

Story one: The broken mirror, the black cat and lots of good luck Nikos was an ordinary man."Go on then, Nikas, his friends shouted, 'use all the money you have won to buy some lottery tickets! Nikos spent all the money he had won on lottery tickets. The draw for the lottery was the next day. The next day after work Nikos went to the taverna again. Everybody was watching the draw for the lottery on TV. The first number came out, for the third prize. It was Nikos number. Then the second number, for the second prize. It was another of Nikos tickets. Then the first prize. It was Nikos number as well. He won all three of the big lottery prizes. It was incredible. It seemed that all the things that people thought caused bad luck actually brought him good luck. The next day Nikos bought a book about superstitions from all over the world. When he had read the book he decided to do everything that would bring him bad luck. He left empty bottles on the table. He asked his wife to cut his hair for him. He accepted a box of knives as a gift. He slept with his feet pointing towards the door. He sat on the corners of tables. He put a candle in front of the mirror. He always left his hat on the bed. He always left his wallet on the bed. He bought things in numbers of six or thirteen. He crossed people on the stairs. He got on a boat and whistled. And with everything he did, he got luckier and luckier. He won the lottery again. He won the games of dice in the taverna every evening. The things got crazier and crazier. He bought a black cat as a pet. He broke a few more mirrors, on purpose. He didn't look people in the eye when they raised their glasses to him. He put loaves of bread upside down on the table. He spilled salt. He spilled olive oil. He spilled svine. The more superstitious things he did, the luckier he became. He went into the taverna and started to tell all his friends what he thought. 'You see!' he told them. 'I was right all along! Superstition is nonsense! The more things I do to break ridiculous superstitions, the more lucky I am!' 'But Nikos,' replied one of his friends, 'don't you see that you are actually as superstitious as we are? You are so careful to break superstitions, and this brings you luck. But you are only lucky when you do these things. Your disbelief is actually a kind of belief!! Nikos thought hard about what his friend said He had to admit that it was true. He was so careful to break all the superstitions he could, that in some way he was actually observing those superstitions. The next day, he stopped spilling salt, chasing away black cats, walking under ladders, putting up umbrellas in the house and breaking mirrors. He also stopped winning money on the lottery. He started to lose at games of cards or dice. He was a normal man again. Sometimes he was lucky, sometimes he wasn't. He didn't not believe in superstitions any more, but he didn't believe in them either "Nikos," said his friend to him, it was your belief in yourself that made you lucky. Nikos thought about walking around the ladder, but he didn't care, he wasn't superstitious and didn't believe in superstitions, so he walked right underneath the ladder. Nikos thought himself to be a very rational man, a man who did not believe that his good luck or bad luck was in any way changed by black cats, walking under ladders, spilling salt or opening umbrellas inside the house. One thing, however, that Nikos absolutely did not believe in was superstition. Some of them made bets on horse races or football matches. Nikos wasn't superstitious at all. Nikos knew that some people thought this was .unlucky