



## **Black Cats and April Fools: Origins of Old Wives Tales and Superstitions in Our Daily Lives**

*Harry Oliver, Mike Mosedale (Illustrator)*

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An intriguing look at the origins of some of our most popular superstitions and old wives tales. People have knocked on wood to ward off misfortune, or watched a bride throw a bouquet over her head at a wedding, but how often have they stopped to consider where such customs originate, or why they endure? Behind many of our daily rituals and beliefs lies a fascinating history of weird and wonderful notions, some rational, others fanciful. In this diverting volume, Harry Oliver delves into the stories behind our rich traditions to explain them with characteristic wit and flair. So before you search for any more four-leaf clovers or worry about the next Friday the 13th, dip into this little book to find out why.

## **Black Cats and April Fools: Origins of Old Wives Tales and Superstitions in Our Daily Lives Details**

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## **From Reader Review Black Cats and April Fools: Origins of Old Wives Tales and Superstitions in Our Daily Lives for online ebook**

### **Ashley Hunt says**

"...in the past the Bible was considered the word of God..." Really Harry? Hence the low rating.

Not only for this ridiculous statement but the constant misinformation (if not lies) about Catholic traditions/superstitions being Biblical.

Most of the superstitions the author labels as Christian or being derived from the Holy Bible is just plain false. (Don't get me started on his passing comment that baptism is done in order to receive forgiveness of sins!) Sadly most people don't read the Bible, so they wouldn't know they're being misinformed about the origin of some of these superstitions.

I don't know whether this author is ignorant (in thinking that Catholicism is Biblical Christianity) or if he's bias; wanting to pass the Bible of as an old superstitious book. Either way, I could not enjoy this book (like I thought I was going to) because of these errors.

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### **Leslie says**

It's definitely interesting to read about how all the old superstitions come about.

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### **Jason says**

Although enjoyable learning some new superstitions, i found that the origins as the in the title of the book where either left out or not defined. The book is more a reiteration of old folk tales.

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### **Amanda Witt says**

Features bite sized chunks of information, in plain English about all sorts of things once thought to be either old wives tales and/or superstitions.

Brief explanations are given, with most dating back to years past when there really were reasons to think that way but now modern medicine and better education has meant most of these are no longer believed.

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### **Rachna says**

This book is about numerous superstitions from all over the world and how they may have originated. Such as knocking on wood may be from an old kids game where touching wood meant "safe". Giving white and red flowers in a bouquet is bad luck, it is believed to be this way because blood and bandages are also red

and white. If a girl drew water from the well on the first day of the New Year she would be considered lucky. My favorite was the carrot myth, if you eat carrots you can see in the dark. It's a myth because people thought that's what British pilots did in WWII instead of using radars. Another favorite was peacock feathers bring bad luck, it's believed to be like that because of its evil looking eye appearance.

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### **Wilde Sky says**

I found this collection of explanations for superstitions quite interesting, but very patchy. The best chapters (in my opinion) were 21 and 22.

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### **waiwaiee says**

Flipping a page, random at best, might be entertaining. There are some interesting tales, though mostly it would leave you baffled. Not in the way, oh-yeah-that-could-have-happened-in-the-past, but instead, here-you-you-go-i-hope-this-is-random-enough-for-you. Watching life science documentary should be a pre-requisite before reading books from this genre. This is because you could then understand the reasoning and belief behind every occurrences.

Quite frankly, superstitions is to make beliefs and it is to be embellished. Let all reality be grasped on the first hand. Heed not a convert of superstitions!

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### **Tanwen Cooper says**

Interesting book where I found out about a lot of superstitions and old wives tales I hadn't heard about before. They are well laid out by topic, making it easy to read. However, the origin part of the book felt a little lack luster to me. I know many of these origins are lost to time, but there were a few too many instances of 'no one is sure where this superstition started' considering that was the premise of the book.

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### **Lou says**

Not much info here, mostly saying "no one knows the origin". That would be quite all right if there was humor or graphics to add interest.

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### **Kellie says**

happened upon this at the library and thought it would be entertaining while waiting for kid lessons. turns out to not have had actually that much real information about the origins, mostly speculation and modern use - but it entertained me for an hour anyway and gave me a few nuggets of useless trivia to share.

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### **James says**

This is an entertaining and interesting insight into some of the worlds most common superstitions. It's a very good 'pick up' book that you can read a few entries here and there.

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### **Xanthi says**

Generally speaking, I don't consider myself a particularly superstitious person, but this book's topic held my interest from start to finish. It was easy to read during my breaks at work, with bite sized sections. There were a fair few superstitions covered by this book, that I have never heard of before, and almost as many that I had, but never knew where or how they originated. An entertaining read.

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### **Carissa says**

I read some of the first chapter and skimmed the rest. I was looking for something with more references... along the lines of the "Pop Goes the Weasel" book.  
I also disagree with passing under a train... it's good luck!

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### **Charissa Ty says**

Interesting read!

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### **Kimberley says**

Good book even of it did make me a bit paranoid about superstitions I never even knew existed!

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