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Be Afraid, Be Very Afraid: The Book Of Scary Urban Legends



Synopsis

An anthology of the most chilling urban legends of all time collected by the maestro himself. Urban legends are those strange, but seemingly credible tales that always happen to a friend of a friend. For the first time, Professor Jan Harold Brunvand, "who has achieved almost legendary status" (Choice), has collected the creepiest, most terrifying urban legends, many that have spooked you since your childhood and others that you believe really did occur— even if it was one town over to some poor hapless coed who left a party early only to be followed by a man who just got loose from a mental hospital. From the classic hook-man story told around many a campfire to "Saved by a Cell Phone," these spine-tingling urban legends will give you goose bumps, even when you know they can't be true. Still, you'll continue to check the backseat of your car at gas stations and look under your bed at night before praying for sleep.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rum flavored by a dead man in the cask; black widow spiders nesting in beehive hairdos; women's intestines broiled by tanning booths; teenage couples menaced by men with hooks for hands: if these are the sorts of tales that thrill and chill you, this an anthology worth picking up. Folklorist Brunvand (The Vanishing Hitchhiker) assembles a creepy cornucopia of urban legends, organizing them by theme ("Chills Up Your Spine," "Accidents") and considering them in a surprisingly sedate manner. The result is a blend of "primary text" urban legends (transcribed from field interviews, collected from e-mails or reprinted from local newspapers) and more reflective

introductions that consider the motifs and variations of each urban legend. Some tales are old chestnuts, familiar to anyone who's been to a camp or a slumber party in the past 50 years, but others indicate more contemporary fears: stories of vacationers waking in unfamiliar hotel rooms, groggy and minus a kidney, or rumors of sexual predators who purposefully spread HIV to their unsuspecting partners. Brunvand traces most of these legends to their roots and debunks some of the more widespread ones, but he never lets his skepticism dampen his enthusiasm for the stories themselves. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Adult/High School
Brunvand is known to many as the godfather of the American urban legend. In this collection, he has compiled the scariest, grisliest ones—some that are unfamiliar but many that have been heard at sleepovers and depicted in horror movies over the past several years. Since many of them will be known to urban-legend lovers, the book's real strength is in the subtle changes within different versions of a legend. The runaway madman with the hook for a hand, the ghost of the dead girl, the slasher under the car or in the backseat all make appearances here, but in slightly different circumstances. Sometimes the distances are great, but the differences are few. For example, the "Hairy-Armed Hitchhiker" appears in two versions, one from England and one from Los Angeles. Brunvand also integrates how much the Internet, particularly e-mail, has changed the dissemination of urban legends. He gives credit to urban-legend debunking site www.snopes.com, and the final chapter concerns the widespread hysterical e-mails that purport to come from experts but actually originate from the usual dubious sources. All in all, this is a good addition where such titles are popular.
Jamie Watson, Harford County Public Library, MD Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

You've undoubtedly heard some of these "true" stories that very definitely happened to a friend of a friend of a friend, but if you've not read any of Jan Harold Brunvand's books about where they come from and what they really tell us, this volume of the scarier tales is a good place to start. Part spooky tale told around a campfire, part lesson in modern folklore, urban legends are both fun and instructive when told by the master, as Brunvand is. If you've read a number of Brunvand's many other popular books on urban legends, you won't find a lot new here, though that doesn't make it any less an entertaining read. For a first timer, this is a five star book. Devotees of urban legend lore (like me) will want it to complete their collections. Just don't dim the lights too much as you read it.

This is a very interesting read, I love it. It is filled with stories that are so creepy and interesting. Very good to read especially around halloween and especially best shared with friends.

I just got mine a few days ago and I must say, this book surprised me. It is a relatively easy read and can give one the jitters if read alone at night ;) My only knock on this book is that I was hoping it would have more ghost tales but I'd still recommend this book especially during Halloween.

I was able to finish this book in a week. The stories were fascinating and whenever possible the author does his best to credit his sources. I own his encyclopedia of Urban Legends as well(about 1000 pages) and after reading this book I can't wait to start reading it.

The stories in this book were very enjoyable. There were no tears or marks on the pages and there were no pages missing. The stories were easy to understand too. A great buy!!!

Some of the ground is familiar from his other books, but still interesting

Good reading and interesting stories

Really good read.

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