**Urban Legend Assignment (and some Final Project info)**

**World Literature**

**Step One: Read aloud the definition and understand the purpose of urban legends**

**Urban legend**(n): a humorous or horrific story or piece of information circulated as though true, especially one purporting to involve someone vaguely related or known to the teller. They often explain a custom or tradition, like carving pumpkins, bobbing for apples, or trick or treating. They are also believable.

Urban legends, also known as urban myths or urban tales, are a kind of contemporary legend and are classified as folklore by sociologists and folklorists. They often combine elements of the fantastical with those of the mundane to create something vaguely believable. Urban legends are sometimes repeated in news stories and distributed by e-mail or social media. People frequently allege that such tales happened to a friend of a friend.

An urban legend can be passed down through generations with only minor changes to the overall narrative, and similar urban legends can be found thousands of miles apart in vastly disparate cultures. Contemporary legends are far from a modern phenomenon.

Step Two: **Brainstorm and reimagine an urban legend w/ a partner**

With one partner, take a well-known urban legend and add new details and a significant twist to the story. Brainstorm ideas for your retold urban legend (using the summary writing strategy) on a separate lined sheet of paper and summarize the story in 1 paragraph on a separate sheet of paper and be prepared to share it. Make sure that you introduce the story well and add detail and specifics to the story. The story will also need a conclusion. REMEMBER THAT JUST BECAUSE IT IS ONLY FIVE PARAGRAPHS DOES NOT MEAN IT’S BASIC

Urban Legend Requirements: Your five sentence summary needs to be detailed and story told from “the friend of a friend.” There must be creepy that motivates the listener to do something or not do something. Examples are below:

Examples: Bloody Mary, The Hook, The Vanishing Hitchhiker, Poisonous Daddy Long Legs, Being Buried Alive, Skinwalkers, Sasquatch, Stonehenge, New York Sewer Gators, the Easter Island Statues, Will O’ the Wisps

Step Three**: Understand the Final Project**

**Due October 18th**

With a partner, create your own original world legend. The legend must be about something OUTSIDE of North America. Your legend will be 5-8 paragraphs long and should be written as a lengthier summary. Your summary needs to be objective and should teach a life lesson about how people should act or why something happens to certain people. You will need to choose words and use language that teach that life lesson. You will write and revise three separate drafts before you are done. Don’t just turn in your first draft unchanged as your final draft.

You will need to approve your project before you create it and you must include a reflection of your work. If I were you, I would both work on the story, but put one person in charge of the reflection and one person in charge of the final draft of the story. Shy away from cliché, stereotypical, and uninformed projects. You’re welcome to work with a partner, but if you choose to do so, you will need to produce a significant project in order to show that you both worked on it and spend time on it.

**The Legend of the Wailing Woman of the Great Salt Lake**

**Note: No North American Legends. This is just an example.**

The Legend of the Great Salt Lake has been passed down from generation to generation for hundreds of years. The legend explains that the Great Salt Lake, a lake in Northern Utah that is one of the world’s saltiest bodies of water and very shallow, plunging to depths of only 27 feet in its deepest parts, was not always salty. In fact, only since the early 1800s do people remember the lake being salty. The reason the lake turned was because of one girl’s love for two men.

Raven Darkholme was the chieftain’s daughter of the Shoshone tribe. She was beautiful, with a tan, oval face, a slender figure, and long, dark tresses that flowed to her waist. When she walked, it looked like she was wading through a river; when she laughed, it sounded like the gentle tinkling of chimes. When she strode through her village, most of the men stopped what they were doing and watched her, admiringly.

Raven loved two men: Her first love, Nahko, had been her childhood friend since she was very young. He was happy and fun-loving. He loved to take her up the canyon and see the falls and give her daisies missing petals as gifts. Kanen, the chieftain’s son from the Piute tribe, was her other love. He was strong and proud, a leader among his people. Raven cared for them both, but knew she would ultimately have to choose between the two.

One morning, she met Nahko on the shores of the enormous lake her people called *Maska*. Its waters were light and beautiful, although it was shallow and still. They loved to go and see the gulls swoop down and catch flies on the glassy surface of the lake in the early mornings. They ventured to the far northeast side of the lake, their horses steaming in the cool air when they heard a cry. A Ute hunting party had spotted them and were swiftly moving towards them. They usually never came this far south and the two teens were shocked at the sight of them. The Utes were enemies to the Shoshone and Piute tribes.

Raven and Nahko jumped onto their horses and rode for the mountain, hoping that they could lose the tribe in the foothills, but were overtaken quickly. The tribe tackled Nahko off of his horse and, in the ensuing fight, stabbed him in the abdomen. Raven cried out and ran to him. One of the tribe grabbed her violently and rapped her over the head in disdain, leaving her unconscious. As she fell, the red tattoo on her arm, marking her as a chieftain’s daughter, became exposed. Realizing what they had done and fearing retribution, the group rode away before they had any time to check on either victim.

Hours later, Kanen came to the site of the struggle and, in terror and pain, stabbed himself in the chest, thinking that Raven was dead. When she came to and saw both dead, Raven threw herself upon them, wailing in agony and suffering. She wandered off and walked the shores of the lake. By the time her father sent out a party, they found her delirious and starved. She died a short time later.

Weeks later, after their burial, an old horseman looking for water, traveled to the lake. When he dipped his satchel into the water and drank, he spit out the salty brine in disgust. As he rode away, he thought he heard a voice cry out in pain. To this day, if you go to the salt lake late at night, it is said you can still hear Raven moaning over her loss, her bitter tears changing the lake into salt, her bloody dress darkening the surface of the water.

This is also where the term “salty” comes from to describe people who are angry and bitter. ☺