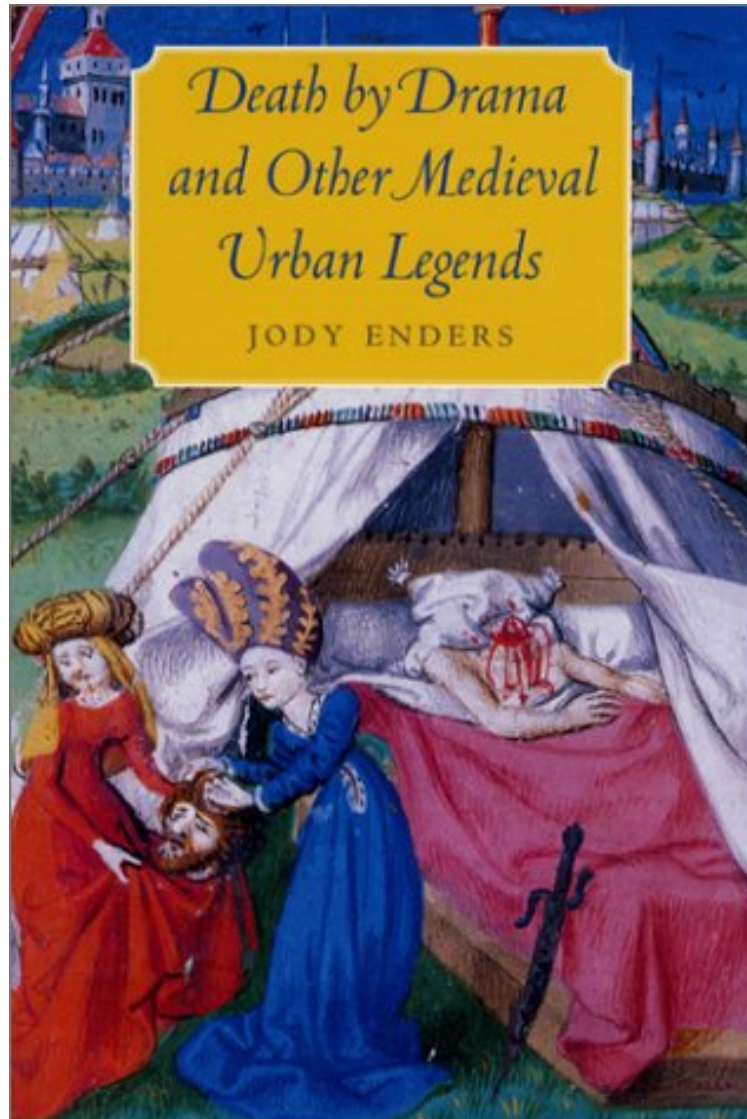


(Download pdf ebook) Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends

## Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends

*Jody Enders*

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**Jody Enders : Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. french medieval urban legends...By A Customer as a speaker, Jody Enders is one of those people who can keep a graduating senior in the throes of ennui awake long enough to say, "whoa, really?" Even when the topic is \*French Medieval Drama\* for goodness' sake. Happily, as a writer, her often cheeky voice comes straight through in her writing. On the surface, it seems like the book is only for French Lit and English Lit geeks, but she can make French Medieval Drama somehow accessible to the modern reader. It ranges from

accounts about the many near deaths on the medieval stage (and they are often ironic enough to make ANYONE laugh) to urban legends like the Southern Fried Rat and alligators in the sewers. (I.e. are the accounts we read about the medieval stage actually urban legends as well?) and then it goes into a fascinating chapter on snuff films. Which, of course, being a bit pervy was the most fascinating part of the whole book. There are few people who can make arcane and archaic topics interesting to the general populace, and Dr. Enders is one of those few.

Part of every legend is true. Or so argues Jody Enders in this fascinating look at early French drama and the way it compels us to consider where the stage ends and where real life begins. This ambitious and bracing study explores fourteen tales of the theater that are at turns dark and dangerous, sexy and scandalous, humorous and frightening stories that are nurtured by the confusion between truth and fiction, and imitation and enactment, until it becomes impossible to tell whether life is imitating art, or art is imitating life. Was a convicted criminal executed on stage during a beheading scene? Was an unfortunate actor driven insane while playing a madman? Did a theatrical enactment of a crucifixion result in a real one? Did an androgynous young man seduce a priest when portraying a female saint? Enders answers these and other questions while presenting a treasure trove of tales that have long seemed true but are actually medieval urban legends. On topics ranging through politics, religion, marriage, class, and law, these tales, Enders argues, do the cultural work of all urban legends: they disclose the hopes, fears, and anxieties of their tellers. Each one represents a medieval meditation created or dramatized by the theater with its power to blur the line between fiction and reality, engaging anyone who watches, performs, or is represented by it. Each one also raises pressing questions about the medieval and modern world on the eve of the Reformation, when Europe had never engaged more anxiously and fervently in the great debate about what was real, what was pretend, and what was pretense. Written with elegance and flair, and meticulously researched, *Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends* will interest scholars of medieval and Renaissance literature, history, theater, performance studies, and anyone curious about urban legends.

"It is rare to catch oneself describing a scholarly monograph as a page-turner, rarer still to be able to report that one laughed out loud while reading it, but I did both with *Death by Drama*." - Richard Green, *Medieval*; "Jody Enders has written that rare book that is both deeply learned and intellectually entertaining. By asking astute questions of several relatively obscure texts, she gets to the heart of what makes late medieval drama so captivating. I can't remember the last time I've learned so much while having so much fun!" - Richard K. Emmerson, executive director of the Medieval Academy of America and editor of *Speculum*

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