

S4.2 FABLES, LEGENDS AND HISTORY



S4.2.2

We will learn about a Maltese legend.

A. What is a legend?

Legends can be true, partly true or entirely made up. Legends nowadays form part of our culture.

We should always divide a legend in two:

- ❖ the true facts on which the legend is based
- ❖ the actual legend

Let us use as an example two legends associated with the Church of "tal-Ħerba" in Birkirkara.

THE LEGEND OF THE HEALING IN "TAL-ĦERBA"

The Truth: There really is a church known as "Tal-Ħerba" in Birkirkara. This is a picture of the present church, however this is not the original church.

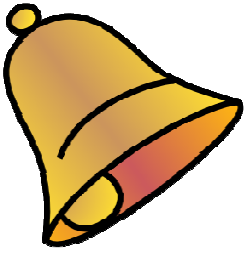
"Tal-Ħerba" was a small, old church to which the part shown in the photo was added in 1673. The antique part was kept and used as a sacristy while the extension was dedicated to Our Lady's Nativity. The façade and the bell tower were built in 1797.



The First Legend: HEALING IN "TAL-HERBA"

A man used to walk on crutches. Once he heard the bell ringing and went into the church. He spent a long time in deep prayer and suddenly, he felt as if he'd been healed. He stood up shouting: "A Miracle! A Miracle!"

The Second Legend: THE BELL THAT RANG ON ITS OWN



During the night a man broke in to try to steal some jewellery. As soon as he touched the jewellery on the statue of Holy Mary, his hand froze and he remained stuck where he was. At that precise moment, to everyone's astonishment, the bell started ringing, the people came and the thief was caught red handed.

B. Exercises in CREATIVE WRITING

Create your own legend by using one of the following themes. Don't forget that a legend, in spite of being entirely made up, has historic roots. Every legend should not be longer than 100 words.

1. PIETRU AND THE THIEVES OF MDINA



Last year, Pietru, a nine year old boy, was walking around the old city of Mdina minding his own business. Three thieves attacked him and beat him up. However, a knight on horseback appeared and saved him.

2. MARIJA AND THE NUN IN THE CITADEL

Last year, Marija, a Gozitan, nine year old girl went for a walk along the bastions of the Citadel. She spots a young nun who tells her the story of how she was taken a slave by the Turks and how she died in slavery.



3. TONINU AND THE TURKISH SLAVE

Toninu, a nine year old boy from Vittoriosa relates how he often goes walking in the vicinity of St Angelo's castle and how he once saw a man who was around 40 years old and who was dressed as a slave. The man tells Toninu many things about his life and about how he used to live during the Great Siege of Malta (1565).



Number _____.
