



ŠTĚPÁNKA SEKANINOVÁ & LUKÁŠ FIGEĽ

Superstitions

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Superstitions



PITCH-BLACK HEALERS

In Japan, black cats are always treated well as they are the only ones able to heal body and soul. A sore stomach? Put a black cat on it and you'll be surprised what happens. Single girls also happily welcome black cats, and why not if they bring them luck in love?

Miaow



WAITING FOR A MIRACLE

A black cat across your path? All is good. Expect some magical moments in your life. At least that's what the French believe.

GET OFF THE BED

In Italy there's panic if a black cat jumps onto a bed with a sick person lying in it. This pitch-black creature is then signalling that death is near.

NOT THIS WAY

In North America, if you are superstitious, you give black cats a wide berth! Who would voluntarily want bad luck?



What do you think of black cats? Are you afraid of them or do you welcome them in your life and travels?

DREADED NUMBERS

When the thirteenth and Friday clash – oof, it's better to stay in bed and not budge. You never know what to expect on such a fateful day. That's because the number 13 brings bad luck and twice as much on a Friday. Apparently, so they say...

GET THEM!

The famous Templars could tell you something about Friday the 13th! October 13, 1307, was a Friday, when the French king Philip IV turned against them and began to arrest, imprison and kill them. Friday the 13th thus became the first day of the demise of the Order of the Knights Templar. And why did Philip do this? Because the knights owed him a lot of money and didn't want to pay him.

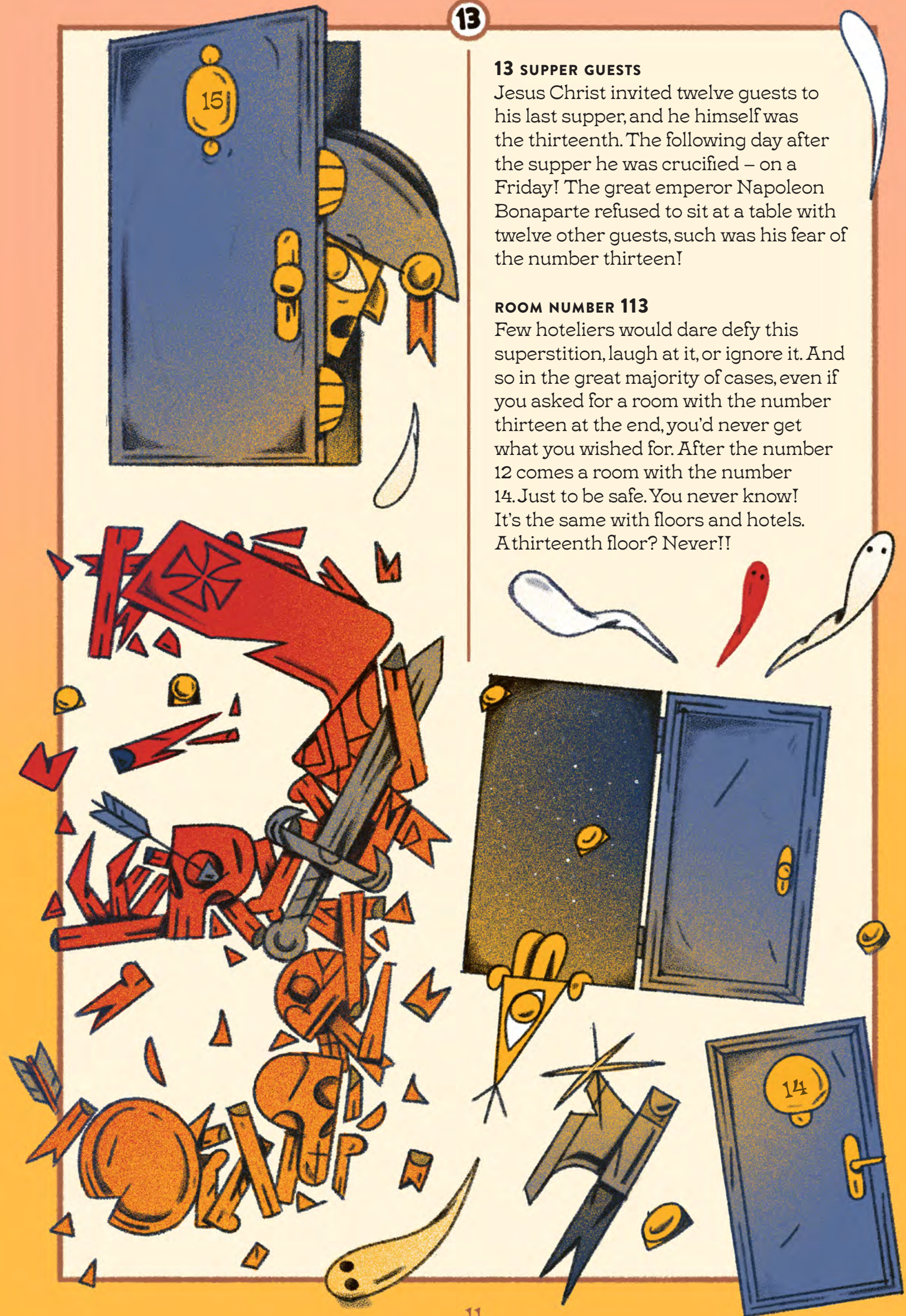


13 SUPPER GUESTS

Jesus Christ invited twelve guests to his last supper, and he himself was the thirteenth. The following day after the supper he was crucified – on a Friday! The great emperor Napoleon Bonaparte refused to sit at a table with twelve other guests, such was his fear of the number thirteen!

ROOM NUMBER 113

Few hoteliers would dare defy this superstition, laugh at it, or ignore it. And so in the great majority of cases, even if you asked for a room with the number thirteen at the end, you'd never get what you wished for. After the number 12 comes a room with the number 14. Just to be safe. You never know! It's the same with floors and hotels. A thirteenth floor? Never!!

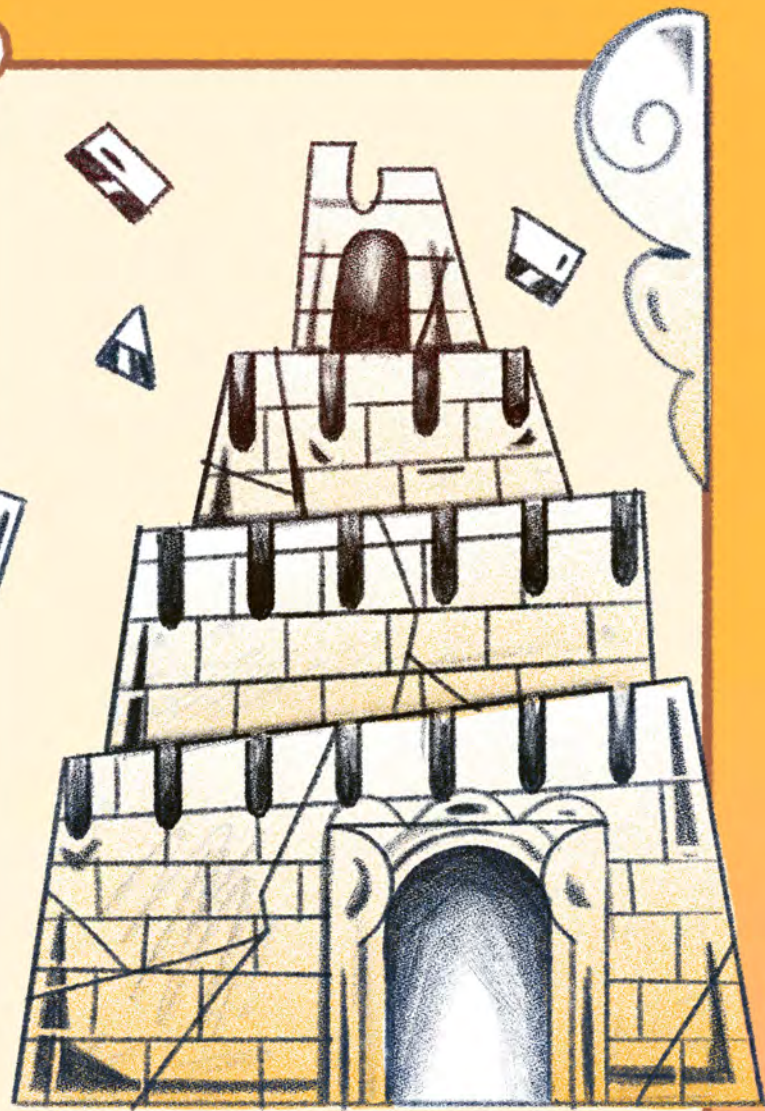


SO FRIDAY OR TUESDAY?

Let's not be unfair to Fridays. Spaniards, Greeks and people from Latin American countries always get fidgety on Tuesday the 13th. That's because the name of this day is derived from Mars – the god of war and destruction. Additionally, it was supposedly on a fateful Tuesday 13th when the confusion of languages started when the Tower of Babylon was being built. So what do you think? Are you against Fridays or Tuesdays?

THE CURSED NUMBER 4

For a change, in some Asian countries they look at the number 4 with horror! That's because the word four is very similar to the word 'death' in several Asian languages! And no-one wants to usher that into their lives. The Japanese go even further, not only do they panic at the mention of number 4, they are maybe even slightly more afraid of the number 49. This is easily confused with the expression 'pain unto death'. And who wants a painful life?



WHERE'S THE FOURTH FLOOR?

In Asia, if you want to go to the fourth floor by elevator, you won't find a button with the number 4! A company address with the number 4 in it? Never! Get rid of 4 from your life if you want to live happily and do business successfully. Honestly! Asians really don't want anything to do with the number four. God forbid you were born on 4.4.!



MIRRORS

Oh...no! The mirror! It's lying on the ground, shattered into a thousand pieces. Seven years' bad luck in store. But why? Where did this strange superstition come from that is so unfair to mirrors? Why is it that other shards bring luck? Why not those from mirrors?

A PEEK AT THE EARTHLINGS

The gods themselves can observe our souls using mirrors! That's what the ancient Romans used to believe. It's

clear, then, that breaking a mirror will get you into the nosy gods' bad books and they'll take revenge. How? Through bad luck, naturally.

NOT YOU, YOUR SOUL

The ancient Greeks and Romans believed that if you looked at your reflection in the water, you could see deep into your soul. But if the surface stirred and your image became blurred, people were terrified. They expected illness or even death. A fractured mirror then came to mean a fractured soul.



I'll have my revenge!

BUT WHY SEVEN YEARS?

Because bad luck for an entire lifetime would be overdoing it a bit, and our ancestors also believed that the soul changed over seven-year cycles. You have to admit that seven years of bad luck and misfortune would seem to be endless. So keep a close eye on your mirror and don't break it.



PRECAUTIONS AGAINST BAD LUCK

Seven years' bad luck is really quite a lot and so those ancient Roman eggheads came up with some protective measures. If you bury the shards of the broken mirror deep into the ground, hey presto, you've outdone the gods and

the superstitions! As this superstition has its roots in the very cradle of European culture, we come across it mainly in Europe and North America. Mysterious mirrors appear in many other superstitions!

BLESS YOU!

Whenever anyone sneezes, other people will bless them. Where did this custom come from, where did this sneezing superstition originate? In the Middle Ages, of course. During the plague epidemic. Very soon people noticed that sneezing was quickly followed by death.

BE WARY OF SNEEZING

No sneezing, please, let us all survive this in good health! This was the wish of the people at the time and also the wish of Pope Gregory I. Not only did he pray regularly for everyone, he also called on them to increase divine protection. As soon as a sick person sneezed, you were to immediately say God bless you. By doing so, you might avoid the dreaded disease.

ATISHOO!

And so people sneezed and sneezed and asked God for his blessing. As time passed they grew used to the association, but as the plague had passed and with it the terror of sneezing, they made do with wishing health – ordinary extraordinary health.

DON'T SNEEZE OUT YOUR SOUL

It was more complicated though with sneezing. Long before the plague epidemic, people believed that when you sneezed, you could sneeze out your soul...and so they blessed their souls so they wouldn't want to leave...



AND WE'RE BACK AT BLACK CATS

At the time when the plague was devastating Europe and people were asking for divine protection at the slightest sneeze, the position of black cats became increasingly worse. People not only saw the devil in them, they were also convinced that these black beasts were spreading disease...

NOT ONE CAT LEFT

And so they set about exterminating them. They would have liked to have killed them all. And as they caught and destroyed them, the number of cats dropped while the number of rats and rodents increased. And they were the ones infected with the plague flea, which then spread the disease to people. When the cat's away the rats will play!



CURSED BROOMSTICKS

As though our everyday helpers were to blame! By some strange twist of fate, after long and arduous testing of different objects – from mortars to straw – witches decided broomsticks would be their means of transport. And the nice broomstick paid for it with its reputation, because...

...if someone sweeps a broomstick under you, they take the love away from your life and you will never get married. You will remain alone!

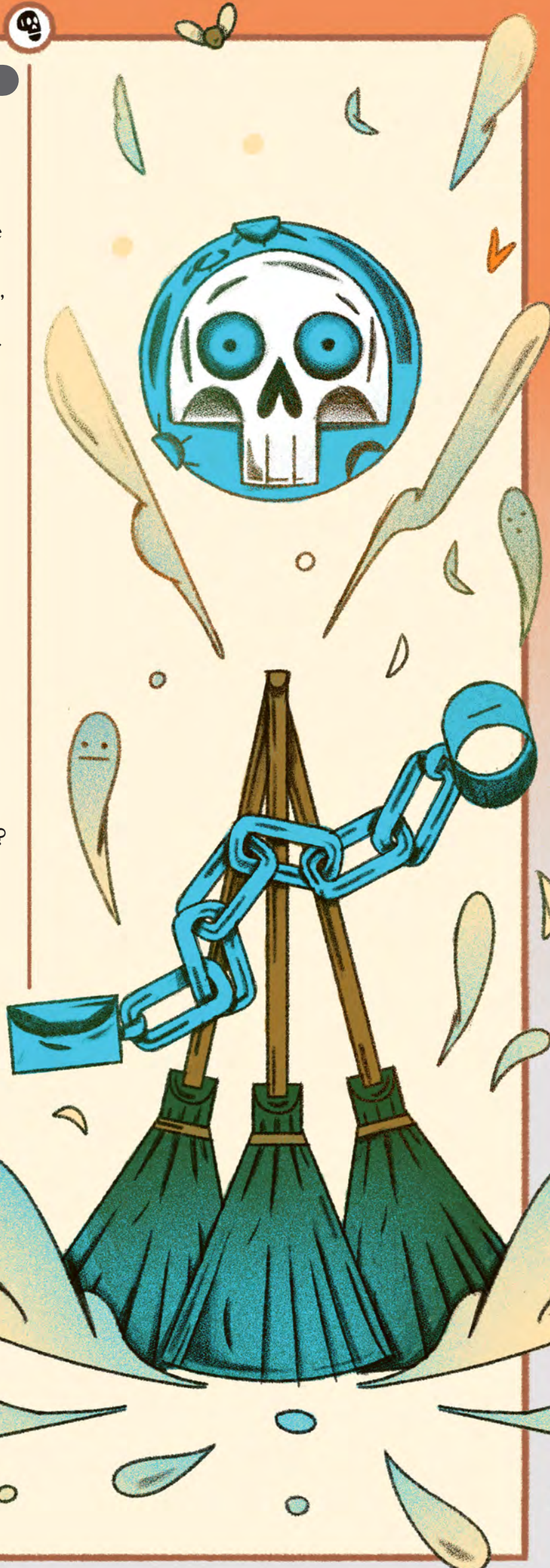
...if you sweep after sunset, you're liable to have bad luck cling to you.

...if someone is cleaning and sweeps the broom over your feet, you're likely to have bad luck or end up in jail.

Fortunately, there's a solution in such cases, quickly spit on the broom and you're in the clear!

Are you moving to a new house? Then you almost certainly won't be taking your old broom with you. That is unless you want to risk bad luck.

Cross over a broomstick? Ha, ha! Bad luck! Sweep under the bed of an invalid? Bad luck guaranteed! Sometimes people leave their broom outside their front door... This prevents unwelcome visits from sinister witches.



FINGER NAILS

Never cut your nails at night! They'd never do anything so thoughtless in India, Turkey or in South Korea! They wouldn't want to make their life hell after all! In Japan they believe that such a nocturnal activity brings death! People used to cut their finger nails using super-sharp knives...well, when you can't see very well, you can imagine what might happen...



A WALLET ON THE GROUND?

No-o-o-o!!! Never put your wallet or purse on the ground! Unless you want to lose your money and be financially ruined! They know all about this in Central and South America and the Philippines, where this superstition appears.



I'm a superstitious person and sometimes superstitions really get me in a bind. What to do about it? Why not write a book in which I find out all about these superstitions. Where do they come from? Maybe if I got a good close look at them, I'd get rid of my curse. And so I started writing. I searched for and studied all of the superstitions across the world. And guess what happened...I lost my fear. For example, of the number thirteen and black cats. I hope this will help readers as it did me. And that you'll also have fun, but most importantly, that you'll find out lots of interesting things about some of these superstitions from all corners of the globe.