

Superstitions



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Superstitions To inform my audience about commonly practiced superstitions, their meaning, origins, and what affects they have on our lives and commonly practiced traditions. Hi! My name is Sarah & today I am going to talk to you about superstitions. According to blah blah superstition is defined as blah blah blah. How many of you have ever crossed your fingers for good luck, or got a little nervous about something bad happening on Friday the 13th? I would bet that all of you have said or have heard someone say “ God Bless You” after a sneeze. Have any of you ever wondered where the traditions of Halloween came from? Or maybe why it is thought to be bad luck for the groom to see the bride before the wedding ceremony? Today I am going to enlighten you with the answer to these questions and much more. I. For the most part superstitions can be placed into 2 categories, good or bad luck, many of them also have deeply religious meaning and use symbolism. A. Good Luck 1. You must knock on wood 3 times after mentioning good fortune or the evil spirits will ruin things for you. a) The tradition traces back to an ancient pagan belief that spirits resided in trees and that by knocking on the wood, you were paying a small tribute to them by acknowledging them, and could call on them for protection against ill-fortune. Also, you were thanking them for their continued blessings and good luck. 2. Crossing two fingers (the middle and pointing fingers) on one hand as a sign of hopefulness or desire for a particular outcome. a) This is probably the superstition that is most widely used today. By making the sign of the Christian faith with our fingers, evil spirits would be prevented from destroying our chances of good fortune. It is also used as an expression: “ Cross your fingers” is often told to someone hoping for good luck or a particular outcome. Sometimes, when someone tells a lie, they will cross

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their fingers (usually behind their back). This somehow absolves them from the consequences or makes the lie not count. See a penny pick it up, all day long you will have good luck. b) Finding a penny and picking it up is believed to bring a day of good luck. Finding a penny with heads up is considered luckier. It is believed that this penny should not be spent; keeping it safe can bring you fortune. Any metal was considered God's gift to mankind 3. Saying " God Bless You" when someone sneezes. (1) " The blessing of those who sneeze started when the great plague took hold of Europe. Sufferers began sneezing violently, and as such, were bound to die. The Pope passed a law requiring people to bless the sneezer. At the same time, it was expected that anybody sneezing would cover their mouth with a cloth or their hand. This was obviously to stop the spreading of the disease, but many believed that it was to keep the soul intact. Sneezing 'into the air' would allow the soul to escape and death would be imminent. Humankind has long been equating the soul with breath. It was thought that when one sneezed, the soul briefly flew out of the body, and this might allow an evil spirit to take up residence within. On the other hand, it is also said that blessing someone who sneezes is necessary because their heart skips a beat when they sneeze; it is wishing them continued good health B. Bad Luck 1. Breaking a mirror will bring seven years of bad luck. a) Romans tagged the broken mirror a sign of bad luck. The length of the prescribed misfortune, 7 years, came from the Roman belief that man's body was physically rejuvenated every 7 years, and he became, in effect, a new man. One's reflection in a mirror is thought to be the representation of his or her soul or spiritual state. Breaking the mirror, and therefore the person's reflection, would bring damage to their soul and spiritual hardship. Taking the pieces outside and burying them in the

moonlight could avoid this. 2. Open an umbrella indoors and bad luck will "rain" on you. a) Origin can be traced back to when umbrellas were used as sun protection. Opening one indoors supposedly was offensive to the sun (or sun god) and would bring his wrath down upon the offender 3. Walking under a ladder will bring bad luck. a) Excluding the obvious — that something might fall on you from above — the belief that walking under a ladder will bring bad luck seems to stem from the ladder forming a triangle with the wall and the ground. This represents the "Holy Trinity", and if you violate this by entering the space, it puts you in league with the devil, and you're likely to incur God's wrath. 4. Friday the 13th The belief that thirteen brings bad luck is an extremely pervasive belief throughout many societies, and is strong enough that many major hotels and high rises traditionally either build only twelve floors, or, if they want to go higher, skip labeling the 13th floor entirely! Many people refuse to stay on the 13th floor, or in room 13. People stay home from work, for fear of something bad happening. Most airports don't have a thirteenth gate. There are many theories as to why this belief is held. One is that Judas, known as "the Betrayer of Jesus", was the 13th member present at the Last Supper. Paraskevidekatriaphobia is the official term for the fear of Friday the Thirteenth. Jesus was said to have been crucified on Friday and the number of guests at the party of the Last Supper was 13, with the 13th guest being Judas, the traitor. II. Superstition plays a role in several of our nationally celebrated Holidays and traditions. A. Halloween blah blah blah 1. Costumes- The people of Ireland at that time were pagans and spirits were a part of their religion. Their beliefs involved good and evil spirits and would strive to live in harmony with both. This is where the custom of dressing up in costumes came in. On All Hallows Eve

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the spirits of the dead, good and evil, were believed to walk the streets until sunrise so anyone out might run into an evil spirit and become possessed. To keep from becoming possessed, the villagers would dress in animal skins and paint their faces to scare away the bad spirits.

2. Trick or treat- it began in Ireland as part of their end-of-summer festival. October 31st is the last day of the Celtic calendar and November 1st begins the new year. On this last day of the year it what a widely-held belief that on this one night the spirits of the dead could visit the living. Family members would leave a plate of food and a place set at the table to welcome their spiritual guests. People would also leave gifts of food out to keep from angering the evil spirits and causing them to do mischief. It was a preventative measure. The saying "trick or treat" was a question, because if you left no treat you may wake up the next morning to find you had been victim of a trick or some form of mischief.

B. Thanksgiving blah blah During Thanksgiving, it is traditional to roast a turkey. When it is served, it's also traditional for two people to take the wishbone (the bird's clavicle) each making a wish, they pull apart the bone to break it. The person ending up with the larger piece will supposedly get his or her wish. Although Thanksgiving is an American holiday, the wishbone custom was brought over to the new world by the Pilgrims from England, where it had long been in practice. The ritual of breaking apart the wishbone can be traced back to the ancient Romans, Etymologists claim that the expression 'get a lucky break' initially applied to the person winning the larger half in a wishbone tug-of-war."

III. There are many wedding traditions that may seem a little silly and far fetched, and even though most of us don't know their origin or meaning, we still include them in our wedding day rituals.

A. It's bad luck for the groom to see the bride in her wedding dress

before the ceremony. 1. During the time when arranged marriages were custom, the couple wasn't allowed to see each other before the wedding at all. The wedding symbolized a business deal between two families and a father would have been pleased for his daughter to marry a man from a rich family. But he also feared that if the groom met the bride before the wedding and thought she wasn't attractive, he'd call off the wedding, casting shame onto the bride and her family. Therefore, it became tradition that the bride and groom were only allowed to meet at the wedding ceremony so that the groom did not have the opportunity to change his mind. And that veil the bride wears? Its original purpose was also to keep the groom from finding out what the bride looked like until the last possible minute, when it was too late to back out of the transaction B. Ringer Finger 1. C. The person who catches the bride's bouquet or garter when she tosses it over her head will be the next to get married. 1. The story behind this tradition is downright dirty. In medieval times, it was considered lucky to get a fragment of the bride's clothing, so hordes of guests would follow the newlywed couple into their wedding chamber after the ceremony and stand around the bed, trying to rip pieces of the bride's gown right off her body. Because dresses were often torn apart, brides searched for alternatives to preserve their gowns and began throwing their bouquets to distract guests while they made their getaway. When the bride and groom made it safely into their wedding chamber, the groom would then crack open the door and toss the bride's garter to the throngs of people waiting outside as a way of saying that he was about to " seal the deal. " D. The groom must carry his new wife across the threshold of their new home to prevent bad luck. 1. In ancient cultures, the threshold of the home was considered to be a hotbed of lurking,

unattached evil spirits, and since a new bride was particularly vulnerable to spirit intrusion, especially through the soles of her feet, the groom ensured that his wife would not bring any bad spirits into the house by carrying her inside. Conclusion