

Myths, Folktales, Legends, & Fables



Be an Expert!

Oral Tradition



- ◆ Stories handed down through generations using word of mouth.
- ◆ The stories we have all heard as a kid!
 - ◆ *Example:*
 - ◆ *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*
 - ◆ *Jack and the Beanstalk*
 - ◆ *Sleeping Beauty*
- ◆ Can you name some more?



Folktales



- ◆ Includes Fairy Tales and Folklore
- ◆ Stories that have been passed down for hundreds of years
- ◆ Magic, imaginary creatures, and talking animals can be included
- ◆ **Examples: Paul Bunyan, Bigfoot, Johnny Appleseed, and Brer Rabbit**



Paul Bunyan



Characteristics of a Folktale

- ◆ Begins with a phrase such as, "Once upon a time . . .", or "There once was . . ."
- ◆ About ordinary people (or animals) and everyday life
- ◆ The number three is significant and repeated often
- ◆ There are good and bad characters
- ◆ Good characters are given a problem to solve

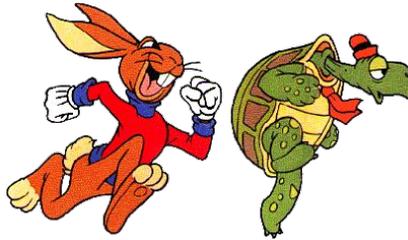
Characteristics of Folktales

- ◆ Animals can talk
- ◆ Wishes are granted
- ◆ Happy endings – good wins over bad
- ◆ Everyone has heard them
- ◆ Transmitted through word of mouth
- ◆ No known author



Fables

- ◆ Short story that teaches a lesson (called a moral) that people should apply to their own lives
- ◆ Characters are usually animals
- ◆ Aesop is the most well-known author
- ◆ **Example: The Tortoise and the Hare**



Tortoise and the Hare





Fairy Tales

- Typically begins with “Once upon a time...”
- Set in the past—usually significantly long ago. May be presented as historical fact from the past.
- Includes fantasy, supernatural or make-believe aspects.
- Typically incorporates clearly defined good characters and evil characters.



Fairy Tales



- May include objects, people, or events in threes.
- Often have happy endings, based on the resolution of the conflict or problem.
- Involves royalty of some sort (prince, princess, king, queen, etc.)
- Usually teaches a lesson or demonstrates values important to the culture.
- Involves magic elements, which may be magical people, animals, or objects. Magic may be positive or negative (i.e., witches, curses, etc.).

Sleeping Beauty Trailer



Legends

- ◆ Always about humans but can have magic or supernatural events
- ◆ Based on real people who are considered heroes
- ◆ Story handed down for many years
- ◆ Passed off as a true story
- ◆ Example: Sleepy Hollow





Characteristics of a Legend

- ◆ A story from the past about a subject that was, or is believed to have been, historical
- ◆ Many legends tell about human beings who meet supernatural creatures
- ◆ Historical, but not always factual

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow



Urban Legend



- ◆ Modern folklore consisting of stories believed by their tellers to be true
- ◆ Set in today's time; not historical
- ◆ Contains an element of mystery, horror, fear or humor
- ◆ Rarely able to be traced to original origins and if they can be traced, the connections are often obscured by later embellishment or adaptation

Elements of Urban Legends



- ◆ Often told on behalf of the original witness or participant. Ex. "I know someone who..."
- ◆ Dire warnings are often given to those who might not heed the legend's warning
- ◆ Include a degree of plausibility

"Urban Legend" movie trailer



Myths

- ◆ Stories about gods, goddesses, and spirits
- ◆ Try to explain how things in the world were created
- ◆ Happened before the world we now live in
- ◆ May be connected to a religious belief system
- ◆ **Example: The Greek Gods, Pandoras Box**





Characteristics of Myths

- ◆ The gods and goddesses have human emotions
- ◆ Myths contain magic
- ◆ Gods and goddesses often appear in disguises
- ◆ Myths teach a lesson or explain the natural world

The Greek Gods



Archetype

- basic building blocks of stories that all writers use to create a world to which readers can escape.
- all cultures around the world use them to build their stories.
- Examples of archetypes are: the hero, the damsel in distress, the battle between good and evil, bargaining with the devil, etc.

Situational Archetypes

- THE JOURNEY—the hero goes in search of some truth or information to restore life to the kingdom;
- THE QUEST—search for someone or some object, which when it is found and brought back will restore life to a wasted land, the desolation of which is shown by a leader's illness and disability.



Situational Archetypes



• DEATH AND REBIRTH—grows out of a parallel between the cycle of nature and the cycle of life. Thus, morning and springtime represent birth, youth, or rebirth; evening and winter suggest old age or death.

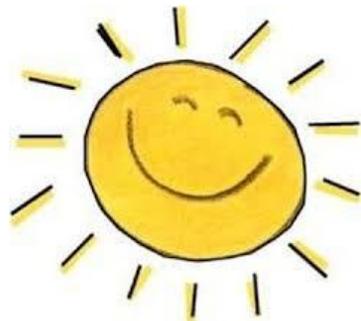
• BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL—Obviously the battle between two primal forces. Mankind shows eternal optimism in the continual portrayal of good triumphing over evil despite great odds.

• THE RITUAL—The actual ceremonies the initiate experiences that will mark his rite of passage into another state (weddings, funerals)

Symbolic Archetypes

• LIGHT VS. DARKNESS—light suggests hope, renewal, or intellectual illumination; darkness suggests the unknown, ignorance, or despair.

• HEAVEN VS. HELL—gods live in the skies or mountaintops; evil forces live in the bowels of the earth



Symbolic Archetypes

- SUPERNATURAL INTERVENTION—the gods most often intervene on the side of the hero to assist him in his quest

- MAGIC WEAPON—some object used to fight the forces of evil that has magical properties



Character Archetypes



- THE HERO—circumstances of birth are unusual, some attempt is made at birth to kill him; raised by foster parents, returns to his kingdom to right wrongs and save the day, marries a princess, becomes king

- MENTOR—teacher or counselor to the hero; often are father or mother figures to the hero or heroine



Character Archetypes



• STAR-CROSSED LOVERS—two lovers forbidden to be together because of the rules of society or family; often ends tragically



• CREATURE OF NIGHTMARE—animal or creature disfigured or mutated; monsters who are the antagonists in the story



• TEMPTRESS—sensuous beauty; brings about the hero's downfall because he is physically attracted to her

Character Archetypes



• The Outcast: The outcast is just that. He or she has been cast out of a society or has left it on a voluntary basis. The outcast figure can oftentimes be considered as a Christ figure.

(i.e. the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*)

• The Scapegoat: The scapegoat figure is one who gets blamed for everything, regardless of whether he/she is actually at fault.

(i.e. Snowball in *Animal Farm*)

• The Shrew: This is that nagging, bothersome wife always battering her husband with verbal abuse.

Shrek Trailer



Shrek Archetypes



- **DEATH AND REBIRTH**—when they escape the dragon, morning is dawning suggesting hope and rebirth
- **BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL**—Shrek and Donkey vs the Dragon and then later Farquaad
- **STAR-CROSSED LOVERS**—Dragons and Donkeys aren't supposed to be together. . .ew
- **EVIL FIGURE WITH A GOOD HEART**—Dragon appears at first as an Evil Figure, especially with the remains of the knights, but Donkey saves her and converts her to good
- **CREATURE OF NIGHTMARE**—Dragon before she falls in love with Donkey
- **THE JOURNEY**—Shrek and Donkey face their fears and conquer the dragon, finding Fiona to accomplish their task

Shrek Archetypes

• **HERO**—Shrek...literally doing superhuman deeds (fighting fire breathing dragon)

• **QUEST**—to find and rescue Princess Fiona

• **TASK**—to get his swamp back from the fairy creatures

• **HUNTING GROUP OF COMPANIONS**—Donkey is there to make Shrek's humanity come out and show that he is not just an ogre at heart

• **FRIENDLY BEAST, SCAPEGOAT**—Donkey; he's blamed for bringing all of the animals to Shrek's house, but he wasn't really responsible

• **DAMSEL IN DISTRESS**—Princess Fiona in the highest tower

• **HEAVEN VS. HELL**—glowing embers and fire are shown to be the habitat of the dragon.

• **LIGHT VS. DARKNESS**—the castle is dark to represent evil; Fiona is first seen in a ray of light; as soon as they escape, they emerge into daytime since they have escaped evil

