

FUMC ESL 4-1-2019 Advanced Lesson

Sailors are a superstitious group. Long nights on solitary watch predisposes them to believe some strange things. Many sailors claim to have seen ghost ships. These are ships sailing along with no crew in sight.

One of the most famous stories of ghost ships is the Flying Dutchman which sank in 1680 with all crew aboard because the captain ignored warnings of a major storm. According to legend, his arrogance invoked the wrath of God, who condemned the lost crew to battle the waters off the Cape of Good Hope for eternity. These ghost ships of folklore are one type, but there are some real ghost ships as well.

In December of 1872, the Marie Celeste was discovered adrift and deserted in the Atlantic Ocean. She was found in disheveled condition, but was still seaworthy. There were ample provisions on board, but her lifeboat was missing. Was this a mutiny, piracy or were the crew overcome by some paranormal activity? No answer was ever found. None of the crew were ever heard from again.

Match the underlined words from the story to the definitions below.

rebellion against the captain of a ship	anger	a boat floating without being moored or steered
supplies	conceit, self-importance	in good enough condition to sail
untidy, disordered	isolated	unending time
believing in myths or unproven stories	call on or appeal to, summon	events beyond the scope of normal understanding
attacking and robbing ships at sea	make susceptible to	plenty
sentenced to punishment	abandoned	mythology, traditional beliefs

Discuss:

1. Some buildings do not have a 13th floor because 13 is an unlucky number. Would you live in an apartment on the 13th floor? What numbers are lucky or unlucky in your culture?
2. It's bad luck to: walk under a ladder, break a mirror, open an umbrella indoors or have a black cat cross your path. A four leaf clover or rabbit's foot lead to good luck. And after I make a statement, such as, "I haven't been sick all year", I would knock on wood to prevent getting sick. Discuss some good luck or bad luck superstitions in your culture.
3. If you see someone on the street that looks disheveled, what do you think? Do you think they are probably homeless? Do you try to avoid them? If someone arrived at your home in a disheveled condition, would you be concerned? Would you ask them if something was wrong? If your son or daughter brought home a new girlfriend or boyfriend who was disheveled, would you disapprove? How important is neatness in making a good impression on someone?
4. Obesity and a bad diet might predispose someone to diabetes. People who make many lengthy flights are predisposed to blood clots in their legs. In the story above, sailors are

predisposed to believe in strange happenings because they spend a lot of time alone at night watching for dangers. If you are in a dark house, alone, at night, do you ever have frightening thoughts? Have you ever been in a place so creepy that you wanted to run away fast?

5. Adrift can also mean feeling alone and unsupported. Sometimes immigrants feel adrift in a culture they don't understand. Did you feel this way when you arrived in the U.S.?

6. Urban legends are a new version of folklore. They are stories, which people claim are true, but usually are later proven to be false. Nowadays they are spread by social media. Can you think of any urban legends you have heard?

"Paul is dead" is an urban legend suggesting that Paul McCartney of the English rock band The Beatles died in 1966 and was secretly replaced by a look-alike. When I was in college, we played Beatles songs backwards to try to hear the "Paul is dead" quote we were supposed to.