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Ruth R. Wisse

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#576571 in Books Ruth R Wisse 2013-06-02Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.81 x .92 x 5.681, 1.04
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Ruth R. Wisse : No Joke: Making Jewish Humor (Library of Jewish Ideas) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised No Joke: Making Jewish Humor (Library of Jewish Ideas):

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. seriously funnyBy Michael CahnThis is clearly not a joke book although it does contain some very funny jokes. The jokes are not free standing, but are there to demonstrate a particular point. Some of the points are very dark, like Jewish jokes about Nazi cruelty, as well as jokes referring to

other persecutions. It also gives incites into many comedians and historical figures. I feel the book is important, and not sibly an easy read.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not so funnyBy George L. BustinIf you are looking for classic Yiddish jokes, you won't find many here. Fair enough, the title makes clear there is not a joke book. It is an academic study of a genre of humor by a Harvard professor, learned and somewhat arid. I found it difficult to complete.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This is history, painful and funny by turns.By Kindle33Prof. Wisse has written an excellent and absorbing history of Jewish humor through centuries of turmoil. While it relates many, truly side-splitting, jokes along the way, this is serious history, not child's play. This book is anything but "boring." As a historian myself, I know how difficult it is to write authoritatively about a subject that could so easily sail above the reader's head. Prof. Wisse instead brings the reader along. If the reader works at it, much will be learned about Jewish history, and sadness and laughter will be co-mingled along the way. But above all, knowledge will be gained, and that is a source of both appreciation and excitement.

Humor is the most celebrated of all Jewish responses to modernity. In this book, Ruth Wisse evokes and applauds the genius of spontaneous Jewish joking--as well as the brilliance of comic masterworks by writers like Heinrich Heine, Sholem Aleichem, Isaac Babel, S. Y. Agnon, Isaac Bashevis Singer, and Philip Roth. At the same time, Wisse draws attention to the precarious conditions that call Jewish humor into being--and the price it may exact from its practitioners and audience. Wisse broadly traces modern Jewish humor around the world, teasing out its implications as she explores memorable and telling examples from German, Yiddish, English, Russian, and Hebrew. Among other topics, the book looks at how Jewish humor channeled Jewish learning and wordsmanship into new avenues of creativity, brought relief to liberal non-Jews in repressive societies, and enriched popular culture in the United States. Even as it invites readers to consider the pleasures and profits of Jewish humor, the book asks difficult but fascinating questions: Can the excess and extreme self-ridicule of Jewish humor go too far and backfire in the process? And is "leave 'em laughing" the wisest motto for a people that others have intended to sweep off the stage of history?