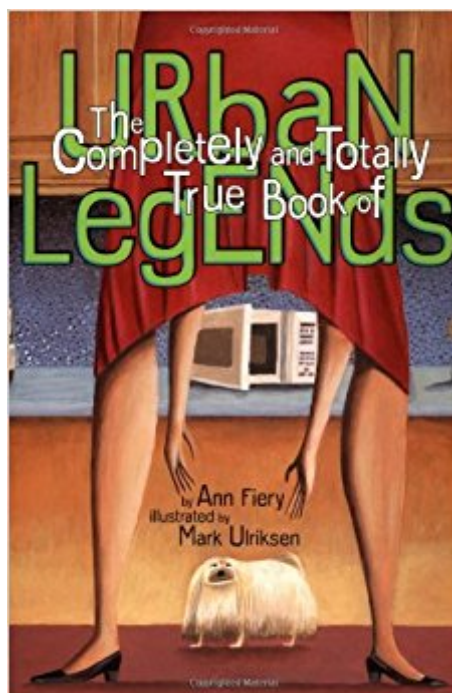


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The Complete And Totally True Book Of Urban Legends



Synopsis

Most of us have repeated them. Some of us have believed them. But none of us has actually played a part in them. ...have we? What's that in your food!? What's that in your pipes!? What's underneath your bed!? Are you being betrayed by someone you love? Will evil be punished? Are there things you haven't even thought of that will harm you? Are people what they seem? Are you safe? No. Urban legends. They're the definitive tales of the 21st century, in all their grotesque and goofy glory. The ancient Greeks had their Iliad and their Odyssey. The northern tribes had their sagas and epics. The dainty Victorians had their fairy tales. Let 'em keep 'em. We've got The Microwaved Dog and The Girl Who Burnt to a Crisp in the Tanning Salon. They're a little paranoid, a little creepy -- even a little ridiculous, sure -- but they're ours, and it's time they got some respect. This book is filled with the legends you love, the legends you laugh at, and maybe even the legends you always thought really happened to your next door neighbor's best friend's youngest cousin. A treasury that cherishes the folklore of our time.

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Customer Reviews

As it happens, that little dog that got nuked in the microwave was named Vince. That's one of the priceless details Ann Fiery has added to breathe new life into 25 old stories in *The Completely and Totally True Book of Urban Legends*. The tanning-booth disaster becomes a tragedy of suburban banality, the hydrogen beer fiasco levels a city, and subtle anti-American sentiments find expression in a simple toothbrush. Fiery's prose is sharp and engaging, her characterization lively, and her pacing brilliant. Artist Mark Ulriksen captures the essence of each tale with a creepy (if often quite

funny) painting that leers from a facing page. The retelling of these legends in short-short story form forces the reader to think about how they hold our interest, why we love to hear and spread them, and why so many are about dogs. --Rob Lightner

Caution: This book contains some crude language that is not necessary to convey the themes in *The Completely and Totally True Book of Urban Legends*. The author has taken an interesting and unusual direction in this book, developing stories around the concept that "urban legends are our fairy tales . . ." You've heard all of the stories, no doubt, about what has been served at various restaurant chains. Those are urban legends. The stories are probably not literally true (or at least no one can prove them), but they do express concepts of what we need to be cautious about in life. For example, Little Red Riding Hood was not literally true (unless wolves are a lot different from the ones I have seen) but it conveyed warnings about being careful about assuming too much (the wolf was not grandma) and following advice that seems against your best interest (let me show you my big teeth). In that same spirit, Ms. Fiery has created "a treasury of our best urban legends . . . most exciting, beloved, and morally laden tales. . . ." But they need to be rewritten, because they are "the uncut gems of our literary heritage." In the book, the urban legends are dressed up to be more like written short stories, and to be more plausible. The concept is an interesting one, and I enjoyed reading the book. I must admit that I had only heard of one of these urban legends before reading this book. Perhaps I have been out in the suburbs too long! I found that some of the stories worked much better than others. In some, the detail built the story. In others, the detail either directed you away from the story or was irrelevant. The illustrations are attractive, but sometimes they telegraphed where the story was going too soon. If you already knew the urban legend, you would already know where the story was going. I would have preferred to have been surprised. I thought the best two stories were "Old Dog, New Tricks" about a man, his dog, and a lady in an elevator, and "Babysitter's Club" about a haunted house that scares all of the babysitters. I also enjoyed "Warm as Toast" (a woman helps her dog dry off), "Such Clean Floors" (life support equipment keeps failing in a hospital), "The Flying Gypsy Trick" (traveling in Greece), "Fiat Lux" (about a driving lesson), "Light Beer" (new properties of the latest ale), and "Hot Potato" (a doctor having trouble diagnosing his patient's problem). On the other hand, more than half of the stories didn't work very well for me. They seemed either implausible, uninteresting, or gross . . . rather than seeming like modern fairy tales. I graded the book down accordingly. What jokes do you know that provide good lessons that we all should follow? What stories that are too good to be true actually capture essential truths, nonetheless? Get the point!

This is a compilation of 25 short stories. They range from putting a pooch in the microwave to an elderly lady who uses a potato to balance her womb. Some of the stories are graphic in nature and not for the faint of heart. Some of the others will make you laugh whether you want to or not. Ms. Fiery writes like she telling friends the latest urban legend that came true in her neighborhood. The illustrations help to move the book along and give you an insight of the heart of the story.

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