

# BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

## Myth and legend

### *Atlantis*

The myth of Atlantis claims the existence of an island in the Atlantic Ocean some 10,000 years ago.

It is said to have suffered catastrophic earthquakes and floods until it disappeared beneath the sea. All the brave men were swallowed up in one day and night of horror.

Since this day Atlantis has been located underneath the water a great many places.

### *The Flying Dutchman*

The legend of The Flying Dutchman is said to have started in 1641 when a Dutch ship sank off the coast of the Cape of Good Hope:

Captain van der Decken was pleased. The trip to the Far East had been highly successful and at last they were on their way back to Holland. He was so deep in thought that he failed to notice the dark clouds looming, and only when he heard the lookout scream in terror, did he realize that they had sailed straight into a fierce storm. The captain and his crew battled for hours to get out of the storm and at one stage it looked like they would make it. Then they heard the crunch – the ship had hit some rocks and began to sink. Captain van der Decken knew that death was approaching but was not ready to die and screamed out a curse: "I *will* round this Cape even if I have to be sailing until doomsday!!"

Today, whenever a storm brews off the Cape of Good Hope, and you look into the eye of the storm, you will be able to see the ship and its captain.

Many people have claimed to have seen The Flying Dutchman, including the crew of a German submarine during World War II – and holidaymakers.

## Mysterious powers

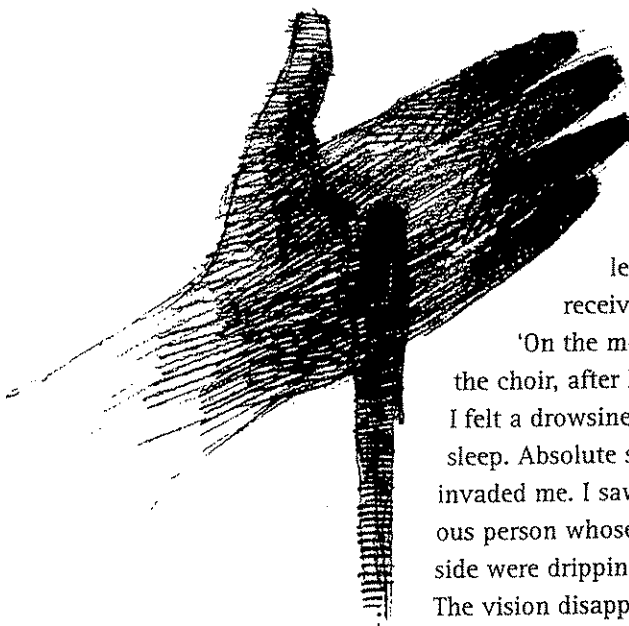
### *Telekinesis*

Nina Kulagina, born in Russia, is one of the most extensively tested psychics in history. Scientists spent 30 years exploring the strange human energy which can move or deform objects without the use of hands or body, but merely using the brain. Stephen King wrote a thriller dealing with the same power, "Carrie".

### *Stigmata*

Stigmata is spontaneous bloody wounds on a person's hands, feet, forehead and back – similar to the crucified Jesus. Healing is usually reported within a few hours after the wounds appear.

The blood will pour forth from openings on the body for an unknown amount of time, then suddenly disappear and heal. The openings can be just in one area of the body or in several at the same time. The person is almost always in pain when this occurs. It can affect women as well as men. The blood may be of a different type than the person who is having the experience. The first recorded stigmata was in the year 1222 in Canterbury, England.



### *Padre Pio*

His wounds bled daily for 50 years.

On October 22, 1918, Padre Pio wrote a letter describing how he received the stigmata:

'On the morning of the 20th, in the choir, after I had celebrated Mass, I felt a drowsiness similar to a sweet sleep. Absolute silence surrounded and invaded me. I saw before me a mysterious person whose hands and feet and side were dripping blood.

The vision disappeared and I became aware that my hands, feet and side were

dripping blood. Imagine the agony I experienced and continue to experience almost every day. The heart wound bleeds continually, especially from Thursday evening until Saturday.'

*Maria Al Acaris*

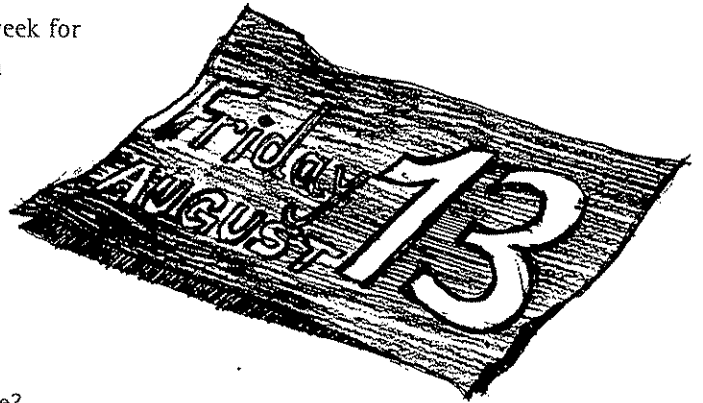
Since the early 1980s, Maria Al Acaris from Syria spontaneously begins to bleed from all over her body. It happens on Good Friday and lasts for hours. She develops scratches on her forehead. Then, as if by another miracle, the wounds heal in a few hours.

**Superstitions*****Why is Friday 13th considered unlucky?***

At first glance Friday isn't so bad, being the end of the work week for many. Some say the word Friday comes from the Anglo-Saxon 'Friggedaeg', which means Frigg's day. Frigg was a goddess of love in Norse mythology, so many Scandinavians considered Friday their luckiest day.

Thirteen is more tricky. Judas Iscariot, for example, was the thirteenth apostle. Many hotels and skyscrapers are built without a „thirteenth floor“. Reportedly there is an organization in France providing a last-minute party guest so there are never 13 people at a dinner table.

Friday 13th is perhaps a great day for a computer virus to strike?

***Is it bad luck to walk under a ladder?***

This came from the early Christian belief that a leaning ladder formed a triangle with the wall and the ground. You must never violate the Holy Trinity by walking through a triangle, unless you are considered in league with the devil – or is it just fear of getting something dumped on you?

***God Bless You***

During the 6th century it was customary to congratulate people who sneezed because they were expelling evil from their bodies. Later, when a great plague took hold of Europe and people began sneezing violently, the Pope passed a law which required people to bless the sneezer since he was probably going to die.

***Don't spill the salt***

If you spill any, you must immediately throw it over your left shoulder to strike the nasty spirits in the eye to prevent sickness.

***Black cats***

A black cat is lucky or unlucky depending on where you live. In Egypt it is believed that a black cat crossing one's path brings good luck.

There are many cat charms relating to ships and the sea. Fishermen's wives would keep a black cat at home to prevent disaster at sea. Consequently, the cats were very valuable, and often stolen.

For luck, cats were often kept on board ships. The worst possible cat-related act, guaranteed to raise a storm and bring bad luck of all sorts, was to throw the cat overboard.

Black cats were often looked upon as witches in disguise. A Norse legend tells of the chariot of Freya, the witch, that was pulled by black cats that became black horses. After serving Freya for seven years, the cats were rewarded by being turned into witches, disguised as black cats.

## Unbelievable!

### All about Mike

September 10th, 1945 finds a five and a half month old Wyandotte rooster pecking through the dust of Fruita, Colorado.

Clara Olsen was planning on featuring the plump bird in the evening meal. Husband Lloyd Olsen was sent out to prepare the rooster for the pan. Lloyd positioned his axe precisely. A skillful blow was executed, but the bird shook off the traumatic event and returned to his job of being a chicken – *without a head*.

When Lloyd found Mike the next morning, sleeping with his 'head' under his wing, he decided that if Mike had that much will to live, he would figure out a way to feed and water him. With an eyedropper Mike was given grain and water. It was becoming obvious that Mike was special. A week into Mike's new life, Lloyd packed him up and took him 250 miles to the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. It was determined that the axe blade had missed the jugular vein and a clot had prevented Mike from bleeding to death. Although most of his head was in a jar, most of his brain stem and one ear was left on his body. Since most of the chicken's reflex actions are controlled by the brain stem Mike was able to remain healthy.

In the 18 months that Mike lived as 'The Headless Wonder Chicken', he grew from 2 lbs. to nearly 8 lbs.

Now Mike's spirit is celebrated the third weekend in May in Fruita every year.

jugular vein *halsblodåre*, clot *størknet blod*

**MIKE THE HEADLESS CHICKEN DAYS**

USDA  
Funky Chicken  
GRADE

CHICKEN LIVES 2 YEARS  
WITH NO HEAD

**ONLY IN  
FRUITA  
COLORADO**

From last year's celebration  
(don't miss it next year!)  
"Scramble Golf Tournament"  
Micro Brew Festival & Great Food  
(Chicken)  
Music from Timothy P. &  
The Rural Route Three  
(Composer of The Soon To Be World  
Famous 'Ode To Mike')  
Chicken Dance Marathon  
New Pet Parade  
— dress your pet like a chicken!  
Run like a chicken with your  
head cut off

### Exercises:

1. Do you think that there are people who possess mysterious powers? Tell your partner what you think.
2. In groups, ask each other questions about being superstitious, e.g. "Would you sit at a table with thirteen people?" "Does a horseshoe really mean good luck?" "Do you turn around if a black cat crosses the road in front of you?" And many, many more. Discuss how you react and why. Compare with other groups.
3. Tell a creepy story. You may write it down and publish it on the board.