

College Urban Legends

College urban legends are stories students and professors like to tell, partly for humor and partly to drive fear into others. In each urban legend, there seems to be a hidden message warning ignorant college students of dangers and legends on a college campus. These hidden messages can either be cautionary advice or positive motivation to do something.

Here are some of the more popular college urban legends known in popular culture:

Aren't you glad you didn't turn on the light?

In this urban legend a female college student who was studying all night in the library returns to her dorm room at 2 a.m. to get some sleep before her test in the morning. She thinks her roommate is sleeping, so she doesn't turn on the light for fear of waking her up. In the morning when she goes to wake up her roommate, she is terrified at the sight of blood, and she sees her roommate lying there slaughtered. She falls to the floor in fear and notices a note written in blood on the mirror that says, "Aren't you glad you didn't turn on the light?" It has been suggested that a group of resident advisors started the rumor in order to keep students from inviting strangers back to their rooms.

Kidney Thieves

This legend involves a male student who attends a party and has a few drinks. He meets an attractive girl who invites him to go to another party. He agrees, and they end up partying throughout the night. He blacks out and in the morning wakes up completely naked in a bathtub filled with ice. He starts to get out of the tub and notices a note written in lipstick on his chest that reads, "Call 911 or you will die." After calling 911 and being examined, he finds out that his kidneys had been stolen. They are worth about \$10,000 each on the black market. Apparently, the second party had been a setup and the people involved were medical students trying to make a little cash.

Holiday Break Dorm Murder

This story involves two female roommates who decide to stay at their college dorm over the holiday break. One of the roommates ends up going out on a date that night, while the other girl decides to stay in and go to bed. Later that night, the girl sleeping is awakened by scratching noises at the door, along with light moaning and gurgling noises coming from the dorm hallway. The girl gets scared, so she locks the door and quietly hides in the closet until the morning. When the girl finally opens the door, she discovers her roommate dead in the hallway. Her throat was slit, and there were scratch marks on the door where she had been clawing to try to get in the room.

Halloween Massacre

There are many tales of a Halloween massacre that takes place on school grounds. Typically, legend has it that a psychic predicts on a TV show that a serial killer will strike at a college campus on October 31. Supposedly, the murderer will kill dozens of students. Some say the psychic appeared on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," while others claim it was on the "Late Show with David Letterman." Some have even said that the killer will wear the mask from the Scream movies.

The legend is especially known at colleges like Michigan State University, University of Minnesota, and University of Wisconsin, specifically because it was also rumored that the murderer will hit a campus that starts with the letter M or W. However, no Halloween massacres on any campus have ever been reported to date.

Med School Cadaver

A Medical student got assigned to work on a cadaver for an in-class dissection. Upon looking at the dead body, the student realizes it is a relative of hers. This actually turned out to be a true story, taking place in 1982 at the University of

Alabama School of Medicine, when a student realized one of the cadavers for the class was her Great Aunt.

Which Tire?

Two friends decide to go out partying all weekend instead of studying for their upcoming final. Since they weren't prepared for the final, they decided to use the excuse that they got a flat tire and couldn't make it back in time for the test. The professor decided to let them retake the test. During the rescheduled exam, each student was placed in a separate room to take the test. The first question was a simple 5 point question. However, the second question of the test asked "Which Tire?", and was worth 95 points. Obviously the professor was trying to catch the students in a lie and fail them on the test. Parts of this legend are actually somewhat true, as something very similar happened in Professor Bonk's Introductory Chemistry class at Duke University decades ago.

Do you even know who I am?

A student gets caught still working on a test after time had been called by the instructor. The student gets up to turn in the test, but the teacher won't accept it because the student continued working after time had been called. The student then asks the teacher if he even knows who he is --- The teacher answers, "No". The student replied, "Good," and quickly stuck his test into the center of the pile of tests on the desk and ran out of the room.

This scenario was also played out in the movie Slackers:

Student wins car by reading his textbook

This is one of the few urban legends on this list that is true. In 2001, a student from Yale University was reading the fine print in his textbook and found a publisher's note congratulating him for being thorough and offered a chance to win a car if he sent his name and address to the publisher. Sure enough, he did just that, and being one of only five students to submit their name and address for the giveaway, he was selected as the student to win a 1965 Ford Thunderbird. Pretty sweet deal!

The School Library is Sinking

Since the 1970s, a myth has spread around many college campuses that the library is sinking into the ground because the architect forgot to factor in the weight of all the books in the library. An opposite version of this myth has also surfaced occasionally that when books were discarded, the library began to rise. Funny as it may be, this urban legend is not true.

Statues come to Life

The claim of this legend is that statues on campus will come to life when a virgin walks by. This legend has been spread across various college campuses for many years.

Here are some of the statues that are said to come to life when a virgin walks by:

- The University of North Carolina has a memorial statue for alumni who died fighting for the Confederacy in the Civil War. The statue is a bronze soldier named Silent Sam. Legend has it that Silent Sam will shoot his rifle if a virgin passes by.

- According to urban legend at the University of Tennessee, if a virgin walks under the statue of The Torchbearer, the flame will go out.

- The University of Maryland's terrapin mascot Testudo will sprout wings and fly away if a virgin ever graduates from the

university.

- The stone lion statues at the Universities of Missouri, University of Michigan, and University of Cincinnati will roar if a virgin walks between them.

These are general college-related urban legends. There are many other school specific urban legends out there.

This is part three of a three part series that includes college myths, college admission myths, and college urban legends.