. And still, the legend will live on and continue to transform. Who knows? Maybe sometime soon those teenage vampire clicks will blossom into something more, and the werewolves will have no choice but to retaliate. We might even have some werewolf trials of our own...

Second Generation Wonderland

My favorite part about bedtime when I was a child was the stories my mother would tell me. She told me tales of a little girl named Alice who journeyed through a mystical place called Wonderland, where nothing made sense.

Her tale goes that, years ago, under the rule of the Red Queen, a young girl named Alice fell through a hole in the ground while chasing a white rabbit with a pocket watch. After falling and falling for what seemed like forever, she landed in a place she named Wonderland. Unfamiliar with the world and its customs, she went around making a fool of herself while meeting people such as the Mad Hatter, the Caterpillar, Cheshire Cat, and the pompous Red Queen of Hearts. Despite her many faux pas, her humiliating the Red Queen put her in good standing with the occupants of Wonderland. She was held in even higher regard when the sacred calendar revealed her to be the one that would end the Red Queen's reign (which had become far more violent since her embarrassment at Alice's hands).

After months of searching, the same habitually late white rabbit that brought her to Wonderland in the first place, found an older, but no more mature, Alice Liddell. Though some had their doubts about whether or not she was the "right" Alice, the White Queen's champion rose to the challenge when the Frabjous Day arrived and slew the Jabberwocky (the Red Queen's champion, of course) with the legendary Vorpal Blade. Following the battle and formal banishment of Iracebeth of Crims -- formerly the Red Queen -- by the White Queen, Mirana, Alice chose to leave, and though she promised to never again forget Wonderland, she would never return.

When I finally found wonderland (I had been searching since my mother first told me its story), it was far from what I expected. The last tale my mother had told me ended with Alice's departure and the White Queen's joyous reign. What I met when I crawled through the small door -- after shrinking with the help of some pishsalver left in a bottle labeled 'drink me' -- was appalling. The colorful flowers and nonsensical animals I should have seen in the garden were replaced with the wastelands of a war.

It wasn't just the roses that were painted red this time, but the entire garden, dripping in the still-wet shade of crimson. The sky was so dark it was hard to see through

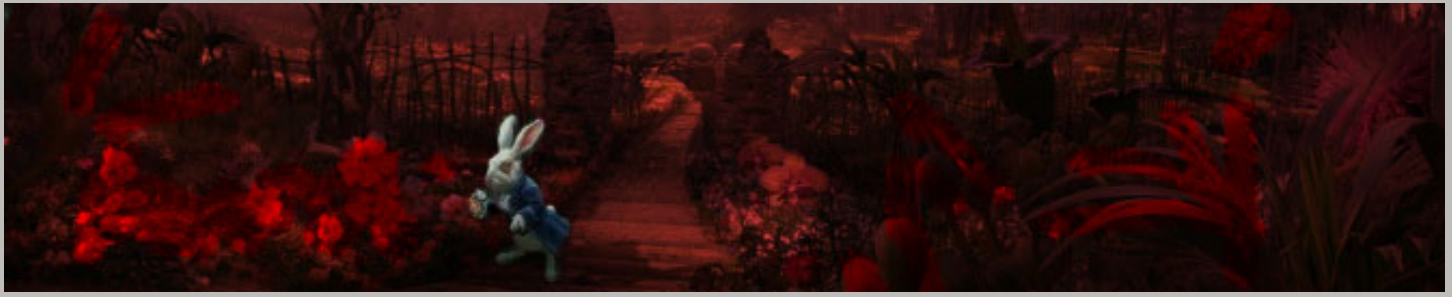
the bleak foliage, and the smell of whatever it was that was assaulting my nose was making me dizzy. I stumbled through the overgrown plant life, thorns and sharp twigs poking and scraping my arms, legs, and stomach, tearing my shirt and poking holes in my pants. With no white rabbit to follow, I fought my way to the edge of the garden, where even more horrors awaited.

Wonderland was supposed to be a vast land of color, confusion, and captivation. Instead, I found nothing but chaos. This was not the Wonderland my mother had told me about, not even close. This was a post-apocalyptic land of gruesome terror, where the sun itself was red and dripping, as though its own head had been taken. Years of searching for the fabled Wonderland that I had made my heaven in childhood, and this is what I see.

Even as little as I was, I could see for miles in every direction, though it wasn't much of a view. Every plant had its color bled dry from its dying, withered form; I could hear the pained wails and sorrowful cries of the living flowers I had apparently overlooked or entirely missed in the garden behind me. The only visible thing with any apparent sign of life was a large, sinister looking castle in the distance. It towered over everything else in sight, even the trees. It was astonishing, how large it was with its darker than black walls and deep red trim; the structure was jagged looking, sharp and dangerous, with a huge red heart atop the whole structure, looking intimidating and forlorn rather than inviting, as most hearts would be. Since there was no way I could climb back up the way I came, I just continued on toward that dangerous palace, despite its silent screams to turn back.

Beneath the soles of my shoes, burnt brush snapped and crunched, echoing slightly before the sound was muted by the evil in the air. I was still so small, and desperately needed to find some upelkuchen cake in order to return to my normal size. At least, that was the idea. I knew from the stories Mom told me that so much as a bite of upelkuchen cake could cause one to become a giant -- you had to be very careful about how much you took.

"You're much too small to be wandering around



these fields."

The voice was booming, the sound so much louder due to my small stature. Looking up, I saw a tall (not that *everything* wasn't currently tall to me) man with a large, unique top hat. His clothing was frayed and dirty, but relatively stylish. Without waiting for my answer, the pale male reached down and picked me up, holding me carefully in his hand.

"My father told me of a girl he used to know, who would wander around much too big or small at any given time. Do you know her?"

"Alice," I affirmed, shaking my hand. "I know *of* her, but I do not know her personally. My mother told me stories of her, too. Who is your father?"

"Tarrant Hightopp, of course."

Tarrant was the Mad Hatter of Wonderland, and the hat on this man's head was the exact one from mother's stories, leaving no doubt to the man's answer. As much as the hatter loved his top hat, I knew he would never let anyone else wear it.

"I'm Tazzel Hightopp. Who might you be?"

A man born to Tarrant should not have behaved in the way this man did. He was so calm and collected, with a sane outlook and he minded his manners. How could he have been the son of a man as bonkers as Tarrant? Still, I had no reason to be threatened by him, and answered honestly.

"My name is Alexander, but you can call me Alex, if you'd prefer. I come from the same place – the same world – as Alice. Though, I expected this place to be much more..."

"Lively? Colorful? *Fun*?" He had a sarcastic sort of humor in his tone, as though laughing about some sadistic joke I wasn't aware of. "You're thinking of how Wonderland was *before* the Prince took over."

"Prince?"

"Ah. You don't know, do you? Well, allow me to

inform you." He sat down on a rotting stump, the detached tree rotting beside it, and held his hands palm-up so I could sit comfortably for the wicked story. "For years after Mirana – That's the White Queen, if you didn't know – banished that awful woman of hearts, life in Wonderland was magnificent. All was fair and as it should be, everyone able to indulge in whatever buffoonery they so pleased without worry of decapitation. But years later, these painted hearts began to pop up around the castle, which of course, everyone took as a threat to the crown. No one ever saw who did it, but they became more and more of a frequent 'decoration' on the Queen's grounds.

"We all knew something major was going to happen, as not even the looniest loon in Wonderland would dare play such a prank involving the former Red Queen. Unfortunately, our fears were realized when the rebellion began. Thousands of Heart-guards came storming into Mirana's castle, killing her pawns and taking her crown. They took her, and many others such as Cheshire Cat and my father – anyone who had aided Alice on the Frabjous Day – to the former castle of the Red Queen, which had been long abandoned until that day. Everyone expected it to be Iracebeth, but it was a young man that sat in the throne, stolen crown atop his head. He was the Prince of Hearts, Iracebeth's son. Apparently, she had raised him to believe Mirana had stolen the Queenship, turned him bitter with the idea that he was the rightful ruler of Wonderland. She manipulated him from birth, created an absolute monster.

"There was nothing anyone could do. He set fire to fields, ruined gardens, painted everything red. Since the crown was placed upon his head, the skies have been a dark red and the air stinks of the blood from his moat. No one can be so much as silly. Even my father seems to have lost his rather charming

madness. I can't be sure, as I only get to read the letters the Prince is so *gracious* enough to let him send me. I can't even write back. This place has been a disaster since he took over. I would have preferred his mother."

For a moment, I was speechless, appalled by the story and angered by the timing. It may have seemed selfish, since people were obviously suffering, but I wanted to see the beautiful Wonderland from my bedtime stories, not this desolate wasteland brought on by some jaded prince.

Shaking my head, I rose to my feet and cast my eyes back up at the second-generation Hightopp. His eyes were the same green as my mother had described in Hatter, but they lacked the insanity.

"I want to meet this Prince. If you don't want to take me, I'll happily go by myself, if you could provide a little upelkuchen cake." I couldn't very well go confront this man while being only three inches tall.

"Upelkuchen cake, I have. Though, I suggest eating it after sneaking past the guards. I'm sure Cheshire's litter can help you with that."

From his breast pocket, the pale-faced hat maker pinched off a crumb of the grow cake, which seemed like an entire slice to me. Before I could even finish putting the piece in my pocket, there was a poof of purple, blue, and grey smoke. Forming from the colored cloud were three felines, floating about with grins on their faces. It didn't take a genius to tell whose offspring they were.

"Someone called?" the purple one asked, confirming his status as the leader of the trio. After a brief explanation of my situation, he nodded and picked me up with his paw, poofing away from the others. Next thing I know, my view of Tazzel waving good-bye was replaced by a red and black checkerboard floor. It was cold in what I assumed was the castle, the atmosphere so dark and sinister it made me shiver.

"The Prince is right through those doors," the kitten whispered, pointing to a heart-shaped door with his tail. I couldn't help but think about the feline's father, and how he would have been extremely vague in his directions, unlike his kin. This generation was robbed of their insane "muchness" by this prince.

I could hear the cat poof away as I started for the doors, which took much longer than you would think due to my unnatural height. If I would learn nothing else from

this day, it would be that I never want to be a bug. After sliding under the gap in the door, I took a small bite of upelkuchen, which shot me up only about an inch shy of my typical five-foot-ten. I wasn't going to push it by trying another bite.

As my presence was made known, red and white card guards slowly stepped forward, spears pointed straight at me. I should have been scared, but I was oddly numb to the threat, somehow believing they would not hurt me. Almost as soon as I completed that thought, a tenor voice called for them to stand down, which they did with military precision, returning to their previous stances. With the same indifference to all that was going on, I approached the thrones, easily recognizing the aged Queen and Knave of Hearts. To their right was a seated man, whose deep red hair masked his face, revealing only one deep blue eye.

"You've destroyed this place," I insisted, tone surprisingly more at ease than I had expected, since I was so thoroughly upset with the ruined state of my youthful utopia.



His laugh filled the room, the poison of his own sadism dripping from the snicker. Once the sound of humor died, the man stood, coming uncomfortably close to me. As he shook his mane from his face, I froze, caught off guard by reflection staring back at me. He was my crimson-haired twin, down to the last detail – he had the same small scar on the bridge of his nose that I had from an accident when I had when I was four.

“You blame me for the devastation,” he sneered, walking forward, forcing me to back up, “without recognition of what is truly happening. *You* have destroyed everything!”

“No, I—“

“*You* let the wonders burn. *You* wanted normalcy and unity. You locked up the abnormal and burned the beauty!”

“I would never—“

“You couldn’t find Wonderland, so you made it exist. You couldn’t survive in a world less fantastic, so you abandoned your precious Wonderland and let *me* take it over while you sought to make the 'real world' just as phenomenal. You wanted the real world to accept you. You wanted to be normal. You wanted and wanted and wanted so much that Wonderland died.”

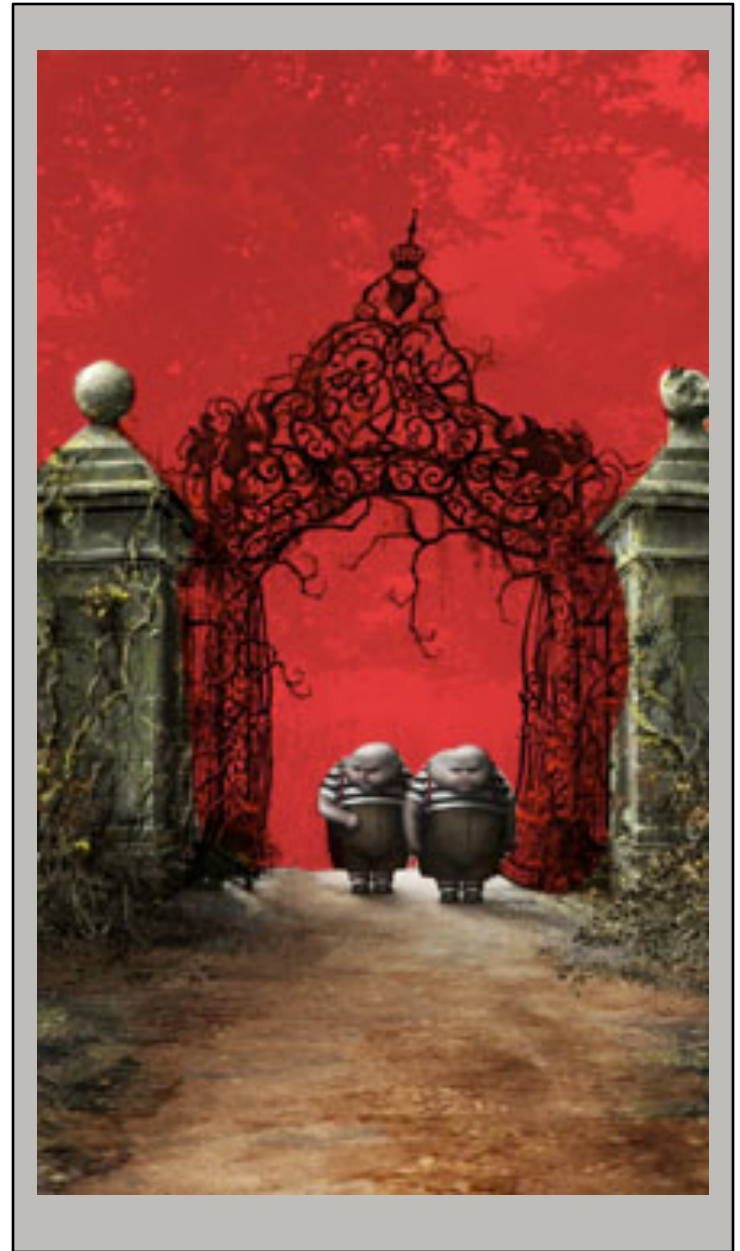
“I’ve always looked for —“

“An excuse. To be normal. You felt normal when you listened to the stories, didn’t you? But the real world wasn’t like that. No, the real world just saw you as crazy boy with ideas of some *Wonderland*. They just saw you as the insane son of an insane woman. Isn’t that right, Alexander Liddell?”

Wrapped tight in a straitjacket, the young man mumbled of his Wonderland and the broken state it had turned into. He cried out for a rebellion to save the land and rid it of the tyranny of the Hearts. Insane blue eyes stared at one spot in the room the whole time, hardly blinking as he went on and on about Wonderland and the prince that had to be defeated.

Instead, she spread the insanity, infecting her child with the mental disease that was Wonderland.

Looking in through the small observation mirror was a blonde woman. The insanity had left her eyes long ago, replaced by the heart break of watching her son suffer through the same delusions she had endured. She had filled his mind with ideas of a Wonderland to bring him a magical retreat when the world was too much to handle. Instead, she spread the insanity, infecting her child with the mental disease that was Wonderland.



-Dalannya Burton

Finding Cinderella

As a little girl I dreamt of being Cinderella.
I dreamt of meeting a really nice fella.
He would be dressed in a suit, a tux at that.
He would have all that I want, for he would not lack.
I would live in a castle, as grand as could be.
For the rest of the world, would be in love with me.
But who knew of the hardships she went through,
This, to me though, would be nothing new.
There's a wicked step-mom and her fairy godmother.
The three dreadful sisters, that would make her duck and cover.
Don't let me forget, the helpful little mice,
That without them she would not suffice.
She would scrub the floors, the dishes and all.
She would always be at their beck and call.
The day her life would change, could not come soon enough,
Living this way was way too tough.
She heard the news of a lavish grand ball.
All she could hope for would be a call.
As her sisters and mother left her in the dust,
She would hope that her night would not be a bust.
As she washed the clothes, the floor and more,
She wished she could stop doing all these chores.
All of a sudden her fairy godmother did arrive,
Who turned her a princess whom nobody could pass by.

She rode away in an elegant pumpkin carriage
To the night of her life, that would lead to marriage.
Only at midnight would she turn back,
To the girl she once was, for the princess she would lack.
She danced the night away in her glistening gown,
With the prince, for whom did not show a frown.
The time did come, where she had to leave,
But who knew, a glass slipper he would see.
He searched the land for a perfect fit.
No one came close until he left without it.
On to the last house he went with little hope,
To find the one that he would elope.
Poor Cinderella was the last to try the shoe.
They were all in shock, who knew.
Cinderella had found her prince charming.
Her mother and sisters became so alarming.
On she went with her life
Living happily ever after, with her prince by her side.
But as I grew older, I began to wonder,
Is this fairytale real, or is it all just a blunder.
Who knew what I would find.
I do not know if I can cram it all in my mind.
In the land of China, this fairytale came to be,
With a young girl no older than me.
Yeh-Hsien was her name.





She had no one to blame,
For the misfortunates she was brought.
But for her though, it would be fought.
Hard working and smart she was,
But she didn't know what to do because,
She would be left to her father's co-wife,
After the tragic ending of his life.
She mistreated her ultimately so.
No food or water, but no one would know.
Yeh-Hsien befriended a magical fish,
That would give her, her very wish.
Comfort and companionship were sought,
Until the co-wife, took away the very thought.
The bones of the fish would still be precious to thee,
They would give her small golden slippers that the land
would love to see.
We have to remember the fact that,
In China, tiny feet were highly looked at.
Upon leaving a festival, a golden slipper was lost,
A search went on to find the owner, at all costs.
Yeh-Hsien announces the shoe belongs to her,
Which brings her to the ultimate cure.
The chief's wife Yeh-Hsien came to be.
She became happier than he.
As for the co-wife and her sisters,
They were stoned to death by the mister.
Now I know where this classic fairytale may have arrived,
But my dream will always survive.
This may be the most popular fairytale of all,
Meeting your prince who will never let you fall.
Yeh-Hsien's story brings a new perspective,
To the young little girls who are all so respectful.
My dream of being Cinderella still lives on,
With all the other girls listening along.
And now I began to wonder about the rest of the crew
Snow White, Ariel, and Tiana too.

-Miranda Hamm

Every Warrior Needs A Lance

"And the quivering lance which he brandished bright was the sting of a wasp he had slain in fight . . ." --Joseph Rodman Drake

Culprit Fay was reclining on his chick-weed bower. The air was warm, the breeze was cool, the lilies shading his head were sweet, and life was pretty boring---

"Culprit Fay!" The panting, ragged voice shattered the air as a panting fairy flew wearily into view, stumbling as he touched the ground. "You *are* Culprit Fay, are you not?"

"I am," said Culprit, quitting his bower and bowing. "And you are?"

"Azure Facade, messenger and suppliant of the town of Lily. I bring a message from the townsfolk---"

"Your message can wait, you look exhausted. First refresh yourself."

Azure shook his head. "I cannot spare the time. Lilt is being terrorized by a wasp. The beast took up residence on the outskirts three weeks ago, and it has already killed five of our fairies. We need help and you have a reputation as a mighty warrior. Can you come to Lilt?"

Culprit frowned. "Is there no wight in your town willing to fight this wasp?"

Azure's head sagged. "My brother was willing. But the wasp still lives, and my brother does not."

"Oh," said Culprit, trying to think of something else to say. Fortunately, Azure continued:

"The town council is prepared to offer you two ounces of gold upon proof of the wasp's death."

Culprit raised his eyebrows. "Two ounces is a lot of gold. However, a wasp is a dangerous monster."

"But we---"

"I accept."

A smile flashed across Azure's face. "Then Lilt's salvation is assured."

Culprit reached for his acorn helmet, plumed of the silk of the thistledown. "Maybe."

Culprit and Azure reached Lilt a week later. The town was situated in and among the branches of a large oak tree, some of the buildings were built atop the branches and some hung from the bottom by slender ropes. All were coated in green sap stucco. They landed on the tip of one of the oak branches and walked toward the town square a few

yards ahead, glad of the chance to use their legs and not their wings. "Are there always this many people gadding about?" asked Culprit, referring to the countless wights darting here and there and swooping through the leaves and running in and out of the houses.

"No."

"Ah." Culprit beamed. "No doubt news of my arrival precedes me, and they are forming a welcoming committee."

"If only..." Azure spread his wings and flew on ahead to join the nearest group of jittery fairies. Culprit followed at a more sedate pace; Azure darted on deeper into the town, exchanging a few words with every cluster he chanced to meet. Finally he turned back to Culprit. "The monster killed two more, not less than an hour ago. The town council is meeting and we need to join them. Follow me."

Azure led Culprit to a large and imposing building. The two fairies flew through the front doors and into a room off the main hall. A group of perhaps ten men and women were milling about, each talking as loudly as possible to anyone who would listen, but all became quiet and Azure and Culprit entered.

An older fairy with a beard to his knees stepped forward. "You have returned, Azure Facade. Is this the Culprit Fay?"

"I can speak for myself." Culprit sauntered into the middle of the room. "Sounds like you have a wasp problem. When shall I start upon fixing it for you?"

"Now!" screeched a young-looking fairy. "We demand instant satisfaction! You will attack the wasp at once and we will then"

"Shut up, Auberon," hissed the nearest fairy. "A paid warrior cannot be ordered around."

"All the same, I won't mind starting before too long," said Culprit. "Where is the wasp's lair? What fields does it haunt?"

The wight with the long beard gestured to a map hastily pinned on the wall. "Our town is marked here. Our scouts report that the wasp is most frequently seen within this circle here, and the patterns of lesser insect activity lead us to believe it has a nest roughly around this area." He traced a circle on the map, denoting a

spot perhaps a twenty-minute's flight away.

"simple enough." Culprit loosened his sword in its scabbard. "I'll just nip over there and wrap things up for you, shall I?"

"Before you go, I believe there was some mention of a fee in Azure's message..."

"Two ounce of gold, if I remember correctly."

"Indeed. Present us with the sting of the wasp, and the fold is yours."

"Very well. I'm off." He headed for the door. Azure stopped him on the way with a terse murmur.

"Would you like any help?"

Culprit thought for a few minutes, weighing what he knew of Azure with the thought of one ounce of gold as compared to two... "No thanks," he finally said, and darted out of the town hall.

Three whispered insect conversations and two dead ends later found Culprit starting at a mud wasp's nest resting in the fork of a tree bordering a sunburnt plain. He had been waiting under cover of a ragweed for half an hour and the wasp had not made a single appearance. It would be difficult to kill something that refused to show up.

Finally he left his ragweed and flew up to the nest. After glancing nervously over his shoulder, he hacked at the nest with his sword until the nasty thing fell down to the ground--if that would not bring out the wasp, nothing would. He floated down to the ground to examine the content of the nest. So absorbed was he that he never noticed a tell-tale angry buzzing---

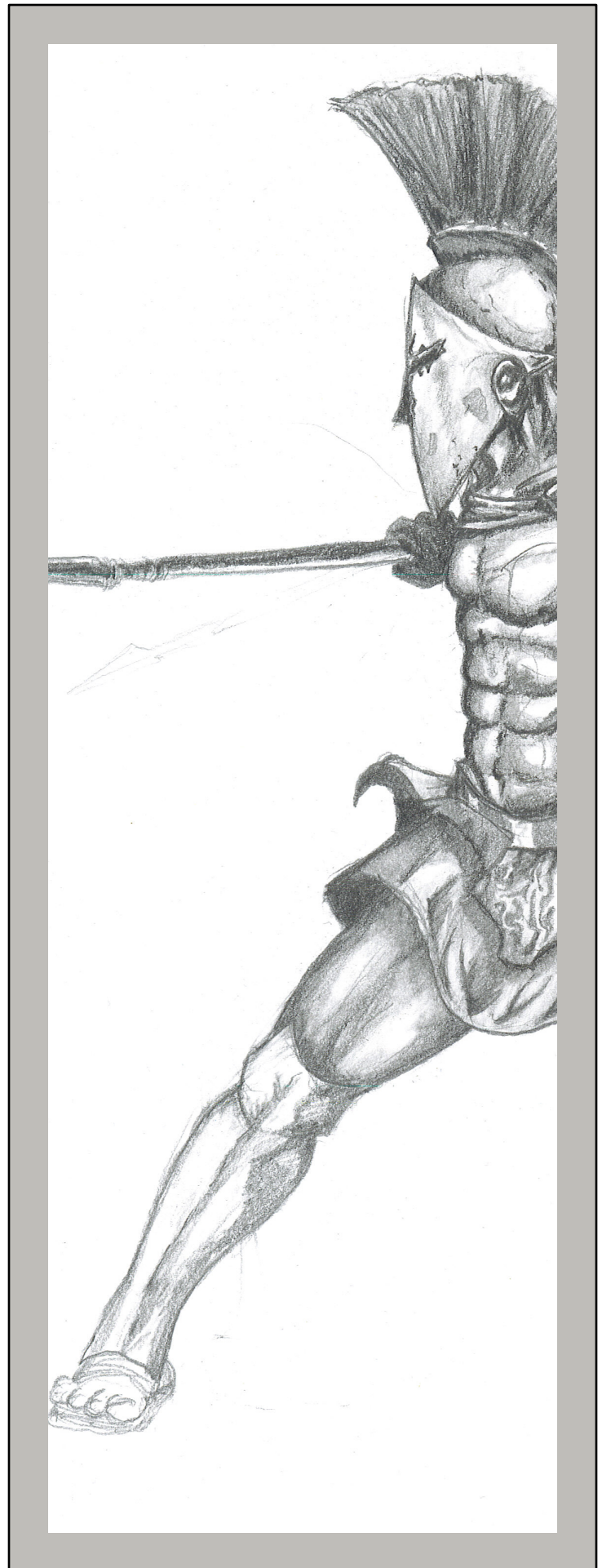
---until he was thrown to the ground and his sword was knocked out of his hand by a ferocious wasp more than twice his size. The monster was out for blood. Its mouth snapped at him, nicking his arm. He frantically rolled away, glancing here and there for his sword.

"Knock down my nest, will you?" hissed the wasp, slowly advancing on the hopeless wight. "I'll kill you for that!"

"You can build other nests," suggest Culprit helpfully. He spotted his sword buried under the musty nest mud and began to inch towards it.

"Fool!" shrieked the wasp, lunging at the fairy.

"Idiot! Helpless savage! I will feast on your flesh!" Its sting arced toward Culprit, but he turned it on his ladybug shell shield and ran for his sword. "You won't even give me the



amusement of fighting back?" it cackled. But the wasp's laughter faded to snarls as he saw Culprit's destination--the sword. Next to the fallen nest.

"Don't touch my nest!" roared the wasp. It leapt onto Culprit's back and sank its teeth deep into the fairy's left shoulder, his sword arm. Culprit cried out as blood gushed past his skin. He clumsily groped with his other hand for the sword, fingers just scraping the hilt, as the wasp's sting scraped up over the corselet plate on his back. Just as the sting brushed the unprotected skin of his neck, he managed to grab the sword completely. He twisted onto his back, the sting scraping across his throat, and awkwardly stabbed at the beast with his sword. But wielding a sword with a shield-arm was no easy matter, and the wasp laughingly evaded his blade. Culprit's vision swam as the poison in the wasp sting flooded his blood stream. The wasp raised its sting once last time for the final blow--Culprit maneuvered his sword into his left hand--the wasp rose a few inches into the air--Culprit clasped his right hand over his left--the wasp's sting shone in the sun--Culprit swung his sword with all his might for the wasp's pinched waist, fighting for control of his poison-weakened muscles. The sword came down, the wasp screamed, and Culprit had enough time for a sensation of triumph before the poison claimed him entirely.

"Culprit Fay!" The familiar voice roused him from his stupor. "Culprit! Where are you?"

"Azure?" he mumbled.

"Culprit!" Azure appeared in his field of vision and knelt beside him. "Glory, Culprit, you're covered in blood!"

"Wasp...did I..."

"That thing's dead all right, but it's you I'm worried about. Did it sting you?"

"Neck..." He felt Azure trace the length and dept of the wound. "Shoulder..."

"I'm taking you back to town. We have healers there that can help you; I can't do anything here."

"No! I've got to...my sting...proof that..."

"I'll grab the sting for you later, Culprit. But now you're going back to town."

"Guess I...needed your help...after all."

Azure laughed shortly and Culprit let the poison take him again.

"I cannot believe," said Azure a few weeks later, "that you have up two ounces of gold for a silly souvenir."

Culprit laughed and caressed the silver wasp sting. "This 'silly souvenir' is the deadliest weapon I've ever encountered. It would have been nice to know beforehand, of course, that the reward was gold *or* sting, not gold *and*, but I doubt I would have done anything differently. Except," he added sheepishly, "hang onto my sword a bit tighter."

"Yes, all well and good, but what are you going to *do* with it? The full length sting is taller than you are."

"It can be my lance. Every warrior needs a lance."

"I do not see why you would want a weapon that almost killed you."

"Culprit traced the fading scar on his neck thoughtfully. "This is what weapons do. I bear it no grudge." He brandished the quivering lance and admired its sunlit sheen.

Princess Fairy Tale Misconceptions

Almost every girl dreams of being a fairy tale princess at one point in her life. Whether it is the talking animals, the beautiful dresses, or Prince Charming, there is something about fairy tales that can enchant a young girl and take her to a place where everything is magical and anything is possible. Although fairy tales are loved by so many adults and children, they can send mixed messages to young girls that parents should be aware of. These misconceptions include woman's continuous role as the victim, the unreal expectations of life and love, and the misconstrued conception of beauty. However, fairy tales can also play a role in improving a child's imagination and creativity.

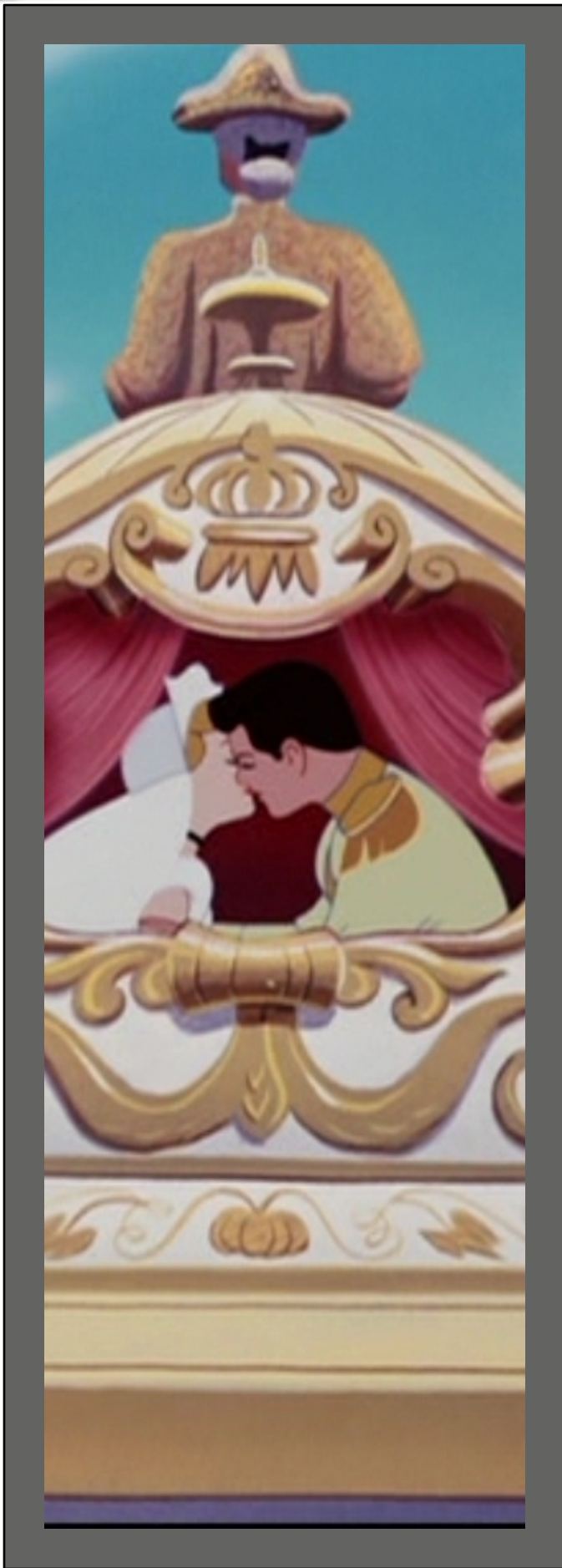
In every princess tale there seems to be the recurring story line of a damsel in distress in need of being rescued by her prince, such as in the stories of Rapunzel and Sleeping Beauty. Although this makes for good entertainment and a heart-warming love story, girls do not need to grow up thinking that they are always helpless victims who need men to save them from every predicament that prevails itself. For instance, in real life, there is not going to be a prince waiting to rescue a girl in every trouble that comes her way. Also, these damsels in distress examples provide girls with the mindset that they are dependent upon men, and therefore cannot live without them. Instead of being taught this at such young ages, girls should learn about female empowerment and independence, and that they do not need to rely on men to fix all of life's problems.

Another misconception of princess fairy tales is the idea of "Happily Ever After," which is incorporated in almost all fairy tales. A classic example of this is Cinderella and her prince in a carriage riding off together into the golden sunset. It is a moment like this that little girls will dream of having someday, because of how common it is in the movies they watch and books they read. Unfortunately, the "Happily Ever After" that fairy tales portray is not realistic, and women may feel disappointed when things do not turn out how they always dreamed they would. For example, some fairy tales end with the prince and princess getting married and living happily ever after, but they never show what happens after the big wedding, or the struggles of marriage. Because of this, girls may have

unrealistic expectations about marriage and believe that it is the key to happiness just like it is shown in the princess tales. Girls should be taught that marriages are not perfect, and although there will be ups and downs, they should try to make the best out of every situation.

The next unreal expectation that princess tales may instill in the minds of girls is the character of "Prince Charming," who is portrayed in every fairy tale as the "perfect man." In these stories, the prince is usually a very kind, handsome, smart, and charming man who will do anything (even slay a dragon) for a girl he just met. Growing up with this depiction of who is the ideal man to end up with will only lead to disappointment down the road for girls. Parents should talk with their daughters when they start dating and let them know that they cannot compare every guy they meet to the princes in fairy tales, and that although no one is perfect, one day they will find some one who is right for them.





The last mixed message that is present in many fairy tales is the portrayal of appearances. In all princess tales the princesses are depicted as gorgeous women usually with long, luscious hair, thin figures, porcelain skin, angelic faces, and they always end up wearing beautiful gowns. However, the villains in these stories, or less worthy people, appear to be unattractive and may have warts or acne, be overweight, or wear old, worn out clothes. Growing up with these stereotypes can be extremely detrimental to girls' self-esteems, because they may compare themselves to these make-believe princesses, and feel like they can never measure up to them. It also instills the belief in their minds that if they do not grow up to be as beautiful as these women, then they will not be as successful in life. Instead of being taught about physical appearances, girls at young ages should be taught that beauty is within, and although caring about themselves and their appearances are important, their personalities are what will determine how successful they will be in life.

Although these are some of the common mixed messages that fairy tales can send young girls, they should not discredit the good that fairy tales can do for young children. Fairy tales are great ways for children to improve their imagination by providing new concepts that are out of this world and that can broaden their creativity. Usually, when kids have very imaginative and creative minds when they are younger, it allows them to grow up as intelligent adults. A famous quote by Albert Einstein says, "If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales." Einstein realized that not only does reading to children improve their intelligence, but also by reading them stories that stretch their imagination, they are more likely to become better creative writers.

Fairy tales will probably always be a part of everyone's childhood. Hopefully, as the years progress, new improvements will be made to them so that they are no longer just the ideal damsel in distress stories with the perfect ending. Who knows, maybe in the future there will be a new generation of fairy tales where average women can be the heroes and the "prince" can be an average, realistic nice guy. Whatever the case, make sure to keep in mind that fairy tales are meant to be an escape from reality into a magical place, not stories to shape children's thoughts about life.

-Amanda Diniz

Theories of Lost Things

In my closet is a very sleek looking jacket made by a London, England based brand brought to America from Australia. It was given as a gift to my significant other from his uncle. However, the jacket is a size too small for him so he does not wear it. For the longest time it was left to sit, ignored in the back of his closet until one day I was over and we decided to go on a night time outing. It had been really hot earlier in the day because it was summer time and so I was only wearing a shirt and shorts. By the time we decided to head out that night it had cooled down considerably so that outside, a jacket was needed. I had not brought anything with me and all his jackets were too big for me until he remembered this one. It was blue and did not have a hood, it being one of those sporty looking jackets with the stand up collar that zips like turtleneck. Across the shoulders and upper chest area there are horizontal strips that are meant to make the wearer look broader across. Technically it is a boy's jacket but it fit me so well and personally I thought I looked so cool in it I immediately fell in love. I wore it that night and any chance I could afterwards and I got frustrated at the warm weather not allowing me to wear anything but t-shirts. A few months later we took a trip to the city and I asked him to bring that jacket so that I could wear it and look cool, and he did. And at the end of the night I asked him if I could keep it. I mean, it is not like he or anyone else in his family wore it. He was a bit hesitant at first but in the end he gave in and the jacket became mine.

I love this jacket. And I wear it every chance I can. One day I wore it out while making a quick trip across campus to the library and to get lunch. I decided to eat my sandwich outside because it was a nice day and I ended up taking the jacket off and shoving it in my bag and a little while later headed back to my dorm room. When I got there I threw my bag on the floor and there my jacket remained until I needed to go into its pockets later in the evening. Now this is where I get to the point of my story. I pulled the jacket out and went to zip or unzip, I do not really remember, and I noticed the zipper pull was off! It was this slightly bulky silver rectangle that said the brand name on it, and the cool thing about this jacket is that the zipper pullies on the pockets and the main zipper can unattach, almost like how a key chain would. The only thing I

worried about was that the main zipper pull was a little loose and finally it just came off altogether.

I looked all over the place for that thing. It had to be between my seat on the bench and my bag in my room and I retraced my steps to find it. I was unsuccessful. I felt disappointed in myself and I was afraid to tell my guy what had happened because I knew he would be upset. Even though the jacket was too small for him, he still loved it. It had just out grown him. My plan was to find him and then say, "Oh, ha ha! You will never guess what happened! But it's alright now! I've found it!" and then there would be chuckling and whatnot...but I never did find it and when he finally asked me about his jacket like I knew he eventually would, I had to confess, with my head hung down, that I had lost that piece...

The thing is, yes, I lost it. But where did it go? I searched all over the area where I knew it had to be. Multiple times. And still it never turned up. Did someone pick it up thinking what a cool little trinket? I have no idea. Where does any lost item go? Did it just stop existing altogether?

The timeless example: missing socks. How many times have you gone to do laundry, checked both the washer and dryer for left over items, find nothing and still end up at the end of the folding one sock short? Little by little the pile of socks in your drawer shrinks as more and more socks disappear and by the time you realize that you only have enough to make it through the week, it is too late to do anything about it. These socks, along with my zipper pull, and countless ball point pens, post it notes, children and animal toys, hair ties and bobby pins, and practically any object that has ever randomly disappeared like my water bottle cap this morning do not simply stop being. That's impossible. Personally, that's the theory I prefer though. It makes the most sense. And it's the most simple. No, we need not question how this disappearing act happens. It just does. Does it defy laws of existence and physics and whatever other laws there may be saying that it is impossible for matter to disappear? Yea, but so what? Until someone can explain to me where these ball point pens go, that's what I am going to believe.

There is another theory....quite unbelievable to be honest....that suggests that little....how shall I describe them? Dwarfs I suppose...or elves...they come as soon as you turn your back out from their little hiding places and accumulate all the things they think you would not miss, or the things you need at that exact moment. Sometimes they give it back, only after you search for a little bit. And sometimes they keep it. Now here is where this theory branches off a bit. What do they do with the objects they now have in their possession? One idea is that they simply keep it as a sort of treasure. They decorate their houses with shiny trinkets and plastic objects that they have accumulated over their long and tiring life as a thief. The goal is to have the most exciting house so that when they have guests over, they can admire the host's extravagant lifestyle, and honor his many achievements (it's hard work to be constantly stealing things from others...).

It is just as likely that they do not keep all these items though. Elves/dwarfs/etc are living creatures too and they need to survive just as much as the rest of us. And how does anyone become successful in this world? Buying and selling, which is what another theory of these elves suggests. If these elves/dwarfs/whatever really do exist, and if they really do steal people stuff, there is just as much a chance that they turn around and resell it to people to make a profit. I don't want to go too deep into it because it might seem like I'm just making this up as I type it but more likely than not, those darn thieving creatures are taking our stuff and selling it on the black market! Ok, maybe not the black market. But just selling it in general.

Or maybe they are taking it and burning it all in a giant furnace to power their little cities. It is possible.

I mean, I like to think all the stuff I ever lost didn't just get burned...

But enough about elves. There are two more very possible theories on where our stuff goes when it goes missing, neither of which involve mythical creatures. The next two theories are for the science fiction enthusiasts...

First there is the worm hole theory. This one, if my original theory about things simply ceasing to exist turns out to not be real, this is what I think I would fall back on. This one suggests our things fall through a worm hole when they vanish from our table tops and purses and desk drawers. The exact spot you set your pen down on happens to be a gateway to another location in space. And as soon as

you turn you back on it or take your eyes away to look at something else, the portal opens and your object falls straight through into some undisclosed location somewhere not necessarily on this earth but most definitely in this universe. That is why some objects we find later in a spot we knew for sure we did not lose it. Sometimes the openings on either end of the gateway are relatively near each other so that the object may surface again at the end of its long journey in a spot simply across the room from where it started. Other times we never see our belongings again because the portal has taken it far across the galaxy, past the many stars and planets and rested it in some tar pit on a rock floating slowly around in space, where it quickly is consumed by whatever tar-residing creature lives there. The exact dynamics of the worm hole theory and how exactly a worm hole could open up in the middle of your bedside drawer is unclear. All we have is a basic understanding based on what evidence we have collected. But again, this is just at theory.

The second one suggests that, similar to the previous one, there is a portal, except this one goes to a different dimension. That pen you were just using disappeared because the you from the next dimension over decided that they were going to take notes in class today and so when they opened their bag, oh hey! There is that pen they thought they lost! The pen sensed the need in the other dimension and so the portal opened and through it went! Maybe you will see it again, maybe you will not.

However, none of these theories help me retrieve my missing zipper pulley and so I am resolved to wear my jacket without it, which is too bad because that zipper pulley was really cool and I would have liked to not have lost it. I would like to not have lost anything actually. But I suppose sometimes you just cannot help it...

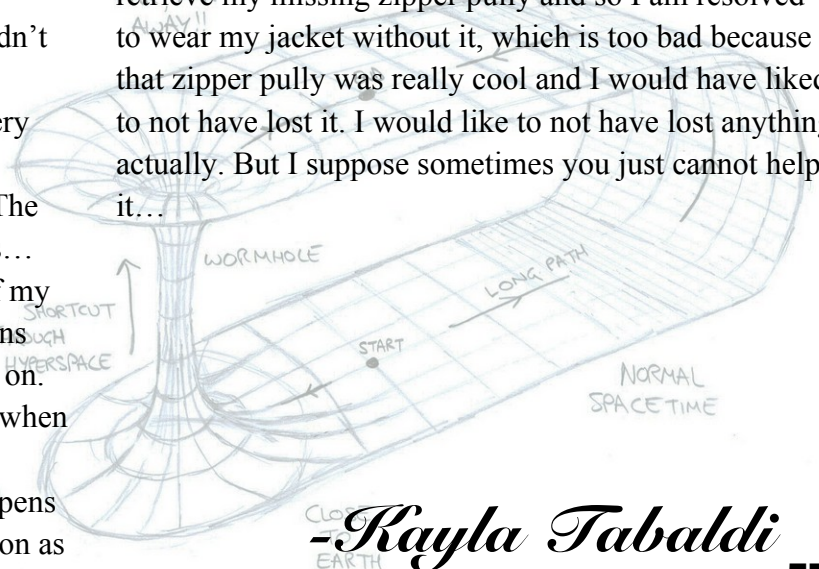


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