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## The Truth Never Stands in Way of a Good Story

Jan Brunvand

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**Jan Brunvand : The Truth Never Stands in Way of a Good Story** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Truth Never Stands in Way of a Good Story:

23 of 23 people found the following review helpful. The saga continues...By Pseudonym More text-booky than previous endeavors, Brunvand brings us yet another urban legend anthology. Perhaps "anthology" isn't the best word. "The Truth Never Stands..." is more of a work of research, delving into the origins and travel patterns of the legends rather than legends (and variations of the legends) themselves. I do recommend this book, but only to die-hard UL enthusiasts and folklore aficionados. If you don't really care about where the urban legend came from, then this book

will be a bore. As for the casual UL reader, I recommend any of Brunvand's other books. 8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Interesting and well researched. By John This is the first Brunvand book that I've read. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. I'm usually very skeptical and don't believe Urban Legend stories that I hear but I must admit this book debunked a few tales I assumed to be true. This book does tend to have an academic tone to it at times and I didn't mind this. Some readers may not want this much detail however. If you are at all interested in Urban Legend, folklore, or even those ubiquitous internet rumors then you'll enjoy this book. 13 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Do not flash your headlights in San Jose! By Paul MI frequently receive urgent warnings from friends and colleagues via e-mail. They always provide me with crucial information, e.g. do not use your cell phone near a gas pump (the pump will explode); do not open certain e-mail messages (your drive will be wiped); and of course - do not flash your headlights in San Jose (you will be murdered to facilitate a gang initiation). Thanks to the works of Brunvand, I amaze and mystify my friends by my ability to recognize these electronic urban legends. This book carries on the urban legend tradition of the author's other works: "The Mexican Pet", "Curses! Broiled Again", for example. I recommend this new book without reservation. You too can become an urban legend spotter.

"My sister's boyfriend knows a family who...", "One of my wife's colleagues has a friend who knows someone who...", "This is a true story that was forwarded to me by...", "This is not a joke!". In this lively and engaging book, the nation's foremost expert on urban legends explores the spontaneous germination of these bizarre, yet plausible, narratives that play on the absurdities and prey on the fears of modern life. Through voluminous correspondence from readers of his books and syndicated newspaper column, Jan Harold Brunvand has become something of a clearinghouse for evolving versions of urban legends. Here, he looks in detail at a dozen rampant and long-lived examples of this vigorous category of contemporary folklore, tracing their histories, variations, sources, and meanings. Brunvand tracks the various permutations-by fax, by e-mail, by newspaper, by word of mouth - of such legends as "The Red Velvet Cake", "The Brain Drain", and "The Baby Roast". He points out their common elements - notably, their insistence on the truth of the story and their attribution to a "friend of a friend". His son Erik Brunvand, an associate professor of computer science at the University of Utah, contributes his own view of computer hacker legends traded across the Internet. Captivating and thought-provoking, "The Truth Never Stands in the Way of a Good Story" pins down the qualities that give urban legends their air of authenticity and make them hard to believe, yet impossible to dismiss. For those interested in popular culture and current events, as well as those wary of being taken in by false information, Brunvand's book reinforces his most basic piece of advice: "Don't believe everything you hear".

From Library Journal Verbally transmitted stories that have influenced history, beliefs, morals, and humor, folktales usually derive from a retelling by a "friend-of-a-friend" through which the tale has become accepted as fact. In the past half-century, the study of these brief vignettes--which range in theme from animal horror stories to accidents, business and professional events, and pranks--has achieved academic status. These two anthologies recount legends from the oral American tradition, using classic and contemporary sources. Brunvand, the unchallenged master of narratives that incorporate the absurdities and fears of modern urban life, adds another tome to his impressive collections of urban tales and humor. Along with more esoteric entries, familiar nuggets of oral fiction are included, such as title pieces from "The Mexican Pet" and "The Vanishing Hitchhiker." Equally valuable is Canadian raconteur Genge's anthology. His work is a remarkable collection of myths that make the rounds in offices, college dorms, and wherever people swap stories that spring from our deepest fears and fascinations. Including tales like "Scare Me!" and "Corporate Convulsions," these legends have appeared in the popular press and circulated via photocopies, faxes, and computer links. Well crafted and riveting, these anthologies are essential to Americana collections. Recommended for all libraries. -Richard K. Burns, MSLS, Hatboro, PA Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. Folklore professor Brunvand has delivered another sprightly study of urban folktales. This time around, Brunvand tracks the various versions of such legends as "The Red Velvet Cake" (one variation is the Mrs. Fields Cookies recipe story), "The Exploding Toilet" (Dave Barry should find this chapter interesting) and "Lights Out!" (a false gang-initiation story spread by fax... The work is delightfully up-to-date." -- Today's Librarian "Brunvand, the unchallenged master of narratives that incorporate the absurdities and fears of modern urban life, adds another tome to his impressive collections of urban tales and humor. Along with more esoteric entries, familiar nuggets of oral fiction are included, such as title pieces from 'The Mexican Pet' and 'The Vanishing Hitchhiker.' ... Well crafted and riveting." -- Library Journal "An in-depth exploration of urban legends... [Brunvand] has made a career of collecting, analyzing, and cataloguing these legends, from stories of alligators in the sewers to tales of spider-egg-infested bubble gum." -- The New Yorker "Urban legends can travel by word of mouth or by print, and lately the Internet has become a prime vehicle for dissemination... However they are spread, Mr. Brunvand says, they all share some characteristics. The 'insistence on the truth of the story, the attribution to specific friends of friends, the age of the story and (most of all) the variations in details among the different versions are all hallmarks of the modern urban legend.'" -- New York Times "Is it true that a penny dropped from the Empire State Building would make a dent in the pavement? That bath water runs out in opposite directions in different hemispheres, due to the Coriolis effect? That Post-it notes were

invented by accident? Who could put their hand on their heart and claim they knew all along that 'Thomas Crapper invented the flush toilet' was false, but that 'military planes are tested by firing chickens at them from a special cannon' was true? ... [Brunvand], a slightly reluctant global 'expert' on the [urban legends] phenomenon ... continues his series of mildly jocular academic studies of oral repetition and variation." -- Mike Jay, Times Literary Supplement "The nation's foremost expert on urban legends here explores the spontaneous germination of these bizarre yet plausible narratives that play on the fears and absurdities of modern life." -- Skeptical Inquirer ADVANCE PRAISE Brunvand has the ability to be both scholarly and charming at the same time. This is his best legend book since *The Vanishing Hitchhiker*." -- Patricia A. Turner, author of *I Heard It through the Grapevine: Rumor in African-American Culture* "Urban legends cut through society in countless ways, and tracing their history is a daunting task that only an experienced scholar-adventurer like Jan Brunvand can handle. In his latest work, he guides the reader through many examples of how old forms of folklore leap with ease into the world of international travel and communication, and even into the realm of cyberspace." -- Bill Ellis, president of the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research