



Funnymen: A Novel

By Ted Heller

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Funnymen: A Novel By Ted Heller

SIGMUND "ZIGGY" BLISSMAN isn't the best-looking, sanest boy in the world. Far, far from it. But this misfit child of a failed husband-and-wife vaudeville team has one (and only one) thing going for him: He can crack people up merely by batting his eyelashes.

And Vittorio "Vic" Fontana, the son of a fisherman, is a fraud. Barely able to carry a tune or even stay awake while attempting to, the indolent baritone (if that's what he is) has one thing going for him: Women love to look at him. On their own, they're failures. But on one summer night in the Catskills, they step onstage and together become the funniest men -- and the hottest act -- in America.

Funnymen is the wildly inventive story of Fountain and Bliss, the comedy duo that delighted America in the 1940s and '50s. Conceived as a fictional oral biography and filled with more than seventy memorable characters, *Funnymen* details the extraordinary careers of two men whose professional success is never matched in their personal lives. The two men fight constantly with their managers, their wives, their children, their mistresses, and those responsible for their success: each other. The stories recounted about Vic and Ziggy -- and the truths Heller reveals about human ambition, egotism, and friendship -- make *Funnymen* a wild ride of a novel that is also a rare and imaginative masterpiece of storytelling.

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Funnymen: A Novel By Ted Heller Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This mock oral history by Heller (Slab Rat) is a comedic roller-coaster ride based on the partnership of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. New England dock worker Vic Fountain uses his striking good looks, impeccable stage timing and solid voice to become a big-band pop vocalist, only to struggle after a series of setbacks before finding his niche with comedian Ziggy Bliss. Bliss's story is even more compelling, particularly when Heller describes the hirings, firings and jockeying for position that even involved Bliss's parents as he battled to find his place in the world of borscht belt comics. Once Fountain and Bliss come together, the novel becomes more pedestrian, although Heller keeps things spicy by adding juicy backstage details about their unique chemistry and the gargantuan appetites of the two entertainers. Heller introduces a veritable armada of secondary characters to tell their stories, including managers, wives, ex-wives, children, etc., producing a nonstop, machine-gun-style series of anecdotes and stories that works well in the early going as Heller describes the cutthroat competition among comics and entertainers. As he shifts to the well-known backbiting that took place when Martin ("Vic") left to pursue his movie and TV career, the stylistic trick proves more cumbersome and unwieldy. Longer and less focused than it should be, this is nevertheless a funny and illuminating story of two of the industry's post-WWII giants. Agent, Chuck Verrill. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Heller follows his first novel, *Slab Rat*, with what's billed as "fiction's first mockumentary." The subject is the fictional entertainment duo of Vic Fountain and Ziggy Bliss. The former is a smooth crooner, ... la Dean Martin, and the latter is a high-energy meshuga comedian, ... la Jerry Lewis. Conversational snippets from more than 50 of their colleagues, ranging from business managers and band members to wives and girlfriends, track the career of the team from the Catskills to Hollywood and beyond. The novel could serve as a primer for a snapshot history of the last century, since the team crosses paths with everybody from Mickey Cohen and Harry Cohn to J. Robert Oppenheimer. Sadly, though, it lacks the undiluted funniness of Christopher Guest's film "mockumentary," *Best in Show*, for example, and, following hard on the heels of Elizabeth McCracken's very similar *Niagara Falls All Over Again*, published last year, it can be recommended only for the largest public libraries. Bob Lunn, Kansas City P.L., MO
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Review

Mel Brooks Wonderful.

Mel Brooks Wonderful reading, a great journey, and all true...I was there.

Karen Valby *Entertainment Weekly* A bighearted new novel...Heller proves he can write about the bite of the young as well as the wisdom of the aged.

Chris Power *The Times* (London) Funnymen is one of the most satisfying books I have read in years.

Maxim [A] laugh-out-loud-funny show-biz satire that'll knock you on your tuchis.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alan Durham:

The book Funnymen: A Novel gives you the sense of being enjoy for your spare time. You can use to make your capable much more increase. Book can to be your best friend when you getting anxiety or having big problem with your subject. If you can make reading through a book Funnymen: A Novel to get your habit, you can get more advantages, like add your own capable, increase your knowledge about a few or all subjects. You can know everything if you like start and read a e-book Funnymen: A Novel. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science book or encyclopedia or other people. So , how do you think about this publication?

Theodore Parish:

Why? Because this Funnymen: A Novel is an unordinary book that the inside of the book waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will jolt you with the secret that inside. Reading this book close to it was fantastic author who write the book in such awesome way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning fully. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This amazing book will give you a lot of rewards than the other book possess such as help improving your expertise and your critical thinking method. So , still want to delay having that book? If I were being you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

Rick Braden:

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Kevin Lewis:

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