

How urban legends work



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the article "How Urban Legends Work" by Tom Harris, the reader is presented with generalities, facts and plots. What are they? Where do they come from? Who started them? Narrative cliffhangers that maneuver people's minds to partake in spreading information anyway possible. Generally beginning with a friend and as the story is passed on usually to another friend, these stories are manipulated to sound convincing. Hence an Urban Legend is born.

What is an Urban Legend?

An Urban Legend is a dubious folktale of circumstances that have happened in the past to people and involve tragedy or amusement. Harris tells us that, "Urban Legends are "Passed from person to person, are often false, but not always", Urban legends are meant to teach a lesson or as Harris explains "A cautionary tale" Harris tells us about the "Contamination story, the long-standing rumor of rats and mice showing up in soda bottles or other pre-packaged food", some stories are created to amuse people as Harris shared with us the story of a drunk driver who thinking has gotten away from the clutches of going to jail, flees, only to find out that he has escaped with the police officers car, a funny story to know.

Friend of a Friend

Readers learn that urban legends can be as, Harris explains "Unusual, funny or shocking stories". Surprisingly enough, we as humans believe these stories and want to tell everyone we know, whether it scares us, or intrigues us. We are driven to pass on the story to our friends and their friends. We

are believers of these stories because as Harris explains “ Psychologically we need to trust people, just for our own sense of comfort”

Urban Legends and the Internet

Urban legends have been talked about from the early 20th century, but have as Harris explains “ Existed in some form for thousands of years and have been our modern oral tradition”.

Harris tells us that “ Urban legends have evolved over time, within the past 10 years; there has been a huge surge of urban legends on the internet”.

There is no more story telling person to person, the world changes and so must the way we communicate with one another. Harris says, “ The most common venue is forwarded e-mail, a person simply clicks the forward icon in their email” story telling just is not the same, thru the internet seems so impersonal. People change with the times but we seem to bring with us some little part of the past with us and urban legends will always be part of our culture.

Conclusion

Whether, humorous or saddening, urban legends are just that, legends, told all over the world, at work, home, gatherings and especially at campfires.

Take these stories with a grain of salt, people need not be so gullible, after all they are only tall tell stories, or are they?