

URBAN LEGENDS

A book about typography
and tales we love

“I will never forget the night that my brother and I were unable to sleep because of how scared we were. “

—Frantz Drouillard

Glooscap and the Beaver

One of my favorite folk tales I heard growing up is a *Mi'kmaq* story about *Glooscap* and his enemy the Beaver. I like the story because I find it humorous and I like the action in it. The first time I heard of the story is when my aunt sent me a book of *Mi'kmaq* legends when I was a child. I had also heard the story repeated several times in school as I was growing up and I've always remembered it.

The story starts with a group of beavers that build a dam across the Restigouche River, which blocked the salmon from swimming upstream. If the salmon cannot get upstream the villagers will have nothing to eat for the winter. The villagers tried to confront the beavers but the beavers resort to violence. What happens next is one of my favorite parts. The Loon alerts *Glooscap* so he comes riding in on the back of a whale. He walks up to the dam, grabs the leader of the beavers and throws him by his tail.

The beaver turned to stone and is now known as Sugarloaf Mountain. *Glooscap* then took the other beavers and shrunk them and promised the villagers that the beavers in New Brunswick will never grow big again.

I enjoy hearing this story because it has two distinct Canadian animals, the Beaver, and the Loon. The story also takes place where part of my family comes from which makes the story relatable.

—Gregory Mitchell

SPIRITS OF THE CARIBBEAN



Growing up in the isles of Trinidad and Tobago, my grandfather would often tell us Caribbean folktales about *La Diabliesse*, *Douennes*, and *The Soucouyant*. We grew up in a rural town with no electricity and those tales were told over a kerosene lamp, so you can imagine how dark it was. The tales of *La Diabliesse*, *Douennes*, and *The Soucouyant* often left my brother and I petrified at night. My brother was the oldest and the epitome of cowardice. Often times, he would tell me that grandma said to go outside to fetch water from the well—when he knew darn well grandma sent him. I thought to myself “what a chicken.” Today, I see my son reenacting those stunts on his little sister. I would laugh, because it brought back those moments of my childhood. *La Diabliesse* (Lajables), means the Devil Woman. My grandpa would reiterate these terrifying stories, which were retold from previous generations. He said that the *La Diabliesse* dressed eloquently in her long skirts or dresses that covered her hoof cloven feet. She wears a veil and a hat like the one *Tantie Mattie* wears for Sunday church service. She charms her way into the hearts of men—by then she enamors them. Spell bound, they would take her home never to be heard from again.

An all-time favorite for Grandfather was the tale about the *Douennes*. Facetiously, he would tell us this children-of-the-corn type story, so we won't go to our neighbor's house or the river by the Rakatan Bridge to play, which was a half-mile away. Grandpa said *Douennes* were children that died without being baptized. I would be spooked when grandpa said that they had no faces and their feet were turn backwards. He said that they roamed the edge of the forest and rivers. More unnerving, he said that *Douennes* would take little children away and loose them in the forest, never to return again. He goes on to say that he would hear them outside at night crying. In addition, they were sited outside the villager's homes. To date, those stories still send chills up my spine, but then I remember what I would do to control my fears—I would pray. Then, I'm no longer was I afraid.

Soucouyant (Sukuya) is a supernatural being who has made a pact with the devil to be able to change themselves into all kinds of different forms. At night the *Soucouyant* sheds their human skin, and they must slip back into their skin before dawn breaks and the cock crows, otherwise they will not be able to get back into it. Grandfather said in order to destroy the *Soucouyant* you must put salt into their skin, so that it will shrink and if the *Soucouyant* cannot get back into their skin they will die. In Trinidad, if we see someone with a “hicky or love bite” on their neck we would make remarks such as, “Soucoyant suck yuh or wha?” When I see teenagers with those marks on their neck it takes me way back.

—Maxine Rich

Don't swallow your gum

When I was little I remember being at my grandparents' house with my friend. They had a neighbor who lived next door and she would occasionally come over. Her name was *Sadia*, she was a really close family friend and she was a nurse. So that day my friend and I were chewing gum when *Sadia* came over. She warned us "Don't swallow your gum!" and we went on not really caring, but she went on and she told us, if you swallow it, it stays in your stomach for the rest of your life and it turns into stone! This part was new to me and frightened me, and her being a nurse I completely believed her.

So some time later, my friend and I were at my grandparents' house again and I had a huge pack of bubble gum. It was one of those bubble gum tapes, where u

can pull out as much gum as you want and make big bubbles. I was chewing a big wad of it and I guess I had too much in my mouth so I accidentally swallowed it. Panicking I remembered the nurse's warning and I started to cry. Everyone got alarmed and asked me what's wrong, and I said I swallowed the gum and now it's never going get out. I told them what *Sadia* told me and said it has to be true since she's a nurse. They tried to calm me down and tell me that that's not true, but I didn't believe them.

Eventually I had stopped crying that day and accepted what had happened, but it wasn't until much later that I found out that the nurse was just telling a small children's fib. I'm just glad that I won't have gum stuck in my stomach forever, what a relief.

—Harpreet Sunda

Tiger Story, Anansi Story

When I was a child, in Jamaica, there were many stories about a spider named *Anansi*. *Anansi* was a spider from the countryside who was adventurous and worked hard to take care of his family. As a child in school I loved reading *Anansi* stories especially when I moved from Kingston city to the countryside of St. Catherine. *Anansi* felt so real, so humorous and so apart of my life growing up.

Many evenings while going home with my friends we would sometimes interact with spiders we would find on leaves or webs in bushes. *Anansi* was our friend, our partner in live action. *Anansi* gave us reason to explore, a reason to even go near any other animals. Although *Anansi* was mostly known for fooling and conning his friends, I was never trying to be like that; we just liked reading the funny stories and learning from *Anansi* and at the end of each story. We know that even though *Anansi* was important to us, never to be unkind or mean to any one of our friends or family. There were stories that were inspiring, where *Anansi* had to rise up from something holding him down.

The Tiger Story, Anansi Story was one of those very stories where *Tiger* was the biggest and strongest animal in the jungle and *Anansi* was the smallest. *Anansi* grew

tired of being inferior and made a deal with *Tiger* to catch *Snake* and get all the stories named after him. *Anansi* tried and failed but through determination and wit, caught *Snake* and impressed every animal in the jungle. This story was probably the most important to me, because I am naturally a dreamer and constant seeker of inspiration and victory. As a child this taught me never to give up and never to feel insecure or inadequate about myself. I would always hold my chest up high and mighty and was confident that if I stayed hungry and focused that I can defeat anything. This is my very attitude to this day.

—Paul Nembhard

One urban legend that is very popular is *Bloody Mary*. There are many versions of this tale that are told, but the one I was told *Mary* was a witch who lived next to a village. *Mary* was close to dying and she didn't know what to do. She started to lure the town children to her cottage in the middle of the night. She would kill them and drink their blood. Some of the town people were suspicious of *Mary* because she started to look younger in age, but they had no proof that *Mary* was the one responsible for the kids disappearing.

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One night when *Mary* was luring a child to her cottage she didn't see that the child's mom was still awake. The child's mom started to follow her daughter as she walked. She tried to stop her child but she was too strong under *Mary's* spell. The town people could see *Mary* waving her wand from on top of the cliff. They all rushed up to *Mary's* cottage and tied her down. They started to burn her alive and as she was dying she cursed the people. She said anyone who says my name in a mirror would be visited by my spirit and killed.

After my uncle told me the story he then walked away. As I was leaving the room he picked me up and put me in the bathroom and locked me in. I was screaming for him to let me out. He then opened the door and came into the bathroom with me. He started to chant bloody *Mary* as I was there begging him not to. After ten minutes nothing happened it was at this point I realized it was just a story and none of it is true.

– Peter Conquet

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ALIENS

I have always had questions about our, human beings, existence. Why are we here? How did we get here? Are we alone? Since I was young I have always wondered if there was life outside earth and if there was what would they look like? Would they be friendly? They have been envisioned in so many different ways in television and films. I'm a *sci-fi* fan and the creations we image is another reason they amaze me.

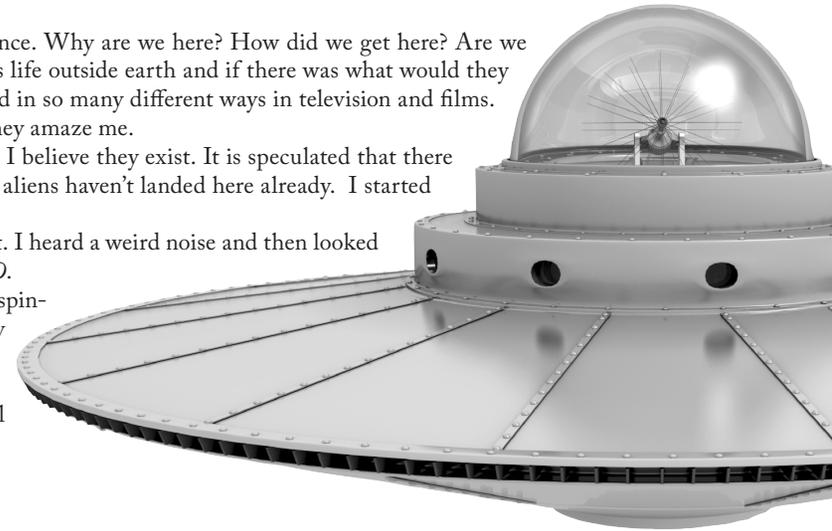
People have suspected the existence of *aliens* for years and I believe they exist. It is speculated that there is so much hidden from us by the government. Who is to say aliens haven't landed here already. I started believing when I saw it firsthand.

I was around ten years old it was in the middle of the night. I heard a weird noise and then looked out my window. There it was, I couldn't believe it I saw a *UFO*.

It was large and shaped like a football with the bottom spinning. There were different colored lights flickering. I quickly ran outside to see it from below but when I got downstairs it was gone. This has been in my head for years now and I still can't decide whether what I saw was real or not. But it still fascinates me to this day.

—Miguel Jimenez

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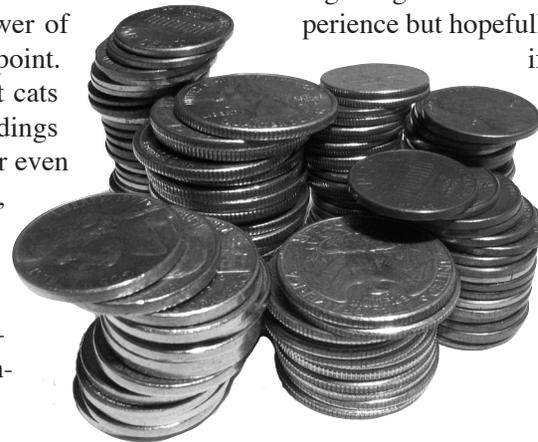


Deadly Change

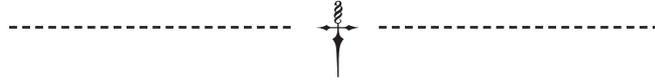
The first time I visited *New York City* was when I was eight years old. Being from *Florida* I was amazed by all of the huge skyscrapers and large architecture. As we strolled through the east side near my aunt's apartments, my older brother revealed a grave truth to me. He told me if someone drops something as small as a penny off of one of those huge buildings and it hits me in the head, I'm as good as dead. What a terrible story it would be, "Boy from *Florida* dies when window washer drops change!" For the rest of that day I checked every block upwards as if a shower of pennies could reign down at any point. With all of the large corporate fat cats hanging out in each of these buildings I was destined for a stray penny or even a quarter. The idea makes sense, as a penny falls from a hundred floors up it gains speed and deadly force and finally reaches the top of an unsuspecting pedestrian and "Blam!" gravity has committed first degree murder.

Now that I have moved here and gotten a little bit older, I walk these streets a safe man. My naivety was capitalized on by my older brother and instilled years of checking up. A penny weighs one gram and even when it reaches terminal velocity it still cannot kill you. All the kids that have hesitated to throw something off a roof are proof to this legend making kids think. The parents don't have to worry about their child killing someone, and the kids don't have to prepare for a life behind bars. Throwing things off of a roof is definitely an exhilarating experience but hopefully we keep it to a minimum because if it isn't a penny, who knows what can happen.

— Andrew Wilson



The Ghost Festival



In the Chinese culture, the *Ghost Festival* is every July of the *lunisolar* calendar. During this month, my family worships our ancestors by offering vegetarian meals. Then, we burn incense and *joss paper*, which are a paper form of goods like clothing, gold, houses, and people. On the 14th, ghosts and spirits of all kinds come out from the lower realm. My mother and grandmother are the most superstitious about it. When I was younger, they often told us not to go out late, don't speak to strangers, and stay away from areas where people are doing rituals.

There are two types of spirits--the good one and the bad one. The good ones are the deceased ancestors that do no harm to the living. Family and relatives for good luck often worship these ancestors. On the other hand, the bad spirits are the ones who never reincarnated and are looking for a living body to possess. That way, they can complete an unfinished task or take revenge on something from their last life. These spirits are invisible in the daytime but visible at night. Thus, if you go out late at night, you might encounter a harmful spirit that wants to possess you. It might even take the form of an attractive man or woman to seduce the opposite sex and possess the person.

Although I've never encountered a ghost or spirit, I do believe in ghosts. They say that if you don't believe in ghosts, you will encounter them. Even many Chinese horror films put an emphasis on that belief.

—Mandy Mei

Loup-Garou

IN Haiti one of the most common folktales is the *loup-garou*. *Loups -garou* are said to be people possessed by evil spirits and have the ability to transform themselves into creatures like cats or dogs during the night. *Loups Garou* go out during the night to hurt others and kill children by drinking their blood.

When I was a kid I would sometimes have family vacations during the summer to visit relatives in Haiti. While there my father and other grown ups would tell me and my brother stories of *loup-garou*. We were warned to never wander off at night and to always be careful when it was dark out. We were told that children like us could be taken away and would never be seen again if a *loup-garou* were to find us. These warnings made me terrified of nightfall and I would never feel safe unless I near my dad, aunts, or uncles. I will never forget the night that my brother and I were unable to sleep because of how

scared we were. That night the family dogs were barking loudly at something nonstop all through the night. I was sure something was out there and thought whatever it was would soon get into our room. What made that night so unforgettable was that while the dogs continued their barking my brother and I heard a loud thud on the roof. It sounded like someone or something had landed on it. We were both sure that it was a *loup-garou* trying to get inside to take us.

Nothing happened to us that night after hearing that sound on the roof, and I still don't know what caused that noise or why the dogs barked the way they did. Even now while I'm older I was unable to sleep easily during my recent summer visit there. I was told that *loup-garou* are only interested in children, mainly new born babies, and that they don't go after adults or anyone passed the age of five years old. Even knowing that I still felt uneasy during the night.

—Frantz Drouillard

Candyman

Growing up I was told of the legend of *Candyman*, which was based on a short story called The Forbidden. The *Candyman*, who was considered to have such a murderous soul and his deadly weapon, was a hook that had been replaced by one of his hand that was cut off. The story told about *Candyman* was that when one looked in a mirror and said his name 5 times, that he would come out of the mirror and kill them. I always hated hearing about *Candyman*. It scared me tremendously.

Every night when I went to bed, I had covered all the mirrors in the house, to include the huge mirror that was located in my hallway.

I really didn't want to see *Candyman* but of course my older sister would make fun of me constantly because she knew my fear for him so there would be times that she would say his name on purpose by a mirror right in front of me. I would scream for dear life because I thought he would jump out the mirror because my sister had said his name 5 times. Luckily, nothing happen, but just to be on the safe side I STILL covered my mirrors. At night, I would hear strange noises, like the wind blowing thru my window. My entire room was completely dark and I was afraid to fall asleep, there were times that I slept in the same bed as my parents

because I thought he was going to come to me.

One night, before I went to bed, I told my mom that I was so scared to go to sleep because I felt like *Candyman* was going to hurt me. So the best thing she told me to do was that before I go to bed, to put my night light on. By me having the night-light on, it will keep *Candyman* away from me because my mom told me that he is scared of any form of light and as long as I had my light on that he wouldn't harm me. I started to do what mommy told me to do and with that being said I was never scared of the *Candyman* because I always had my night light with me.

—Danielle Channell

THE JIANGSHI

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The Asian equivalent of the European vampire, the *Jiangshi* is a sort of combination of vampire and zombie. A typical *Jiangshi* is dressed in the official garment of the Qing Dynasty and moves around by hopping, with its arms extended straight out in front, as if searching for a neck to wring.

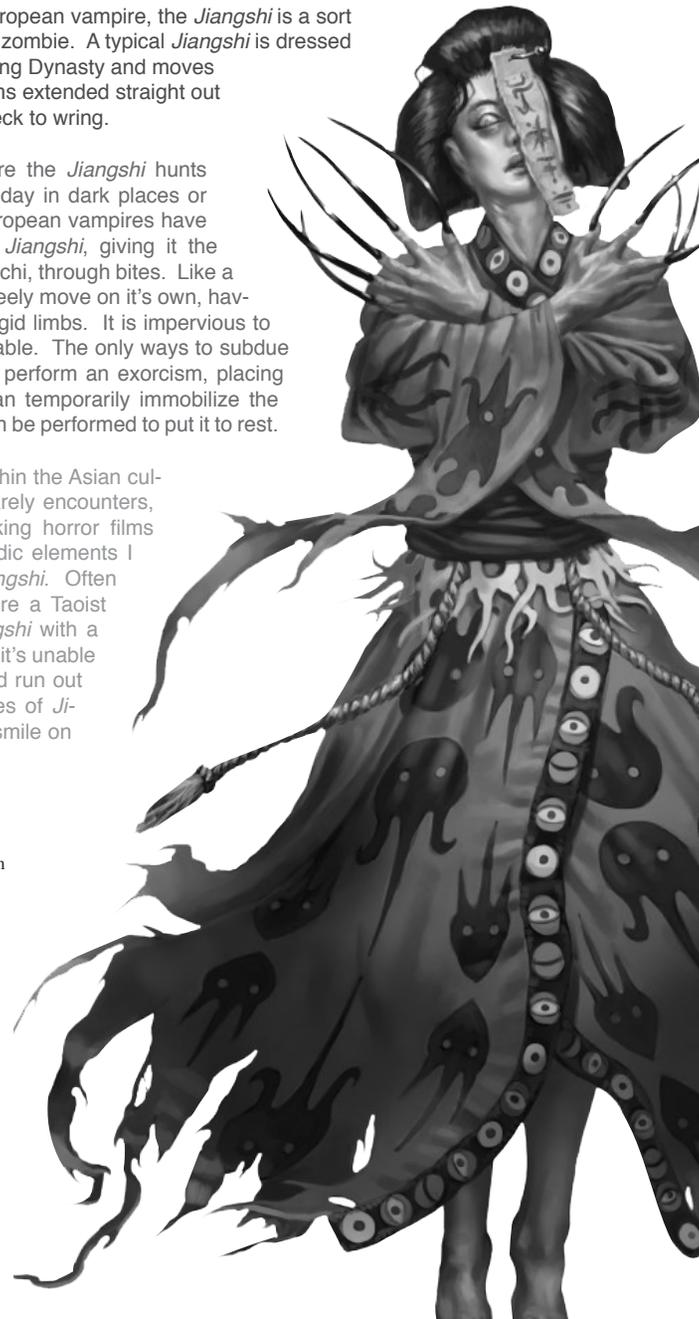
Like the European Vampire the *Jiangshi* hunts by night and rests during the day in dark places or within coffins. Influence of European vampires have seeped into the myth of the *Jiangshi*, giving it the method of absorbing life force, chi, through bites. Like a zombie, a *Jiangshi* is cannot freely move on it's own, having to hop around due to it's rigid limbs. It is impervious to physical damage but is flammable. The only ways to subdue a *Jiangshi* is to have a Taoist perform an exorcism, placing a talisman on it's forehead can temporarily immobilize the *Jiangshi* until the proper rite can be performed to put it to rest.

There is a genre of film within the Asian culture that the Western world rarely encounters, comedic horror films. By taking horror films and giving it very large comedic elements I have never been afraid of *Jiangshi*. Often I can conjure up scenes where a Taoist priest struggles with the *Jiangshi* with a file, shaving down it's fangs so it's unable to bite anyone because he had run out of talismans to stop the hordes of *Jiangshi*. It never fails to put a smile on my face.

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—Shirley Phang

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The Lion and The Beetle

When I was Younger I often heard a funny story about a lion and a beetle. This story was an old folktale about pride I always found it weird though because I was a really shy kid now that I think about it. I guess hearing this story a few times from my grandmother was the cause. The story goes there was a *Great Lion* who was king and Proud of it. He was so proud that he would roar about his greatness, and how he was a great king.

He became so proud that he ordered all the animals to come to his house and worship him. He dressed up in a crown and a royal robe with jewels. Everyone came even a tiny beetle that was singing how he was little and small but he knew he was as big as a tree in his heart. When *the lion* heard this *beetle* singing. He ordered him to bow down and the beetle told him that he was. The lion did not believe him so he bent over to see if it was

true but this crown and jewels were too heavy up top and he fell down a hill into a muddy ditch. Frightened, the little *Beetle* scurried away. And the very embarrassed *Lion* ran away too. He was *not* so very mighty, after all. Sometimes I envy my nieces and nephews because I remember tales like this one and how stupid they actually sound but how much they can teach you.

— Joshua Enrique

DUPPIES

When I was child one of the scary folktales that been told to me was *Duppies*, which is a restless spirit. Good duppies are usually deceased family and friends who “dream you” (appear to you in a dream), in order to give advice or information. Bad *duppies* are able to do harm, and can be set on someone by using obeah.

In Jamaican folk tales, *duppies* talk in high pitched, nasal voices. Sometimes when I am alone at night in my room there will be times I get paranoid of hearing any unusual sounds. One day my cousin told me eating salt would help me to chase away a *duppy*, as *duppies* despise salt. He also mentioned I can make a *duppy* go away by wearing my clothes inside out, which was embarrassing at one point when I actually dressed that way in my house.

At some point, my parents took the time and told me that I have nothing to worry about and not to be scared. It seem they had enough of seeing myself walking around the house with my clothes inside out and eating salt. So they prayed every night so that there will be no bad spirits in the house to harm anyone. After a few nights I start not to worry anymore and grew out of this phase of being scared of *duppies*.

— Mikhail Reid



The Poltergeist Encounter

Encountering a *Poltergeist* experience was probably the most horrifying thing that had happen to me. I remember that one-day where my friend wasn't feeling well and was very depressed. She told me that she was seeing things in the house or dark figures that would hover over her while she was sleeping. I was very concerned about this and decided to pay her a visit and to make sure everything was all right with her situation.

I remembered the moment I stepped into her house. I felt very uncomfortable and feelings of begin watched. I've been over to visit many times but it was the 1st I've felt this way. Turns out that she had just broke up with her boyfriend. She told me that her boyfriend had *demonic* encounters, and would wake up with bruises. He had a very bad background and habits that didn't seem to help their relationship. That gave me the chills. Then while talking about it, all of a sudden we heard someone say her name in the room.

We stopped for a second to listen but there was nothing. Both of us were shocked that someone had said her name out loud and we were the only ones in the house at the time. Then moments we heard something say her name again, the door in her room slams to the wall, books were falling of her desk, and objects in the house were falling on the floor. We were so afraid that the both of us climbed out of the window and ran out into the streets. Till this day she has been living with her parents and decided to sell the house. She had a feeling that the *poltergeist* or the ghost followed her home in her boyfriend's home. But yet we still haven't been able to found out what exactly had happen that day.

— Raymond Laing

The Boy That Drowned at The Lake

My father took me to camp with him when he was a *Boys Scout* leader. I was about six or seven years old. The boys of the camp began to spread a tale of a boy who drowned in the nearby lake. The *Boys Scouts* were spreading a folktale about a little boy who drowned in the lake and sought vengeance at night by taking another child to the lake to drown them. I was staying for a weekend and my mother had already left before I could get a chance to go back home. For the first hour, I cried continuously. I was terrified.

I stayed up all night, afraid that I would be taken by the boy at the lake. Constant winds against the cabin and the wooden creaks made me feel as the dead boy was coming after me. Sleep was impossible for me. I was only comforted by the rise of the sun in the morning. That was the first night staying over. I made sure I used the bathroom before sundown to avoid having to walk to the outhouse which was a slight

walk across the campsite. The next night was not a similar case.

I had to use the bathroom the next night I stayed over, and I shook with terror. Luckily, I was too young to be allowed to go alone. The female camp leaders took me up the long hill for me to use the bathroom. Yet and still, I didn't feel like I was safe from the dead boy who could potentially come out of the very nearby lake and drag me to my death. I began to cry because I was terrified. The

“Sleep was impossible for me. I was only comforted by the rise of the sun in the morning.”

camp leaders noticed, and inquired with me what was bothering me. I asked “*why aren't you afraid of the dead boy that drowned here at that lake many years ago?*” That when I was told the relieving truth—the boys were just telling an old tale and that no one ever drowned in the lake before. From that day on, I was

less gullible about stories that were told to me. I also no longer have fears unless they are rational and actually exist.

—Nicole Coard

THE NAHUALES

Growing up in a country that is so rich in legends and folktales like Mexico, I have heard many legends and tales that are really interesting and unbelievable. When I was growing up, I remember that whenever my family and I used to go visit my grandmother, she used to tell us many legends and myths that would always keep us awake at night. Picking just one for this assignment has been hard since there are so many stories that I would like to share, but if there is one that has really impacted me it has to be the *Nahuales*.

The *Nahuales* are people that are believed to have the power to magically transform into an animal form, but most commonly into dogs, or donkeys. They could either use this power

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for good or bad things, depending on the person’s personality but many of them are feared because they have magical powers and usually magic is linked to bad deeds.

My grandmother used to tell us, my siblings and I, that she knew some people from her hometown that were suspected to be *Nahuales*. She especially told us about an old man that used to live around her house that used to have cattle. She said that the man was barely seen taking out his cattle to grass, but mostly the cattle was guided by

either a dog, or a donkey. Whenever the dog or the donkey was with the cattle, the old man would not be found and vice versa. I always wanted to find out if such story was true, but unfortunately the old man passed away little after my grandmother told us the story; but one thing that has kept me thinking about this story until today is the fact that it has been said that after the old man passed away, neither the dog or the donkey has been seen in town ever again.

—Regina Torres

THE ROSWELL TALE

For so many years, people have argued about the existence of aliens. And yet extraterrestrial life is not proved by scientists despite photos and video of suspicious creature taken by people who claimed sightings.

A typical Hollywood alien is soft, squishy and big on mucus. These sci-fi lumps of goo are inclined to abduct us, probe us, hover above us and even walk among us (in disguise, of course). So are aliens real or myths? For me, I believe there must be extraterrestrial life in the outer space since Earth is not the only planet in the solar system and yet human beings explored only a little part of the space. As a curious kid since I was little, I vividly recall stumbling across many books about *UFOs*, watching TV documentaries and learning about the *Roswell tale*. Allegedly on July 8, 1947, Roswell, New Mexico residents claimed that a spaceship crashed into the town at night. Then the U.S military quickly and covertly confiscated the wreckage along with alien corpses. The items were taken to a top-secret un-

derground installation, Area 51, for the purpose of medical and scientific studies.

Hearing the *Roswell tale*, one wonders who could believe such nonsense. Apparently, many people do, since the town has been holding numerous *UFO* conventions ever since and *UFO-ology* think tanks have opened up all over town.

—Wing Wat

BLOODY

MARY

As a child, I was never really afraid on any myths or urban legends. Even though I had a very wild imagination, I was more in touch with reality. I was more afraid of real dangers in my neighborhood, like being shot or robbed. However, one urban legend that I was always curious about is the one of *Bloody Mary*. This tale is one that I never challenged to see if it was true or false. As a child, I remember asking a few of my friends if they ever tried to summon her, and they would all reply 'No' in a cautious tone.

I've heard many versions of the *Bloody Mary* myth. Some say there was a beautiful young woman named Mary whose face was massacred in terrible car crash. After the car crash, apparently she could not stand the site of her face in the mirror. The disfiguration of her face was too much to bear which caused her to commit suicide. Legend has it, that if you go in a bathroom at night, turn off the lights, close your eyes, spin around three times while saying '*Bloody Mary, Bloody Mary, Bloody Mary*', she will appear in the mirror when you open your eyes. I've heard similar versions that she will appear and scratch your face if you perform this ritual. Another version states that you must say '*Mary Worth, Mary Worth, I believe in Mary Worth*' for her to appear.

I've never encountered anyone who has confirmed seeing *Bloody Mary*. Now that I think about, I believe I never tried to summon her because I was probably afraid that the myth could possibly be true. After all of these years, I guess you could say that I was afraid to test the myth. Maybe tonight, when everyone is asleep, I'll man-up and call upon Bloody Mary.

—Mike Harris

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