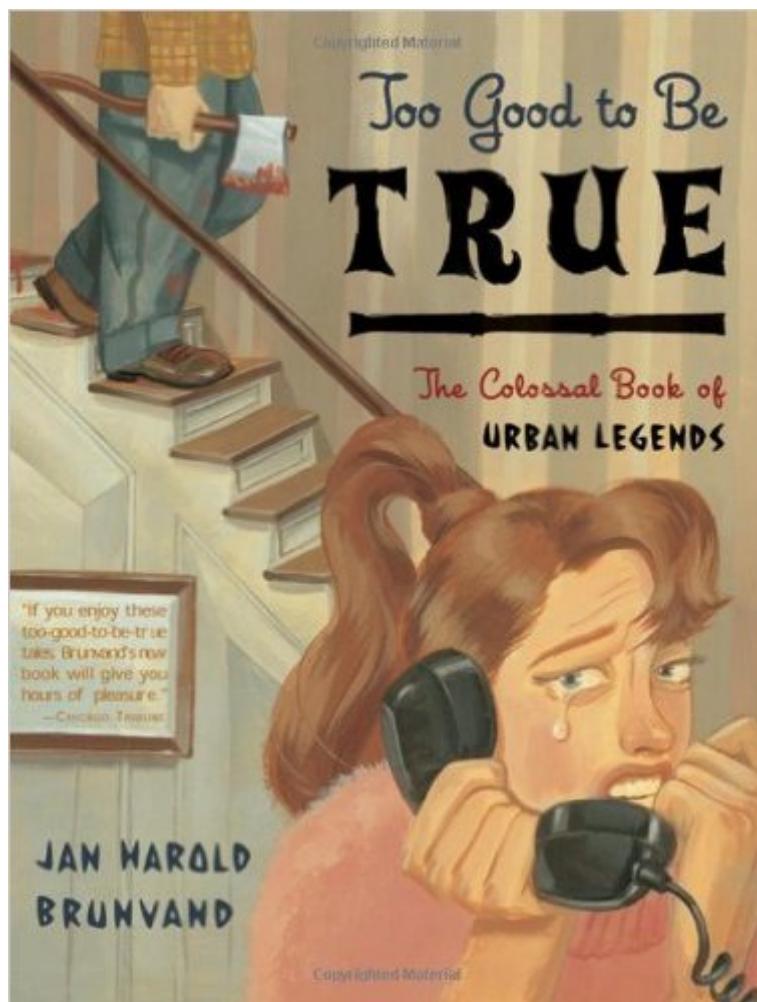


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Too Good To Be True: The Colossal Book Of Urban Legends



Synopsis

"If you enjoy these too-good-to-be-true tales, Brunvand's new book will give you hours of pleasure." •Chicago Tribune A fabulously entertaining book from the ultimate authority on those almost believable tales that always happen to a "friend of a friend." Alligators in the sewers? A pet in the microwave? A tragic misunderstanding of the function of cruise control? No, it didn't really happen to your friend's sister's neighbor: it's an urban legend. And no matter how savvy you think you are, you are sure to find in this collection of over 200 tales at least one story you would have sworn was true. Jan Harold Brunvand has been collecting and studying this modern folklore for over twenty years. In *Too Good to Be True* he captures the best stories in their best retellings, along with their latest variations and examples of how the stories have changed as they move from person to person and place to place. To help you find your favorite, Brunvand has arranged the tales thematically. "Bringing Up Baby" is full of episodes of child-rearing gone wrong, including the grisly tale of the drugged out baby-sitter who mistakes the kid for a turkey. "Funny Business" showcases stories of infamous lapses in customer service, such as the story of the shockingly expensive chocolate chip cookie recipe. And "The Criminal Mind" features both brilliant --if they were real --scams, as well as the purported antics of the less mentally gifted. Whether you want to become an expert debunker or just have plenty of laughs, this book will surprise and entertain you. Illustrated throughout. "Informative and entertaining.... Brunvand has collected more than 200 of the most-repeated and best-known examples of modern folk-myth." •Tampa Tribune "[N]ot only an entertaining anthology, but an excellent introduction to the study of folklore itself." •Publishers Weekly "A fun read... . All the classics are here from the killer upstairs to the Kentucky Fried Rat." •New City "Resonant stories that express our hidden anxieties ... make us laugh, [or] arouse our fascinated horror." •San Francisco Chronicle Book Review "Informative and entertaining.... . Brunvand has collected more than 200 of the most-repeated and best-known examples of modern folk-myth." •Tampa Tribune "[N]ot only an entertaining anthology, but an excellent introduction to the study of folklore itself." •Publishers Weekly 70 b/w illustrations

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Customer Reviews

For those of you who may not be familiar with the term, an Urban Legend is one of those stories that someone tells you--typically they claim that it happened to a friend of a friend (FOAF)--which just seems, in the words of this title, "too good to be true." But when the person tells the story they do so with great authority and include some little hyperspecific detail that tends to allay some of your skepticism. Or at least it does until someone else tells you a slightly different version of the same story two days later. Personally, I've heard dozens of these stories over the years, many from my Mom or my friend Charlie, and I've developed a particular awareness for when folks are peddling these myths, becoming a kind of amateur clearing house. Here are a few I've had folks tell me personally : The Blow Dry Rabbit; The Vibrating Cactus; the Confused Driver; Batman in the Closet; The Disgruntled Bridegroom; any others, anybody? I don't know that he coined the term Urban Legend, but Jan Harold Brunvand, a professor at the University of Utah, certainly popularized it with his newspaper column and a series of books in which he collects them and tries to trace their convoluted paths through the popular culture (It's amazing how often Ann Landers has a hand in promulgating them). I've been a fan of Brunvand's work for years, even submitting some of my favorites to him, including one which he reprinted in The Baby Train. His writing tends to be a little prosaic and, in letting his correspondents speak for themselves, he often presents the legends in less amusing form than he might. But in all honesty, the real pleasure in his books lies not in the stories themselves, but in the joy of recognition, the thrill of the "Gotcha!"

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