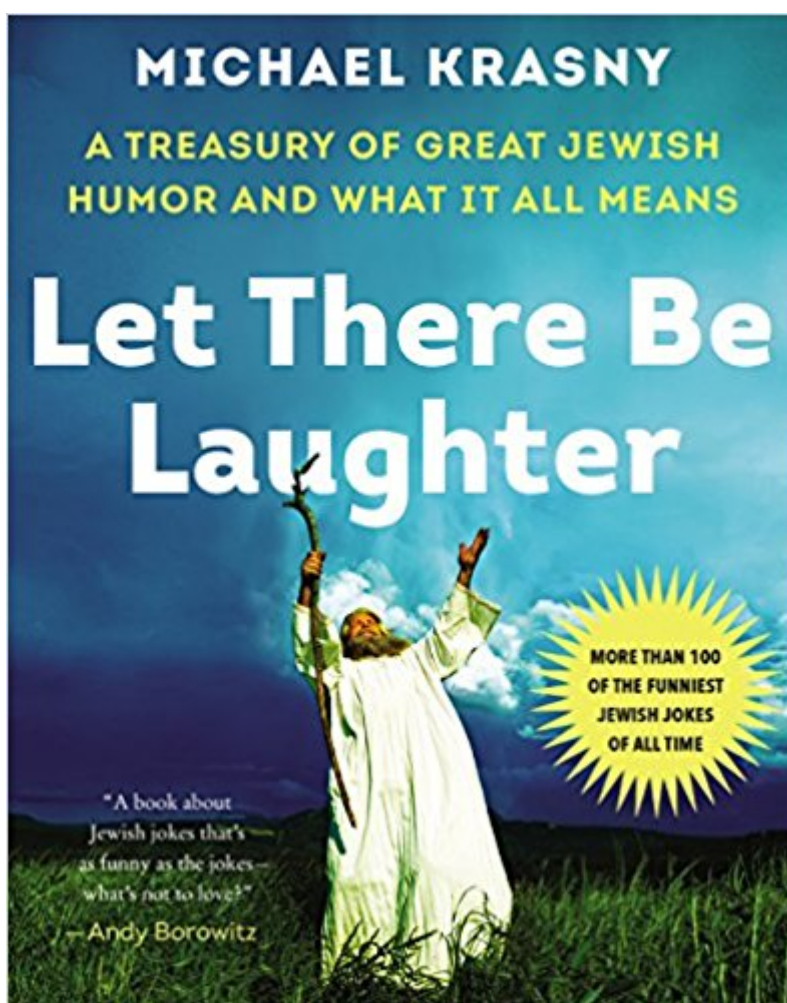


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Let There Be Laughter: A Treasury Of Great Jewish Humor And What It All Means



Synopsis

From the host of NPR affiliate *WNYC's* Forum with Michael Krasny, *Let There Be Laughter* is a compendium of Jewish jokes that packs the punches with hilarious riff after riff and also offers a window into Jewish culture. Michael Krasny has been telling Jewish jokes since his bar mitzvah, and it's been said that he knows more of them than anyone on the planet. He certainly states his case in this wise, enlightening, and hilarious book that not only collects the best of Jewish humor passed down from generation to generation, but explains the cultural expressions and anxieties behind the laughs. "What's Jewish Alzheimer?" "You forget everything but the grudges." "You must be so proud. Your daughter is the President of the United States!" "Yes. But her brother is a doctor!" "Isn't Jewish humor masochistic?" "No. And if I hear that one more time I am going to kill myself." With his background as a scholar and public-radio host, Krasny delves deeply into the themes, topics, and form of Jewish humor: chauvinism undercut by irony and self-mockery, the fear of losing cultural identity through assimilation, the importance of vocal inflection in joke-telling, and calls to communal memory, including the use of Yiddish. Borrowing from traditional humor and such Jewish comedy legends as Jackie Mason, Mel Brooks, and Joan Rivers, Larry David, Sarah Silverman, Jerry Seinfeld and Amy Schumer, *Let There Be Laughter* is an absolute pleasure for the chosen and goyim alike.

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Customer Reviews

"A book about Jewish jokes that's as funny as the jokes--what's not to

love? (–Andy Borowitz) “Joyful, Jewish and often just plain old funny, Michael Krasny’s new book, *Let There Be Laughter*, is jam-packed with jokes. (–The Mercury News) “Side-splittingly hilarious. (–Ken Burns) “Krasny has chosen well, and digs into the jokes, explaining the sometimes not-so-funny histories and emotions that ultimately trigger the laughter. Besides the featured jokes, he provides plentiful additional bits that evoke smiles and nods of recognition. (San Francisco Chronicle Book Review) “Be sure to pick up this funny read. You won’t regret it. (Atlanta Jewish Times) “Let There Be Laughter is as much a memoir as an anthology, and some of the best moments in the book are the anecdotes that Krasny tells about how Jewish humor asserts itself in unexpected, provocative and meaningful ways. (Jewish Journal) “[Krasny] closes with the hope that his book has brought deep appreciation for the remarkably widely-ranging genius of Jewish comedy...delightful. (New York Times Book Review) “For years, [Krasny] been building an arsenal of Jewish jokes, which resulted in the recent bestselling book *Let There Be Laughter*, his punchline-filled reflection on the wit and wisdom and general mishegoss of his people. And, oy, do we need this humor more than ever now. (David Talbot, San Francisco Chronicle) “Michael Krasny’s *Let There Be Laughter* offers funny jokes and insightful commentary as antidote to trying times. (Times of Israel)

“Isn’t Jewish humor masochistic?” “No. And if I hear that one more time I am going to kill myself. Michael Krasny has been telling Jewish jokes since he could say “oy vey!, and it’s been said that he knows more of them than anyone else on the planet. He certainly states his case in this wise, enlightening, and hilarious book that not only collects the best Jewish humor passed down from generation to generation but explains the cultural expressions and anxieties behind the laughs. With his background as a scholar and public radio host, Krasny delves deeply into the themes, topics, and forms of Jewish humor: chauvinism undercut by irony and self-mockery; the fear of losing cultural identity through assimilation; the importance of vocal inflection in joke-telling; and calls to communal memory, including the use of Yiddish. Borrowing from traditional humor and such Jewish comedy legends as Jackie Mason, Mel Brooks, and Joan Rivers, *Let There Be Laughter* is an absolute pleasure for the chosen and goyim alike.

'Let There be Laughter' written by Michael Krasny, who is a Professor of English Literature and host of the noted NPR show 'The Forum'. He previously authored 'The Spiritual Envy-An Agnostic's Quest', in which he tried to answer the principal question about whether we can live this life according to our own code without the need and aid of faith or spiritual belief in a deity? I read that book several times and it used it as a guide on my own path to secularism. So I was extremely excited when Professor's Krasny's new book was announced and I pre ordered it as soon as it became available to purchase. I have had the pleasure to have taken a few courses with Professor Krasny. His class lectures are equivalent to an enchanting theatrical performance. His wonderful collection of lectures on 'Masterpieces of Short Fiction' have been recorded by 'Great Courses' company and can be purchased online. Myself being previously used to stoic Engineering Professors, thought these attributes of mixing humor, storytelling, and teaching must be shared amongst all the Professors of the Humanities; but after having taken several more courses in the literary arts, I have come to the final conclusion that, in deed, Professor Krasny is rather unique. And very much celebrated too; his classes fill out auditoriums, his radio show is listened by a multitude of people everyday; and even the Mayor of San Francisco declared Michael Krasny Day on the 20th anniversary of his radio show. This new book 'Let There Be Laughter: A Treasury of Great Jewish Humor and What It All Means' is a collection of Jewish jokes accumulated by Professor Krasny throughout his life. The book is written in the same style and voice familiar to all of Krasny's fans and reading the book transported me back into his classroom. I could visualize him in front of me, telling these stories utilizing all of his tonal variations. There are two seminal questions the book tries to answer; First is the question of humor i.e what is in fact humor and the second why are Jews considered funny? Professor Krasny deems humor to be an another form of storytelling, that reveals some truth, albeit in a comical way. The book is divided into eight distinct categories of jokes where Professor Krasny lists the jokes and then gives personal anecdotes and explains the context. I personally enjoyed the last four categories the most: 'Yiddish Generation, Celebration, Suffering, and Separate & Distinct'. Professor Krasny reveals that characteristics such as assimilating in a new place, fear of loss of identity, holding on to tradition, pressure to succeed, etc, are some of the main crux of the Jewish jokes. But I believe that these characteristics are shared by all migrant communities. Humor could also be a vehicle to pass on tradition to the future generation, in danger of losing their heritage in the new world. Being a Pakistani living in the US, I could very easily relate with Jewish Humor exhibited by Professor Krasny. Replace the Rabbi with an Imam, the Jewish Mother with an Indian Auntie, and the joke switches from being Jewish to Indian/Muslim/Pakistani etc. Recently an Anthology of short stories was published in the US by

women from the Indian subcontinent origin titled "Good Girls Marry Doctors", also a theme of jokes listed in Professor Krasny's book. So then, humor is not only a form of story telling, but is also a way to bring people together. The characters in these jokes may be of different race, ethnicities, religions; but there is something very crucial that they all share-and that is their humanity. And this is what in the end this book "Let there be Laughter" reminds us all of.

The reason Michael Krasny's radio program Forum on KQED has become a local institution in the San Francisco Bay Area is that he brings a level of knowledge, intelligence and most importantly, humor to his broadcasts each morning that few other radio hosts are able to achieve. Luckily all those qualities are on full display in his wonderful new book "Let There Be Laughter". Laughter is a powerful defense against prejudice and persecution, so naturally Jewish Humor has been honed over centuries. Apparently, Michael knows every Jewish joke ever told and he brilliantly shares them and their meaning with us in this thoroughly entertaining book.

This book took me back to my childhood, when I was somehow able to understand all the Yiddish stories my father and his brother (other relatives, too) told one another. Did they laugh! Did I laugh! The stories in the book are very funny, but the sensibility behind the entire tome really got to me. I could not wipe smile off my face as I read., and I plan to open the book many more times in the future.

Like all kinds of humor, Jewish jokes are sometimes an acquired taste; they often rely on a common set of experiences that some people have and others do not. Mr. Krasny does a great job telling the jokes, but an even more fantastic job explaining the context, the basis, the morphology, and why the joke is funny. Even if you've never come across a stereotypical Jewish "bubba" or a attended a bar mitzvah, this book will provide you everything you need to know about the inside jokes and funnies in a clear, succinct, non-derogatory way that brings the light and mirth of Jewish humor to the masses; Jews and Gentiles alike. A fantastic read; definitely worth picking up a copy. And a great gift for the Jewish person in your life!

This book is "So Right On", and makes you laugh so loud from hearing what Does Really Happen.Its just a ball, a laughter... almost like if my GrandMother used HER words to write the book. Its Exactly True :)Everybody needs one (at least: everybody that can understand & relate.lol)

Being a loyal listener of Michael Krasny on KQED (local NPR fm radio station) I was already familiar with his wit and erudition. This book shows that he can be a very funny man as well. The jokes are fun, but the learning opportunity is grand as well. enjoy.

This is really a history book. Yes, it is about humor, but this book put the humor in the context of it' time and place. It's has a lot of cultural insight. I like history and I like this. Parts of it are very funny. Others are sad. Enjoyed the knowledge.

Michael Krasny is one of the most cogent and balanced talk show hosts in the business, but in "Let There Be Laughter" he has collated a compedium of Jewish Humor that is unrivaled in our time. This work is at once screamingly funny, deeply insightful, and chock full of the author's personal anecdotes gleaned from interviewing most of the comic geniuses of our time. By probing and connecting patterns of Jewish humor Krasny helps us to understand the evolution of the Jewish conscience and its fundamental value systems. It is so refreshing to read a book that celebrates a genre of humor that is seminal to our national and media culture and I could not recommend a more uplifting and joyous book for our times.

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