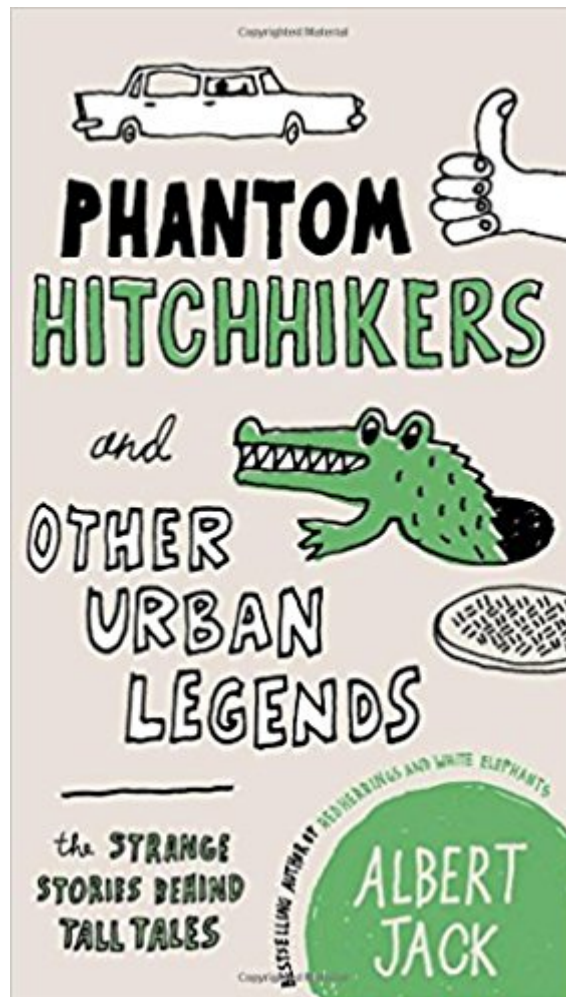


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Phantom Hitchhikers And Other Urban Legends: The Strange Stories Behind Tall Tales



Synopsis

Have you heard the one aboutâ the Walt Disneyâs frozen body?â the Coca-Cola owning Santa Claus?â Alligators living in New York City sewers? We all love a good story. But where do the urban legends, conspiracy theories, and old wivesâ tales we hear every day really originate? Albert Jack explores the best, strangest, and funniest of the tales so many of us take as gospel, and uncovers some eye-popping true stories that are even more far-fetched than their mythical counterparts. From Robin Hood to JFKâs brain, from hamsters under carpets to mysterious travelers, youâll never be short of a scary or bizarre anecdote again.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was given this book as a gift by someone who knows I love trivia of all kinds. I had one chapter left to read in "Phantom Hitchhikers" and was waffling between giving this book three or four stars. Albert Jack's folksy writing style makes for an easy enjoyable read. And Albert Jack's folksy writing style masks poor writing habits and abysmal scholarship. In the beginning, Jack tells us that in one of his stories he gave a character a name, and it was the name of the friend who told him the story. Throughout the book he occasionally gives names and locations and dates, etc., and there is no way to know how much of it he's making up. It should be one way or the other. Either he is a storyteller telling urban myths, or this is a nonfiction book about urban legends. The latter calls for more scholarship and openness. Jack's writing style includes humor, although it can be heavy-handed. In his section on "Winston Churchill Was a Druid", for example, he starts off with:

"When the Roman Army reached the shores of England in AD 43, they encountered a fairly uncultured race of people with few skills, little intellect, and virtually no compassion, such as can be found on the average Friday night out in any suburban town nearly two thousand years later." This odd little intro may be explained by the fact that Albert Jack is the pen name of the British writer, Graham Willmott. Where Willmott really loses me, though, is in that last chapter, titled "The Appliance of Science". Some of the entries are usual urban legend goofiness, such as a tanning bed that scrambles your insides like a microwave (which Willmott debunks). Some get into conspiracy theories. When I got to the last chapter's entry for "One Small Step for Man..."

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