

Mythology with John Bucher

Ologies Podcast

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Heeeyyy. Hi! It's your old buddy, Alie Ward; your old weird dad, wearing corduroy pants, coming to you from a hotel room in Portland, Oregon, overlooking a bus stop and a variety of dumpsters. But in this episode, we'll all be transported to Rome, and a small theater in Texas, and Mesopotamia, and the underworld, and the Amazon, and Detroit. Because: Mythology.

Let's talk about myths. There are two things: sweeping epic tales that transcend time and culture; and then there's also weird schoolyard lies like 'tongue-kissing will make you pregnant.'

For this episode: we're focusing on the sweeping epics.

Where does 'myth' come from? Well, in short, it's Greek and means story or words; narratives. Before we meet our Ologist, I do want to tell you a story about this lady who makes a podcast. Every week, she would creep into a cave (also known as her closet, filled with laundry) and read all of the magical reviews that beautiful elves with ears would leave her. And it would make her so happy and also like a clarion call, it would make the podcast go up in the charts and alert everyone in the land to listen! So what I'm saying is, I creep your reviews, and read every single review you guys leave, and it makes me so happy. Thank you so, so much! Every week I like to read a review that just tickled me a little bit. This week's review, Lance Jagerson [phonetic] says, "Good pod." "Hi! It's a very good pod!" It starts off casual, then says:

I literally changed my major to become a science teacher because of this podcast. It's amazing.

Like, WHAT?! Get it! So, thank you for the reviews, I read them all.

Also, thank you to everyone throwing magical coins into my [Patreon.com/Ologies](https://www.patreon.com/Ologies) well, and supporting the podcast, and for buying merch at [OlogiesMerch.com](https://www.ologiesmerch.com). There's so many cool shirts, and hats, and pins, and totes, and that goes to support the podcast.

Okay, back to myths. So, I hadn't started releasing any episodes of Ologies yet; this was last year. One day I went to the LA Zoo to meet up with Episode 2's Primatologist. (If you listened to that episode, you know that story, it's a little embarrassing on my part but it ends well.) But while there, I met a friend of a friend who is married to a mythologist. She's like, "You're looking for ologists? I've got a mythologist!" My reaction was like, "HOLY SHIT! YES!"

MYTHOLOGY IS AN OLOGY; I didn't even THINK about that one! So, I had this guy on my list for almost a year before sitting down with him, and it turns out, he's like, a really big deal. He has a PhD in Mythology, and he's written books on narrative structure, and has worked with Morgan Freeman, and Julia Roberts, and Matt Damon, and Paul McCartney, and Denzel Washington, and a bunch of other people that I'm probably not even listing right now. Anyway, he's great. He's very passionate about myths, and he works in the movie business to make them better.

So, we exchanged emails for, like, a million months, and then finally I went to his house. It was Super Bowl Sunday and I was like, "I'm so sorry that I scheduled this on Super Bowl Sunday!" And he's like, "I don't give a shit." And I was like, "Cool." His house is filled with all of this crazy movie memorabilia, and antique projectors, and gramophones, and wax cylinders, and I think I spent a good 40 minutes before we even started recording, just trying not to touch expensive antiques in his house. He and his wife, Katie, are amazing, they welcomed me in. We went to his study, and then we sat down to talk about MYTHS, and Joseph Campbell, and *Star Wars*, and how Walt Disney ruined cautionary tales for little girls, and the underworld, and Elvira. So, please get ready to fall in love with Mythology and narrative structure all over again, while also learning some very valuable lessons about yourself, and your own human psychology, and the way that you tell your story to yourself and the world. Hoo boy! With, Mythologist, John Bucher.

John Bucher: It's pronounced "booker" but it's spelled B u c h e r. My ancestors did me no favor with that, it's been one of the banes of my existence. So yeah, it's John Bucher and I'm so sorry.... I feel like I have to apologize for my name.

Alie Ward: *[laughing]* I'm glad you did, because I was like, "when is he going to apologize for how his name is pronounced, because this is really upsetting to me." My last name is pronounced *[garbled nonsense]*.

Now, you are a mythologist?

John: I am a mythologist, yes.

Alie: Does your business card say that?

John: It actually does, yes.

Alie: It does! At what point did you get to call yourself a mythologist?

John: I went after my doctorate in mythology. At that point, you get to call yourself a mythologist when you knocked that PhD in mythology out. The Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara is one of the only places in the world that you can actually get a doctorate in mythology. And that is where the Joseph Campbell Libraries exist, which is one of the reasons I chose to go to that school, because I really was interested in this guy named Joseph Campbell, who I had heard about from this guy you probably haven't heard of, named George Lucas.

Alie: Mmmm, an-up-and-comer.

Aside: In the year 1971, George Lucas was in a bunch of personal debt, which always makes me wonder, what he was buying? I like to think he was spending the money on yoga classes and too much Dr Pepper. That's probably what I would spend it on. But he started writing a movie about a Jedi Warrior, which was okay. Universal Studios read it, and was like, "yeah, no, sorry loser." The story goes that Lucas revisited some of Joseph Campbell's works about mythology, tweaked the script, sent another

draft to 20th Century Fox, and they were like, “yo this is tight” and George Lucas is now worth \$5.3 billion. Thanks, Joe Campbell!

John: A few people went and saw the movie, and now we, sort of, look to Joseph Campbell as being one of the spiritual fathers of *Star Wars*. But it also opened up a lot of people's imagination to the role of mythology in our current society, which I think is super interesting.

Alie: Give me a little bit of a 101 on Joseph Campbell, because I feel like I didn't know who Joseph Campbell was until I moved to Los Angeles and started dating screenwriters, and their bookshelves are *mostly* Joseph Campbell. Can you give me a little bit of a primer on what his deal was, and why he suddenly was like, “p.s. this is how you tell a story”?

John: Yes. Joseph Campbell was an academic guy, but someone who never got a doctorate, whose curiosity became an utter passion about why different cultures around the world had told the same stories, when they had never come in contact with each other. I'll give you an example. Every culture in the world has a flood story about how the whole Earth was flooded, and things started over. Most of us in Western Culture, of course, associate that with Noah in the Bible, but *every* culture has this flood story.

And Joseph Campbell began to look at that and noticed, actually there were stories of floods that predated the Hebrew scriptures. We see this in Amazonian culture, we see this in Greek culture. We see it in Roman culture, Asian culture; all over the world, for some reason, there was some need, in human beings, to have a story that people pointed to that was about the whole Earth being flooded.

Alie: Where does the hit movie *Waterworld* come in?

John: That is a great question, because that is our modern retelling of the flood story, and I think we can see how far things have come now that we've got Kevin Costner on the job. Really, is there need, ever again, to tell that flood story? I think not.

Alie: It's the *new* Testament!

Aside: *Waterworld* was the 1995 Kevin Costner flick that was essentially *Mad Max* meets *Burning Man* in the open ocean, and it was the most expensive film ever made at the time, 175 million bones, yet it scored only 42% Fresh on Rotten Tomatoes. The production remains a myth in and of itself - a tale of hubris teaching us all not to spend \$75 million over budget, lest everyone throw shade at your movie before it even comes out, and then make fun of it for years. It's very applicable to all of our lives, I think. Oh, it's not?

Alie: Are these stories mostly cautionary tales, kind of like how you dream, and in your dream, your narratives are usually rehearsals for terrible things to come? So when it happens in real life, you're like, "I got this, I did this a dream." Is that kind of what myths are?

John: Well, this is an excellent question, and it's also a question that you kind of have to unpack a bit. It's interesting that you bring up dreams, because a lot of myths are

actually based on dreams, or they occur in the context of a dream. And this is what connects mythology with depth psychology.

Aside: Quick definition I just looked up: depth psychology is the study of unconscious mental processes and motives, especially in psychoanalytic theory and practice. That's deep psychology. I tried to look up if there is a field of shallow psychology but I think that's just, like, brunch.

John: One of the big reasons people study mythology is understanding the psyche of people that tell these stories. So, with depth psychology and dreams, we've determined that when people have a dream, usually every character in your dream is you. *[spooky ghostly laughing and "woooooah" from Alie and John]* So if you even have a dream about your parents and something weird happening, there is some aspect of that dream where every character is you. Your mother, that's some part of you that's playing that out, your father, that's some part of you that's playing that out.

So, Joseph Campbell was one of the first to begin to connect that idea of mythology and psychology and begin to figure out, "you know, there are these stories that exist all over the world, perhaps because people are having the same dreams, and having the same experiences in their head," which really began to open up a lot of curiosity, and other people to say, "Huh, I wonder if that's true." Because I'm guessing, you and I have had some of the same dreams. Have you ever had that dream where you feel like you're falling, and right before you hit the ground, you're like, "UH!"?

Alie: Yep! Oh, and then there's the tooth dream, where all your teeth fall out. And then I have this dream a lot where I will find a new room in the house. I've lived somewhere, and then I'm suddenly like, "Oh, I have another room! It's empty!" Is that a thing?

John: Yes, that's a thing! Psychologists and mythologist would say that is usually our psyche that is wanting to open up some new area of our life, or some new area in your experience that you should begin to let your own curiosity seek out. Like, "Okay, what new areas do I need to go into, because there's something inside me that is wanting to explore something new." *[spooky, echoey, glitchy: "Wahooo-hooo"]*

Aside: So what was John's entrée into mythology? How did that big, heavy, dusty door creak open? *[creaky door opening]*

John: When I saw *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, I determined that was what I wanted my life to be. But I grew up in the oil fields of east Texas, and 'archeologist' was not anything that people really did for a living. So, you know, I got involved in technology, and film and television, and all sorts of other types of storytelling. But really my heart was going back to *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and seeing Indiana Jones travel around the world, and not just solve mysteries but come in contact with the ancient stories, and relics, and symbols that had existed for thousands of years and bringing interpretation to those things.

Aside: So he kept hearing this name, Joseph Campbell, bandied about by screenwriting gurus, and started to go down rabbit holes reading his work. And then he found out Campbell's library archives were in Santa Barbara and that the Pacifica

Graduate Institute offered a PhD in mythology and archeological connections to mythology. He was like, "Whoa dude!" (He probably had a more eloquent reaction, but you know what I'm saying.)

John: And I thought, this is as close to Indiana Jones as I may ever get in my life. I really do believe, whatever we end up pursuing in our lives, if it's our passion, it probably goes back to something very young within us. And for me it was going back to this little movie theater in downtown Tyler, Texas that had broken seats and smelled like mildew, but somehow in the darkness among strangers, I was transported to another world where adventures took over my life. And I knew I wanted my life to be full of the sort of adventures I was seeing playing out in this waking dream on the screen.

Alie: Wow.

Aside: When you obtain an PhD in mythology, your life may entail travels to places such as Italy, Greece, Malta (which is an insanely tiny island off the coast of Sicily, that I just looked up), and Dubai where you may help infuse the ancient stories of mythology into amusement parks exhibits and other cool stuff, and so on. At least, if you're John Bucher, who I imagine had to staple extra pages into his passport, which is the best problem to have.

John: My interest in mythology, or sort of my brand, has become connecting the ancient stories, archetypes, and symbols of the past with our modern cutting-edge technology and augmented reality, virtual reality, immersive storytelling.

Alie: When it comes to myths, Greek myths, Roman myths, why are they so similar? Which came first? And did you get hooked on mythology, as a kid, in that way? Classic Mythology?

John: I did. I loved classic mythology as a kid. I had no idea... We just really studied Greek mythology when I was a kid, but I had no idea that you could actually somehow involve a career in that. While I still love Greek mythology, I really have come to appreciate mythology that pre-dates Greek mythology. This is the Babylonian and Sumerian mythology. I'll give you one very brief example of what I think is one of the most powerful stories, and it originates in the lower Mesopotamian valley, with the Sumerians, but I'm going to give you just a taste of the Greek version of it.

The Greeks called this myth the story of Demeter and Persephone. And what it was, is Persephone is out one day, she's gathering pomegranates. She's having a great time, she's out with her girlfriends. They're just walking around enjoying the Greek life. And all of a sudden, out of nowhere, Hades comes up from the underworld, riding a chariot, snatches up Persephone, takes her down to the underworld, and keeps her.

Alie: What a dick move.

John: What a dick move! So her mother, Demeter, she's livid. She can't believe this would have happen. She sort of had a thing going on with Zeus... So she goes Zeus and she's like, "Hey, I'll tell you what, if you want to keep [with innuendo] enjoying the fruits of my labor, you're going to go and send somebody to get my daughter out of Hades." Zeus was

really loving the love he was getting from Demeter, and so he says, “alright, I’m going to send my messenger to go and get Persephone out of Hades.”

So he sends his messenger down, and the messenger tries to negotiate a deal, and they work out this deal where she’s gonna spend part of the year up with her mother, and part of the year down to the underworld. Now they tell you later in the myth, actually that Persephone kind of enjoyed being the Goddess Queen of the underworld, that she got to kind of dig being the, the badass down in the underworld. So she didn’t really mind going back for three months of the year.

Now, she would go back to the underworld for three months of the year. Her mother, Demeter, Goddess of the Harvest, she would have her heart broken for those three months. She wouldn’t allow the grass to grow, she would allow it to get very cold, and this was how the Greeks explained Winter.

Alie: Ooooh man!

John: Yeah! But that originates with the Sumerians. They were telling a version of that story long before the Greeks. So, in some ways myths are ways to explain things about the world that we don’t really know how to explain, and so as we develop science and things like that, sometimes myths go away. But I think what we lose, even when we develop better science, is we lose sort of the archetypal meaning of what it means to go way down to the underground.

Do you ever go to a city and it’s like, I’m just going to go to all the salty bars in the city, and I just kinda need a low-down, dirty experience here in this city?

Alie: When I need to do that, I wear more eyeliner. I’m like, “Look at me, I’m so dark!”

John: Alie, we have so much in common. It’s just crazy to me, how much.

Alie: It reminds me of Elvira, how she’s played by Cassandra. Probably, three months of the year she’s Elvira, the rest of the time she’s just a redhead eating sushi in Hollywood. You know what I mean?

Aside: Elvira: Mistress of Dark, is (according to articles about her, and I read more articles than I needed to because I just couldn’t stop...) She’s solidly booked for Halloween-season engagements, September through November. Three months of the year, people! The rest of the time, she’s a gentle Kansas-born redheaded woman named Cassandra Peterson who’s a vegetarian, loves watching Netflix and singing. I’m telling you, I read a lot of articles about her.

John: Can I also, just quickly, tell you the mythological origins of Cassandra?

Alie: Yes!

John: Because that is a name that we get from Greek mythology. And it’s interesting in our day and age especially, because Cassandra, very beautiful woman, right? One of the gods, he starts hitting on her. Starts hitting on her and she’s not having it. Because she’s not having it, he decides to up the ante and give her a special gift. He decides to give

Cassandra the gift of prophecy; she's going to be able to tell the future. She's still not having it. She's just not going to get with this guy. This god spits in her mouth! Not cool!

He spits in her mouth and it curses her tongue, so that when she speaks prophecy, no one will believe her. So she's just a woman in Greek mythology that has the ability to tell the future, but the curse is that no one will believe her. Now, I think that's a super, super important myth for women in our culture right now, that they identify greatly with that, and women have felt that way for thousands of years. I think that's a really important myth.

Alie: That's just like an old-timey gaslighting to the extreme.

John: You can say that again!

Alie: So tell me the basic arc of a story. Because I think once you start kind of cracking open, like, the Joseph Campbell, the mythology box, you start to realize every story is the same story, same pattern. It's almost like a song; it's got a crescendo, it's got an ending, it's got a beginning. What is a story, what are these patterns?

John: So, even before Joseph Campbell began to identify this, we've got our friend Aristotle who tells us that every story should have a beginning, a middle and an end. And even though we're like, "yeah, duh!" now, this was really revolutionary at the time, right? Because nobody's telling stories in three acts, and this is a big deal. Now, what becomes important about three-act structure - having a beginning, a middle and an end - is that it sort of sets up this idea that psychologists have determined is why stories are how we see the world. And that is, the way storytelling structure works in some ways mirrors the way the human brain solves problems.

So, in a good story, we basically have somebody... this is important, try telling a story without a character; really tough to do. We have to have somebody who WANTS something. It's really not a very cool story if it's somebody who just sits around all the time, eating Cheerios. They have to want something. They have to want to get up from whatever they're doing and go after something, right? So, somebody that wants something, and then someone or something standing in the way of that.

Here's an example. There was once a story guru who said, "A cat lying on a blanket? That's just a scenario. But a cat lying on a dog's blanket, now that's a story!" Because we have somebody who wants something, and someone standing in the way of that. There's conflict. Conflict's an important part of a story. And that is what myths are so good at, taking these unconscious ideas and feelings, and actually putting them into stories that we could see and experience.

Alie: You know, I've often thought... I used to study Latin and in Latin we had to learn a lot about the myths because, like, who else are you going to talk about? And I remember thinking, the way that we look at celebrities is so much like the mythology back in, say, Roman and Greek Times. So, someone is a demigod, I feel like we see celebrities as half-God, half-human. They're followable, they have an ascent, they have a rise, they

have a hubris, they have a fall. What role do you think celebrities play in our modern mythology? Or do you think we play that out all in movies?

John: No, I think celebrities very much are the archetypes that we need within our psyche, and within mythology itself. And part of that is because there are certain things that we've moved away from, ritualistically, in society. There used to be this idea in ancient cultures, the Greeks would call it the pharmakos. This was basically 'the person we're going to sacrifice' every year.

Alie: Oh, boy.

John: Yeah. So this would be the person we're going to put all the bad things on, and all the sins on this person, and go sacrifice them to the gods and say, "Hey, let us slide on everything. We're gonna, you know, sacrifice this person." And we see this in cultures all throughout the world. This idea, by the way that that word, pharmakos, is where we get the word pharmacy or medicine. It's a 'soothing' of the gods, you know.

Now, of course, we don't sacrifice people anymore, but we kind of do. Look at a Paris Hilton, look at a Kim Kardashian. We build those people up, we praise them. And then there seems to be an endless amount of joy taken at sacrificing those people's reputation, who they are as people, and we create an archetype out of them that we need in order to feel better about ourselves. We need to sacrifice that part of us that's vain. We need to sacrifice that part of us that is a shallow and substance-less. And we put all that upon these celebrities, we build them up, and then we enjoy seeing them taken down. And then we always love a good comeback in the end as well.

Alie: Do you think that that follows story structure, kind of? Like, is the beginning their ascent, is there an inciting incident? What are some bare bones of stories that we see in our everyday life and in movies? When you talk about a beginning, middle and end, what *has* to be in a story?

John: So, Joseph Campbell talked about this when he talked about the hero's journey. In the hero's journey we basically have this hero, or this man or woman who decides, "You know what? This world that I'm living, my small village or town or city... The normal world... I need something I can't get here." And so, there's this acceptance of the call that the hero decides, I'm going to leave everything I know to go out after this thing. And Campbell called it a boon, or an elixir, or some sort of a magic medicine, you know, that they would go after. And so then they would go after whatever it is they're going after. They would fight dragons, and there were enemies, and gatekeepers, and all these people to keep them from getting what they were after.

But then, when they got it, it wasn't enough just to get their hands on it. It was very important to the story that they returned back home and brought the elixir back to where they started. Back to the people at home. I think this is something that we often forget in stories today. We often want to end the person's story with the accomplishment of the goal because we live in a very capitalistic society that is very much all about just getting what you want, and that's the whole point of life. But actually, societies before ours believed that the experience of wonder was much greater

than even the experience of success. And wonder could only be experienced by bringing back the elixir, bringing back whatever you had learned on the journey, bringing it back to others who needed that information and that experience.

And in that, an endless wonder was put within you because you could always share your experiences and the lessons that you learned. And I think that is something that our modern storytelling tends to... in its efforts to be efficient, we try and cut that away. But again, when we go back and look at myths, that was always an important part of the story, bringing back what you had learned or what you had gotten.

Alie: Now when people call on you, do they say, "I'm writing a script. I'm developing a series, help me figure out where the holes are, help me figure out how to make this flow."?

John: You know, it's different almost with every project, but that happens a lot where a production company, or a writer, or a studio will call up and say, "Hey, we've got this project, we know there's some problems with it. We're not exactly sure what they are or even how to fix them. Could you come in and take a look?" And I am always happy to go and do that.

Sometimes though, people will be developing a show that is around some really specific part of history that has some sort of mythological connection. And by the way, I should mention that mythology is not just confined to the Greeks, and Romans, and the sort of typical myths that we think of. I did deep work on the mythology of Hinduism, and Islam, and Buddhism, Sufiism, Christianity, Judaism, you know, all of our religious traditions are mythological in nature as well.

Aside: John will consult on TV shows and films that have religious or mythological connections. Or, he might be in the writers' room for, say, a show that takes place in ancient Rome, so he can give some context to Roman stories so they're not just people from the Valley wearing togas and stuff.

John: If you're trying to tell a truthful story that relates to our culture today, you sort of have to use the psychology of the way people think today, but you also have to be true to the history. So you have to find a middle ground psychologically between the motivations people understand today and the history of what was happening at the time. You know, the way that men and women interacted, the way that children were treated...

Alie: They're like, [*silly mocking voice*] "How can we make Caligula likable?" [*John laughing*] You're like, "Weeeeellll... he kills everyone. He sexually assaults farm animals. It's gonna be a hard sell.

Aside: Lest you think I'm being hyperbolic, please do give Caligula a Google. Thank you, Wikipedia for informing me that, "Once, at some games at which he was presiding, he ordered his guards to throw an entire section of the audience into the arena during the intermission, to be eaten by the wild beasts because there were no prisoners to be used and he was bored." Ummmm.... Impeach, much?

Alie: So, can you tell me the difference between a story, a myth, a fable, a parable? What's the difference?

John: Yeah, that's a great question actually. Let me start with a fable, because I think that's a really interesting place to start. One of the more common fables, most of us have heard of Aesop's fables, and we know fables like the tortoise and the hare for example. Most of us are familiar with that story, and we know sort of the meaning of the story is, 'don't get lazy,' and 'slow and steady wins the race,' and 'if you nap with the finish line, the turtle will eventually beat you.' We don't really have the correct understanding of how fables work today because we tend to think of ourselves as one character and then whoever is in opposition to us as the other character. The people who would hear the story of the tortoise and the hare, would understand that fables were actually meant to describe two sides of the same person.

Alie: Oooohhhh!

John: So, inside you, there's a tortoise and there's a hare, and it's not meant to say, "Alie, you be the tortoise and not the hare." It's actually meant to say, "Inside of Alie is a tortoise AND a hare and it's going to be up to you to negotiate, navigate, if you're going to sometimes let the hare get all the way up to the finish line. This part of you then may defeat that part of you." They were meant to be psychological ideas that took place inside of people, as opposed to morality tales. That's sort of what a fable is.

A myth, on the other hand, is usually a long story that does not have a traditional Hollywood happy ending. It's a story of a journey. It's usually a road trip of someone going someplace, but it also incorporates, in mythology, stories of humankind's interaction with 'the other,' or what we call 'the other.' Sometimes that means gods, sometimes that means supernatural monsters. Sometimes that means all sorts of other beings, but much of mythology is about us encountering the other.

There was this child psychologists and the seventies, Bruno Bettelheim, that wrote this book called *The Uses of Enchantment*, and it was basically talking about how childhood myths about monsters are really important for a child's development. Because, when we think we're going to scare kids, when we think we're going to scare children by telling them about monsters, they don't learn how to deal with the most important monster they'll ever face, the one that lives inside of them.

So this is one reason that there are all these wonderful theorists that talked about the importance of fairytales. There was a woman named Marie-Louise von Franz who did incredible work about the psychology and importance of fairytales, especially in women. That it's very important that young women have certain fairytales that they hear when they're younger because it actually prepares young women for certain experiences. One of those fairytales is the story of Little Red Riding Hood.

Alie: It's like, beware, there's dudes out there who want to eat you and kill your grandma. It's legit.

John: That's it. *[laughing]* It's legit.

Alie: But so many fairytales piiiissss me off. Like, you go back and you watch a lot of Disney movies, and you're like, "This is all just a weeping, frail woman who gets swept up by a

prince,” and you're like, “How...?” As a modern feminist I look at that and I'm like, “Don't feed that garbage to your children!” So how do you reconcile the change in society with these really well-worn myths and stories?

John: First, you have to recognize that Disney really messed up fairy tales. Yeah, ‘Disney-fied’ fairytales are not anything I’m a huge fan of. Fairytales, before Disney got a hold of them, were very Adult in nature, and they were very violent, and they involved all sorts of things that we today would say is not appropriate for children. So, I think you have to expose your children to the truth of real fairytales and not a Disney-fied version that *does* make every woman to be helpless, a princess that is waiting to be saved.

Let’s go back to Red Riding Hood for a second. It originated from this Bavarian folk tale called *The Story of Grandmother*. And there are some feminists’ theorists that feel like it was actually a story that was told to young women about dealing with, their oncoming, puberty and menstruation, and that whole idea of “Red Riding Hood” had symbolism, you know, about menstruation.

But also, if you go back to *The Story of Grandmother*, the wolf in the bed portraying the grandmother, asked the young woman to strip off all her clothes and get completely naked in the bed with her. And the girl in the story is old enough that, at that time, she wouldn't have thought that was her grandmother. She would have seen, “This is a wolf dressed up as my grandmother.”

Alie: It’s a goddamn dog in a bonnet!

John: Right! So, in the story, part of the nuance, and the teasing out of that story, is that sometimes young women are also attracted to giving themselves permission to get in bed with the wolf and see how far that experience would go. And in that *Story of Grandmother*, by the way, there’s not a hunter that comes in and kills the wolf. The wolf eats the girl, and she is killed. It’s savage. But it’s also a story that I think has much more truth to it than the guy coming in and saving the young woman from the wolf.

Alie: And, the Hans Christian Andersen *Little Mermaid* was brutal, right?

Aside: Side note: in the original Hans Christian Anderson version of *The Little Mermaid*, the Prince falls in love with another princess and marries her, and the Little Mermaid - per the sea witch’s spell - is supposed to just die of a clinically broken heart. She’s like, “Sorry, lady.” But her sisters get a knife and have a plot to murder the prince and bathe her dumb, useless, new human feet in his blood so she can get her flippers back, but she can’t go through with it because she’s in love with him! So she turns into sea foam. She’s like “Man, this sucks.” Also, there’s like, no talking lobsters.

Alie: So, these fairytales before we, kind of, Americanized them, were cautionary tales?

John: That’s right.

Alie: And so now getting back to fable, myth... Story and parable, what are those?

John: So, a parable is typically a way of approaching the world through story that’s binary. A parable is meant to teach a very simple black and white lesson. Do this, don't do this. Be

good, don't be bad. So we see parables especially in the Bible and places like that, where morality is of the chief, utmost importance. So, parables really deal in the realm of morality. A story is really, sort of this arching umbrella that we put all these different things under.

There was a famous author that once said, "Everyone seems to know what a story is until they sit down to write one." We all sort of know what a story is, but it's tough sometimes for us to differentiate these things, and so we sort of loop all these things under the realm of 'story'; myths, parables, fairytales, all these things. We sort of put them under the umbrella of story. But I think there's value in teasing those things out. Just like a few moments ago when we talked about the idea of a fable taking place inside of one's self. But at the end of the day, I don't know that it's the public's job to be educated on all the nuanced differences between these things, as much as perhaps the storyteller's job, in knowing what sort of tools they're using to craft, what their intention is, and the audience, and the person who's listening to their story.

Alie, I take telling stories, super-seriously. I do, and I think it's a big responsibility. I feel like it's a calling. I feel like... Detroit, in the fall of last year, was the first city in the US to appoint a chief storyteller. It's this guy in Detroit, an African-American guy that's a brilliant journalist, and writer, and storyteller, and he has taken on the task of trying to change the narrative about Detroit.

Alie: Oh my God, I love this so much.

Aside: Side note: My sister lived in Detroit for a decade and I've always had a soft spot for Detroit's history. The city's Chief Storyteller is Aaron Foley, an author in his 30s, and he hates the word 'gritty' like your sister-in-law hates moist. He says, "By forever branding Detroiters as 'gritty,' we're put in the position of being pitied over. Bleeding hearts all over the place suddenly feel the plight of Detroiters." Which is a good point. Aaron Foley wrote the book *How to Live in Detroit Without Being a Jackass*, which, let's be honest, was written for chicks like me, because I'm, like, a jackass and I have dreams of living in an old Detroit Victorian. So, point taken.

Also, this book bears a gold and green cover script that takes you a second before realizing it's an homage to Vernors soda. This book is now very much on my reading list now, so thank you, Aaron. If there is an ology about Detroit, please can we talk about it?

Alie: For anyone who has wanted to write, I feel like, in all of us is a struggling writer. Every single person, I feel like, if you really got them, and had them lay out bare bones, what do they want? Everyone wants to write and create something. What advice do you give people who are starting to write a story, but they have blocks because they feel like they can't do it, or they don't know where to start, or they don't know if their voice is important. What is the first step?

John: That is such an important question because I think you're right. I think almost everybody has some desire to express their story in some form or another, and the first thing that a person needs to know is that no one else has ever told your story before and that the world is not complete without your story. Nobody can tell your story like you.

And it's so key to your own development as a person to have other people bear witness to who you are in your story, and to be able to speak honestly about your experiences, and what you've been through, and who you are. This is very key to our own journeys as human beings.

So, the first thing that I think people have to do is give themselves permission to tell a story. It doesn't have to align itself with your personal history to the T. Sometimes we change facts and we move things around. The key is to tell a story that's true. Don't try and tell me a story about what you've heard other people say is true. Tell me a story about what you've experienced and learned to be true yourself, because that will resonate with people no matter who they are. It's universal. We want to hear people speak from a true place. So, if you give yourself permission to tell that story, the only other thing you have to do, the hardest thing about writing, is getting your butt in a chair and actually doing it.

Alie: I know! What advice do you have for writer's block or writing anxiety?

John: You know, here's what I do. A couple of years ago I was standing in line at the Coffee Bean and I was working on a project and I was there, I think it was like 5:30, 6:00 o'clock in the morning.

Alie: Damn!

John: Yeah, I know, I was at the Coffee Bean, I needed coffee! But there were all these screenwriters sitting in there working on their writing, and I'm guessing they had to be at work by 8:00 AM, so they were in there doing it then. And it struck me: if there's a long line in Hollywood of people waiting to have their shot, those people deserve to be in line ahead of me. They are up doing this in the morning, and Alie, I didn't like anybody having an excuse to be ahead of me in that line! So I decided to start getting up every morning and writing at 6:00 AM.

And you know what? It has become one of the most rich parts of my life, because my brain's not fully on yet, so that filter and that part of me that says, "you can't do this" or "you can't say that"; none of that is engaged yet, and so the most pure parts of my imagination are coming out on the page. And I'll be honest with you, nobody calls me at six in the morning. I intentionally don't open my email, and it's sort of like the dessert I get first thing in the morning, that when I go to bed every night, I feel like no matter what happened the rest of the day, I got something done that day because I got some writing done.

Alie: What time do you go to bed?

John: I go to bed... You're going to laugh. I go get in bed about 9:00 or 9:30.

Alie: That's dope.

John: And I read for an hour to an hour and a half every night, because you cannot, in my opinion, become a great writer without becoming a reader. You have to read.

Alie: That was one of my questions, is how many books a year do you read? That was literally one of my questions that I wrote down. I was like, “Let's see how many books this mo'fucker has.

John: [*laughs*] Honestly, I try and read a book a week. It's also one of the things that I think is super important, is to read things that are outside of your interests. I'll be honest with you, I've become super fascinated right now with Times Square culture in the late '70s and early '80s.

Alie: Seriously? Times Square New York? Just that... Pre-Giuliani cleanup, heroin addicts...?

John: Just that little period. Yeah. Long before HBO did the show, *The Deuce*, this was really interesting to me. And I, by the way, strongly believe in psychotherapy, I go to a psychotherapist every week and she and I have talked about this at great length. And there are some real reasons I won't bore you with of why that is important, but I'll give you a hint.

We talked a few minutes ago about Demeter and Persephone, and Persephone's need to go to the underground. That is a mental underground for me to go to. It's an underworld that is far enough removed from my daily existence that I can sort of psychologically play about what would it have been like to have lived in that neighborhood at that time, when morals were thrown out the window, and there was a rawness to society. So, you know, six months from now I'll be on to something else. For a while I got super, super interested in how refrigerators work.

But let your curiosity go nuts, read about something that you have no connection or use for, and bringing it all back to Joseph Campbell, he said, he had this really famous phrase that was, “follow your bliss.”

Alie: Right! I did not know that was a Joseph Campbell quote until I started researching for this episode. (I did a little digging before I came here) and I was like, wait, I thought that was like an Instagram quote. I didn't know that “follow your bliss” was like... And I listened to a whole interview about that, and I was shook, clinically shook.

John: [*laughing*] I love it! If you really dig into that idea of following your bliss, it's not even ‘follow just what makes you feel good’ or ‘what makes you happy’; that word “bliss” when you begin to unpack it, it really is what makes you feel fulfilled, like your life has meaning, and that you have purpose in what you're doing. And I think for me, when I really got deep into Joseph Campbell, I really determined what my bliss was, and I was able to encapsulate it in a single phrase and a single idea.

And for me, my bliss is helping the world tell a better story. That is what I'm here on this Earth to do, is to help people, individuals, cultures, countries tell a better story. I'm in the business of saying, ‘whatever your story is, you could probably enjoy a slightly better story.’ There's a better version of your life that, with some sacrifices, with some things that you are interested in pursuing, could actually make a better story for you.

Alie: Do you find that with people? That a lot of times we are kind of slaves to our own narratives? That changing your narrative, what you say about yourself, what you say about your life, changes the outcome of it?

John: Pheeewwwww, I think that is so important! I really do! And I think what we tell people about our lives, it's a great window into what we already think, and sort of where we're going.

Alie: Really quick; where does mythology fit into superhero culture? Because I know, your wife is amazing, I met you through your wife, she works for DC. And you do consulting on superhero movies. Where are we with superhero movies? And also just a quick touch on, are we going to be seeing, like, *Wonder Woman*, *Black Panther*, like, flipping the script on who is doing the saving and things like that that?

John: You know, I grew up with superhero movies and I love superhero movies. Even if you look back through the history of comics and you look at the way that superheroes have changed in our modern era. The superheroes typically change to fit whatever psychological needs that we have as a culture. So, Superman was very important to the nation's psyche as we were fighting Adolf Hitler, that we felt like we can take down anybody! We're strong. This idea of Truth, Justice, and the American Way. It was very important, we needed that at that time. So whenever somebody can step in and provide an answer, provide something that helps us deal with what's happening psychologically in the world, we gravitate towards it.

Well, we're facing different problems right now. And so I think, the, the rise of *Wonder Woman* and the rise of *Black Panther*, man, those are super important to where we're at right now as a culture because we've seen... Especially this last year, the way that women have been treated in our culture has risen to the top and it's not covered up anymore. We're having to deal with that as a culture. We're having to deal with how violent we've been, how mean spirited we've been, what bullies we've been. And at the same time, women are dealing with having been through the experiences on the other side of that. And so I think *Wonder Woman* was a very, very important character for the cultural psyche, not only of women but of men as well.

Alie: What about *Black Panther*?

John: I think we're going to see the same thing there, with all the Black Lives Matter issues that have arisen in the last year or two, with racism being another issue that we are confronting as a culture. So, I think the future of superhero movies and superhero stories really depends on what problems we are willing to face in our culture. Because I'll tell you this much, if we don't confront a form of evil when it arises, if we just shush it away, it always comes back, just with a different face.

And we've seen this with the way that women have been treated. We've seen this with racism. When we don't deal with it, it just comes back with a different face. And I think we're finally ready, maybe, to deal with some of those issues in ways that *maybe* they're not going to come back, at least like they have before.

Alie: I think one thing that probably, part of the angst of the last year or so (especially politically) is that it feels like the end of the movie ended in the middle of the second act. It feels like, “ohh, wait, wait, wait, what?” Like, there was something to overcome and then the credits rolled, then you’re like, “Wait, this is the end? Who won??” You know, not to politicize it too much, but I think the people who listen to this know where I stand. But it does feel like, “oh, shit, no, we’re supposed to... he’s supposed to fall off a boat or something!” You know what I mean?

John: Well, I grew up in East Texas, and one of the things that I grew up with was the idea of the compost pile. Which, for those of you who didn't grow up out in the rural routes of our country, a compost pile is a place that you take the leftover food, and all the things that you don't want to burn in the trash barrel, and you put them out in a pile, and animals come and they eat from those things, and bugs... It's gross, it's nasty.

BUT, it actually is a significant, important part of the ecology of the Earth, and it also is what generates life, because what happens is the maggots, and the flies, and the gross insects come and they eat off this compost pile. And then the rats, and the mice, and stuff come and eat them, and then the wolves... and it goes on up the food chain, and it's the way that life is regenerated. And Alie, I think what we're seeing right now, especially in the American political system, I think we're seeing the grossness of the compost pile. I think in order to see new life be regenerated into something new, the process of death and decay, it's gross to look at and we're having to look at the grossness of the death and decay of certain types of fascism, and chauvinism, and racism. And we have a front row seat to it, so for us it looks disgusting and gross and, “will it ever end?!” But I think what we're actually seeing is the process of life regenerating, and the final gasps of some of these things that we've dealt with a long time.

Alie: Woah, so this is just, like, earwigs eating a soggy biscuit?

John: That's exactly what this is! I think it's the hope we can also, sort of, take with us, in dealing with those things, because otherwise I'm going to go to In-N-Out Burger and I'm going to order, like, 20 burgers and 20 shakes and just eat myself death, because what else is there, right? I mean, let's just all eat and get fat and die, if there's not something better. *[laughs]*

Alie: *[laughs]* If there are there missiles headed our way we might as well... Okay, I'm going to ask you some questions from *[French accent] ze audience*. Is that alright?

John: Of course.

Alie: Oh my God, so many. These are all questions from our Patrons, who are awesome. So, if they donate as little as 25 cents an episode they can ask questions of the Ologists. It's a pretty high price to pay! Twenty-five cents an episode!

John: *[laughing]* I love it!

Alie: My heart is cheap. Matt Brookner wanted to know: Joseph Campbell; overrated or rightfully enshrined? I think we know the answer to that one.

John: Absolutely. I don't agree with him on everything, by the way, but you don't have to agree with somebody on every single thing in order to recognize the value of their work.

Alie: Okay! Al Martinez: Greek and Roman Mythology were among my favorites in grammar school. Okay, that was not a question. That's okay though!

Zoe Teplick wants to know: What are some of the most persistent myths, the ones that appear in various cultures throughout history? I know you mentioned the flood...

John: Yeah, the flood. I'll tell you another, and it takes a lot of forms, but it's the idea of someone who's mistreated rising from their station. Every culture on the Earth today has some version of the Cinderella story. And so that story of someone who is mistreated, who has a difficult beginning in life, somehow rising out of the station that they're in. We see that play out time and time again throughout mythology, and I think there's a reason for that in our psychology. We need to believe that things can always get better.

Alie: Right, I think that's why we like a vicious clapback on Twitter. It's a tiny, tiny little myth.

John: Yes! *[laughs]* Such an art form.

Alie: I know! Oh, Al Martinez did have a question! He said: Greek and Roman mythology are the two best known in the Western world, which one proceeds the other or influences the other most? Which is a great question, who came first?

John: The Greeks. Greek mythology is the elder of those and the Romans adopted many of the Greek myths and then changed the names of the gods. Occasionally they would change the story up a little bit also, but we can't discount the importance of the Roman myths because even the Greeks took a lot of their myths from the Babylonians and the Assyrians. To answer this question, the Greeks definitely predated the Romans as far as the mythology goes.

Alie: Reboots on reboots! Michael Gonzalez asks: What is your favorite God from Greek and Roman mythology?

John: Yeah. Boy, this is a tough one to choose. But I think if I had to choose one, it's probably Dionysus.

Alie: Ooooh, god of wine? *[silly voice]* Heeeeeyyyy!

John: Dionysus was the god of wine and leisure, but also Dionysus is where we get our modern ideas of theater from. The theater of Dionysus in Athens is where Greek theatre originated and where the earliest plays were performed. And so, I think it's easy for us to look at wine, and partying, and sort of thing as being the world of Dionysus and certainly that was part of it. However, Dionysus was also... in theatre and with wine, these were actual rituals and meaningful ceremonies that occurred. There's sort of two schools of thought, or philosophies, in mythology. There's the Dionysian people that identify with that psychological idea of Dionysus, or the Apollonian, the people that idealize Apollo, which was very much a god who was dedicated to rational thinking, and logic, and things like that.

We might say that sort of leads us to believe that there's two types of people in the world; those who are Apollonian in nature and believe logic, and we sometimes call them left-brained people; and then Dionysian, the people that might be more creative, or always out to have fun, that we might consider more right-brained. So we're constantly trying to bifurcate that psychological idea we find in mythology, and they would say it's either Dionysus or Apollo, but I' a Dionysus guy.

Alie: Oh my god, I never realized that! It reminds me a little bit of the *Goofus and Gallant* in the *Highlights Magazine*. I think there's too much pressure to be a Gallant!

John: Shout out to *Highlights Magazine*, man! Oooh!

Alie: Sometimes you've just gotta be a Goofus! Just be like, "Whatever, I didn't put the cap back on the milk. Fuck all y'all."

John: I'm gonna write an academic article based on that. Because honestly, I think you're onto something. There is a lot of people that would resonate with that. That's good

Alie: Right, I think there's too much black and white thinking. Jessica Chamberlain asks: What is something from mythology that is carried over into modern traditions that most people don't know the origins of? Like holiday traditions, or Olympics, or other things like that?

John: Yeah, boy, there's so many! One of the things that I think people might find somewhat interesting is the modern ideas that we have about death. For example, when people die we typically don't just go put them out in the recycle bin, out on the curb, or you know, go and bury them in the backyard.

Aside: For more info on how to dispose of your body and confront your own mortality, see Episode 6 of *Ologies: Thanatology* with Cole Imperi. She's so great. And also, I confront my existential terror.

John: We typically have a ceremony where there's a nice coffin, and sometimes we will even go put something that was meaningful to that person in the coffin with them. And those ideas all come from Egyptian mythology. The way that the Egyptian saw death as being, sort of... at least in the funeral type experience, as being this liminal space before you'd go on to the afterworld. We sort of treat the dead like that in America, where many cultures will still have an open coffin at the funeral, and we talk to the person like they're still there, getting ready to go. We dress them up and put on a nice suit for them, or a dress, or some sort of preparatory clothes for wherever they're going. We will often put things in the coffin, you know, that were meaningful to them.

The Egyptians believed, you know, that death was just really this transitory experience that was taking someone on to the next place in the journey. It's something that we mythologically still really rely on, our death traditions.

Alie: Oh wow. Just like, put a coin in your mouth and sail you over the Styx. "Byeee, nice knowing ya! Here's toll for the Styx!"

Eric wants to know: Why were the romans such "biters"?

John: I think he's using the pop parlance of biters. Yeah, I think one of the things that made the Romans such biters, Eric, is that the Romans had the ability to travel and experience other cultures, because they had means, they were wealthy. They could go and experience other cultures. It's sort of like when you go visit your cousin in middle school in their hometown, and everybody's wearing Yankees caps backwards, and you decide to come back and be the person that's going to start wearing the Yankees cap backwards. It's not unlike what the Romans would do.

Wherever the Romans went, they tended to bring back some aspects of the culture that they thought was great. And we still do the same today because - spoiler alert - guess what, that sushi that everybody's enjoying so much here in Los Angeles, it wasn't developed in the San Fernando Valley. Somebody experienced that in another country, thought it was great, and brought it here. And that's sort of how the world works

Alie: And who's going to catch the Romans? It's not like anyone could Google it back then. They're like, "That's a great idea!" And you're like, "Um... kinda took it from Greece!"

Laura Ayson wants to know: As an Ologite, I gotta ask smart people dumb questions so... what is your favorite mythological creature?

John: Ooooh, this is a really great one because... I'm going to somewhat cheat on the answer here because I'm going to pick a half-creature half-human and that is the mermaid. I think mermaids are super fascinating because although we have Disney-fied mermaids, you know, mermaids were often sirens in the older mythological tales, that had really sharp teeth, and would sing these beautiful songs, and sit topless on rocks calling to the sailors, and the sailors would be drawn to their beauty, nudity and beautiful voices. They would go over and then a horror movie would ensue, with the mermaids having lunch on the sailors.

So I think the idea of dangerous beauty is really interesting to me, and I think mermaids sort of encapsulate that idea of dangerous beauty. So for me, you know, it's the mermaid. I know I could've picked a much more creature-like monster or subject, so I'll give a second place to unicorns because, as a straight white male, my people have not given unicorns their due. And I gotta say, as once said by one of my favorite films from the creatures of *South Park*, "Unicorns are badass!"

Alie: I mean, there are so revered, and they can gouge the shit out of you with that horn, right?

John: I mean, it's a horse with a giant sharp object coming out of your head. What's more manly than that?

Alie: Really, there's nothing that's more gently phallic than that. [*John cracking up laughing in the background*] You know what I mean? A gorgeous, totally majestic, but lethal phallus. Like, you boys need to commandeer that as your symbol. Come on!

John: That really is the symbol of male culture, is the unicorn. This magic, dangerous, phallus. Yeah. Male secrets have been revealed on this podcast, Alie, there's no way around it.

Alie: *[laughs]* Tyler Fox wants to know: Of the two major comics publishers, who do you think has better superhero stories? Marvel or DC? Your wife works for DC...

John: *[laughing]* I'm going to say DC on that one, yeah.

Alie: You're in a happy marriage, I think you should definitely say DC. Last question, Caroline, also known as dunderknit, says: Who is your favorite mythological underdog?

John: Yeah. I'm going to have to say the old school answer here, and it's Sisyphus, you know, known for pushing the boulder up the hill and it keeps coming back down. There is something I think we can all relate to in that, no matter what we're trying to do. The idea of pushing this heavy boulder up the hill only to have it come back down. That, psychologically, makes me feel understood and seen, and really that's what good mythology does, you know? It makes us feel seen and understood, and it makes us feel like there's someone out there that gets us, that also told this story. And maybe that's the bottom line for all mythology is it helps us feel less alone.

Alie: Mmhmm, 100% What's your really quick advice for writers' block?

John: My quick advice for writer's block is to literally walk outside, and the first thing that you see, determine and promise yourself, "I will write one page about the first thing I see." Whether it's a tree, or a flower, or whatever it is, and that... just getting the keyboard flowing again, especially something that's organic, outside, it touches parts of the brain that took millions of years to develop. That connection to nature, that connection to the natural world, sometimes it just opens up what's inside of us and allows it to begin to come out. So, get out of your office, get out of your house, get out of your room, walk outside for a minute, and the first thing of the natural world that really strikes you, walk back inside and write a full page about it.

Alie: Heeelll yes. That's so great. That's, like, 'how to overcome writer's block' and instead of reading a whole book about how, it's like, "Boom! Here you go!" You really are a doctor, that's a great prescription!

So, what is your least favorite thing about your work or mythology in general? Or just, like, your life and what you do?

John: You know, my least favorite thing is I wish I had more time just to be reading the millions of books out there that delve deeply into subjects I care about. If I could change anything about my life, it would be somehow to magically create space and time. When I go to the bookstore, when I go on Amazon, and I buy a new book, I'm actually not buying that book. I am buying what I think will be the time I have to read that book. It makes me feel good to feel like 'I'm going to have time to read that book,' and that makes me feel good. I don't actually think that any of us have the sort of time we need to be the full people that we are. And so for me, it's not uncommon, but I would just have more time to delve even more deeply into the things I'm curious about.

Alie: So, bookwormary?

John: Bookwormary is like my jam and my religion, I would say. *[laughs]*

Alie: So, your favorite thing about what you do?

John: My favorite thing about what I do is getting to understand the stories behind the stories. Even though I'm a mythologist, my life became easier when I began to understand that my life didn't boil down to a job description. My life is an ecosystem. And in that ecosystem of story I have the mountains of mythology, and I have the rivers of story structure, and I have the deserts of writer's block. *[both laugh]* And I have all these things, and I spend time in different parts of the ecosystem, but if I tend to that ecosystem of my own creativity and life's work, and I treat it like a living thing; I care for it differently. I love it differently, and I don't get angry with it in the same ways that I did before I understood the ecosystem of story and creativity.

Alie: God, I should apply that to my own life. But just, the desert would be, like, emails. "Oh god... I gotta return these!" Or maybe that's just a deluge? Maybe it's a monsoon somewhere.

So, where can people find you?

John: I have a website called TellingaBetterStory.com. Please go check it out and you can see some of the work that I do, books I've written, TV shows I've appeared on, podcasts that I've been on. But also, I'm really active on Twitter so my twitter handle is @johnkbucher. Notice I spell it, I save people the trouble of having to pronounce it. Those are probably the two easiest places to find me. Yeah, I'm just really fortunate to have a platform to get to talk about these things that I think are really important in life.

Alie: Story doctor changing lives, saving lives!

So, get all up in John Bucher's [website](#) and [Twitter](#). And to follow Ologies, we're @ologies on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) as well. I'm @alieward on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). To become a Patron, visit Patreon.com/Ologies. You can be in the club for 25 cents an episode. Pretty cheap! You'll get sneak peek updates, you'll hear about what episodes are coming up next, and you can submit questions for the ologists. And also you help support this ad-free, completely independently produced podcast, and pay for the editing, which is hugely important, and the hosting, which keeps it running. Also, I hate the term sneak peek and I don't know why I said it, whatever.

You can also support for free by subscribing, rating and reviewing, and telling friends about it. That's a huge support. Also if anyone needs internship credits, holler at me at helloalieward@gmail.com and perhaps you can help out behind the scenes. I was an intern in college, learned a lot. I can't promise you that, but either way, send me an email if you're interested.

Thank you, Steven Ray Morris for slicing this episode all together, and to Erin Talbert and Hannah Lipow for being admins on the [Ologies Podcast Facebook page](#) (which is a great group of funny, curious human organisms). Thank you, Shannon Feltus, and Boni Dutch for helping with OlogiesMerch.com, a really great online store, a great way to support the podcast. Nick Thorburn wrote and performed the theme music.

And I'm still in this hotel room in Portland. I'm leaving in a few minutes to go interview a zymologist about fermentation and beer making, and then an apiologist about beekeeping and a gyno about maybe why I hate the word panties. Stay tuned for those episodes coming up.

If you listen to the end of the episodes, you know that I started telling a secret as just a thanks for sticking it through the credits, so I'll let you know: I travel for work a lot, and for years and years in hotels I was afraid to put the Do Not Disturb sign up because I thought it literally meant, 'people are boning in here,' or like, 'I'm doing things you don't want to see or interrupt because they're gross.' So for years when the cleaning staff would open the door at like 7:45 in the morning I'd be like, "uhhhh hey, I'm in here," because I didn't put the sign up! And it's not until the last few months I've started to put it out if I'm sleeping. I didn't realize that the Do Not Disturb sign could also mean, like, 'I'm just sleeping.' Anyway... is that weird?

Okay, so, ask smart people dumb questions because they love it, and the questions are probably not stupid at all. And any time you ask a question it's saying, "I'm curious and want to learn from your brain," which I think is the highest compliment you can pay.

Okay, berbye.

Transcribed by a Rika, a rural girl who moved to a magical new land of opportunities with her Prince Charming, and has ample spare time as the Ruler of the Land won't allow her to work, so she transcribes podcasts for fun.

Some links which may be of use:

[Waterworld](#): *Pretty much Noah but with Kevin Costner*

[Depth Psychology](#)

[Elvira's Wikipedia](#)

[Caligula Sucks](#)

[The OG Little Mermaid by Hans Christen Anderson](#)

[Aaron Foley's "How to Live in Detroit Without Being a Jackass"](#)

[Verner's Soda](#)

[Story of Sisyphus](#)

[Malta Wants You To Visit It](#)

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