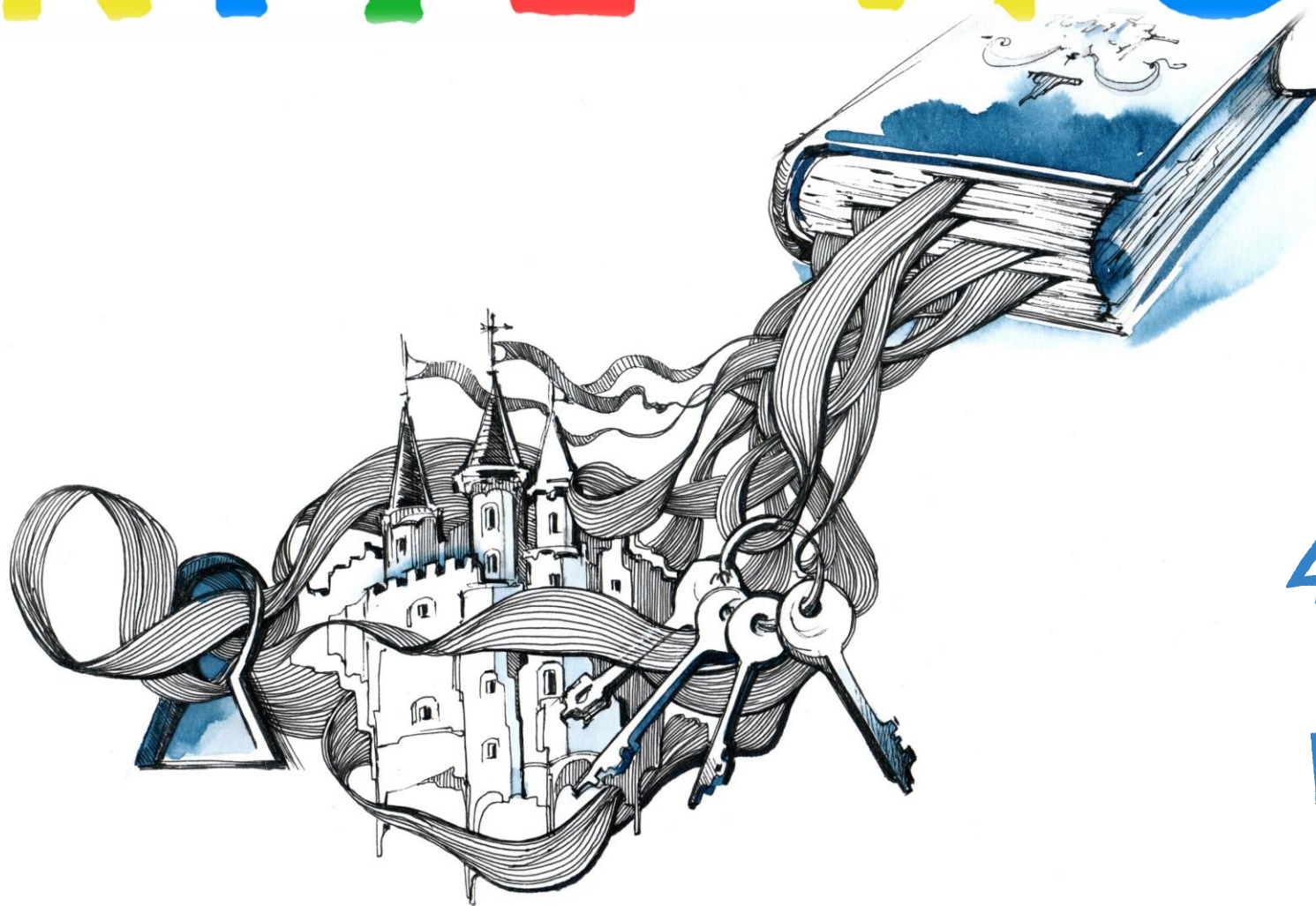


WRITE NOW!



4: Extracts
from
Literature

WRITE NOW!

4. Myths

Extracts from Literature

WRITE NOW!

Contents:

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1. Suggestions for how to use the extracts

In this booklet, you will find some literary extracts from various writers to help you think about myths in interesting ways.

As you read them, think about:

1. How the writer has used older myths or legends to create a new story.
2. How the writer had used language to help immerse the reader in the myth.
3. How the writer makes something imaginary seem believable.

You should also pay attention to:

1. Use of paragraphing – especially effective single word or sentence paragraphing
2. Vocabulary
3. Punctuation use
4. Use of imperatives (instructions) and questions to make the reader trust the narrator

WRITE NOW!

2. One Thousand and One Nights: Geraldine Mccaughrean

This extract is taken from the beginning where King Shahryar plans to visit his brother. This is an ancient Persian legend being retold by a British writer. You can search for 'Arabian Nights' or '1001 Nights' to find out more and to read other versions.

Stories are carried from the desert kingdoms of India and Persia and Arabia – but who can tell if they are true? – of the twin kingdoms of Sasan and Samarkand al-Ajam. Their rulers were brothers: the tall and glorious King Shahryar and his smaller brother King Shahzaman. The foundations of their cities and palaces were not moved by the shifting ocean of Arabian sand. Their domes and minarets on a horizon were as beautiful in the eyes of desert travellers as foaming water or banked rain clouds.

Just as his cities were wonderful to the eyes, so the young Shahryar was wonderful in the eyes of his people, for he ruled wisely and generously. The heart of Shahryar was lovely, for he took pleasure in the life that Allah gave him. Above all, Shahryar took pleasure in his wife – a lady as lovely as the moon reflected in lily pools. Only the queen of King Shahzaman, his brother, equalled her in beauty.

One morning King Shahryar took it in his heart to visit his brother in the kingdom of Samar and al-Ajam and called for camels to be mustered and loaded with presents. Bales of damask cloth, flasks of attar of roses, and panniers filled with oriental spices were heaped across the camels until their legs bent like an archer's bow. In the inner chambers of his palace, King Shahryar kissed his lovely wife goodbye and, of course, veiled her face so that no other man but the King should accidentally see her beauty.

The streets of the royal city of Sasan were filled with fragrance as the caravan wound its way from the palace to the Eastern gates. Just as they were leaving the city, King Shahryar remembered the small personal gift of red sulphur he had laid ready in his bedroom, intending to carry it to King Shahzaman. He hurried back to his palace alone and climbed the stairs, his calf-skin shoes making no sound on the stone staircase. As he opened the bedroom door, his heart jumped inside him like a startled hare. In one moment it leapt with delight at the sight of his wife's face, and in the next it leapt with anger that her veil was gone. A servant from the palace stables was sitting beside the queen. In one hand he held the crumpled veil and in the other he held the queen's hand.

WRITE NOW!

3. One Thousand and One Nights: Hanan Al-Shaykh

This extract is taken from the beginning where King Shahryar plans to visit his brother. This is an ancient Persian legend being retold by a Lebanese writer. You can search for 'Arabian Nights' or '1001 Nights' to find out more and to read other versions. You can compare this version with the first version.

A long, long time ago lived two Kings who were brothers. The elder, King Shahryar, ruled India and Indochina. The younger, Shahzaman, ruled Samarkand. Shahryar was so powerful and strong that even savage animals feared him; but at the same time, he was fair, caring and kind to his people – just as the eyelid protects the eye. And they, in turn, were loyal, obeyed him blindly, and adored him.

Shahryar woke one morning and experienced a pang of longing for his younger brother. He realised, to his amazement, he hadn't seen Shahzaman in ten years. So he summoned his Vizier, the father of two girls, Shahrazad and Dunyazad, and asked him to go immediately to Samarkand and fetch his brother. The Vizier travelled for days and nights, until he reached Samarkand and met King Shahzaman, who welcomed him and slaughtered beasts in his honour, and he gave him the good news. 'King Shahryar is sound and well; he needs only to see your face and so he has sent me to ask that you visit him.'

Happy Shahzaman embraced the Vizier, replying that he too had missed his brother, and that he would be prepared to leave at once.

In no time everything was ready: troops, horses and camels, and sheep to be slaughtered for food. Shahzaman was filled with happiness and excitement, for he was going to see his brother, so he set out at once, not wanting to delay one minute longer as he heard the beat of the tambourine and the blowing of the trumpets. He rushed to his wife's quarters to bid her goodbye, but to his horror he found her lying in the arms of one of the kitchen boys. The world blackened and spun, as though he was caught in a hurricane.

'I am the sovereign King of Samarkand and yet my wife has betrayed me, but with whom? With another king? A general in the army? No – with a kitchen boy!'

In his fury, he drew his sword and killed his wife and the kitchen boy, then dragged them by the heels and threw their bodies from the very top of the palace into the trench below. Then he left his kingdom with his brother's Vizier and entourage, his heart bleeding with sorrow and grief.

WRITE NOW!

4. The Jabberwocky: Lewis Carroll

This poem is called 'nonsense poetry' because Carroll made up a lot of the words and creatures in it. This allows the reader a lot of freedom to imagine the story. It also means we as readers can create our own impressions of heroes and myths.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand;
Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

“And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”
He chortled in his joy.

’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

WRITE NOW!

5. Poems: Nikita Gill

Nikita Gill uses nature, myths, legends and fairy tales to reveal new messages out of something old and familiar.

QUESTION THE FAIRY TALE

What if Cinderella had an attitude problem
and Snow White just liked the idea
of strangers and poisons too much?

What if the Little Mermaid always enjoyed human company
more than her own kind's and Sleeping Beauty
just liked her solitude more than human touch?

What if the only rabbit hole Alice ever fell down was
a terrible mistake with an awful substance,
never discussed as such?

What if they locked Wendy away
for hallucinating about Neverland
and a boy who never grew up?

What if fairytales aren't as innocent
as they sound and even princesses
aren't perfect?

What if I told you that your damage
doesn't define you and the way you survive
is no one else's damned business?

HER NAME WILL BE FEARLESS

And in all the stories my daughter shall hear,
it will not be princes that slay the dragons,
But little girls that believe in magic
with big, brave hearts and even bigger dreams.

She will learn to rely on her own sword
in every battle, in every struggle, in every war
because she will learn how to devour
every single monster from their very core.

WRITE NOW!

6. The Witches: Roald Dahl

This extract is from the beginning of *The Witches*, where Dahl uses imperatives, direct address and ordinary sounding facts to make witches seem real to the reader.

A Note about Witches

In fairy-tales, witches always wear silly black hats and black cloaks, and they ride on broomsticks.

But this is not a fairy-tale. This is about REAL WITCHES.

The most important thing you should know about REAL WITCHES is this. Listen very carefully. Never forget what is coming next.

REAL WITCHES dress in ordinary clothes and look very much like ordinary women. They live in ordinary houses and they work in ORDINARY JOBS.

That is why they are so hard to catch.

A REAL WITCH hates children with a red-hot sizz-ling hatred that is more sizzling and red-hot

than any hatred you could possibly imagine.

A REAL WITCH spends all her time plotting to get rid of the children in her particular territory. Her passion is to do away with them, one by one. It is all she thinks about the whole day long. Even if she is working as a cashier in a supermarket or typing letters for a businessman or driving round in a fancy car (and she could be doing any of these things), her mind will always be plotting and scheming and churning and burning and whiz-zing and phizzing with murderous bloodthirsty thoughts.

"Which child," she says to herself all day long, "exactly which child shall I choose for my next squelching?"

A REAL WITCH gets the same pleasure from squelching a child as you get from eating a plateful of strawberries and thick cream. She reckons on doing away with one child a week. Anything less than that and she becomes grumpy.

One child a week is fifty-two a year.

Squish them and squiggle them and make them disappear.

That is the motto of all witches.

Very carefully a victim is chosen. Then the witch stalks the wretched child like a hunter

stalking a little bird in the forest. She treads softly. She moves quietly. She gets closer and closer. Then at last, when everything is ready...phwisst! ... and she swoops! Sparks fly. Flames leap. Oil boils. Rats howl. Skin shrivels. And the child disappears.

A witch, you must understand, does not knock children on the head or stick knives into them or shoot at them with a pistol. People who do those things get caught by the police.

A witch never gets caught. Don't forget that she has magic in her fingers and devilry dancing in her blood. She can make stones jump about like frogs and she can make tongues of flame go flickering across the surface of the water.

These magic powers are very frightening.

Luckily, there are not a great number of REAL WITCHES in the world today. But there are still quite enough to make you nervous. In England, there are probably about one hundred of them altogether.

Some countries have more, others have not quite so many. No country in the world is completely free from WITCHES.

WRITE NOW!

7. Recommended Reading

I am recommending these books. Some of them are children's books and they are better enjoyed as a whole (and therefore I cannot include them here for copyright purposes). Some of them are just fantastic books to enjoy!

Room on The Broom: Julia Donaldson

The Gruffalo: Julia Donaldson

Horrible Histories: Groovy Greeks: Terry Deary and Martin Brown

Horrible Histories: Ruthless Romans: Terry Deary and Martin Brown

Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief: Rick Riordan

Coraline: Neil Gaiman

His Dark Materials: Philip Pullman

Aru Shah and The End of Time: Roshani Chokshi

Quicksilver: Stephanie Spinner

Norse Mythology: Neil Gaiman

Night at The Circus: Angela Carter

The Bloody Chamber: Angela Carter

The Penelopiad: Margaret Atwood