



American Cornball: A Laffopedic Guide to the Formerly Funny

Christopher Miller

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American Cornball is Christopher Miller's irresistibly funny illustrated survey of popular humor—the topics that used to make us laugh, from hiccups and henpecked-husbands to outhouses and old maids—and what it tells us about our country yesterday and today.

Miller revisits nearly 200 comic staples that have been passed down through our culture for generations, many originating from the vaudeville age. He explores the (often unseemly) contexts from which they arose, why they were funny in their time, and why they eventually lost their appeal. The result is a kind of taxonomy of humor during America's golden age that provides a deeper, more profound look at the prejudices, preoccupations, and peculiarities of a nation polarized between urban and rural, black and white, highbrow and lowbrow.

As he touches on issues of racism and sexism, cultural stereotypes and violence, Miller reveals how dramatically our moral sensibilities have shifted, most notably in the last few decades. Complete with more than 100 period illustrations, *American Cornball* is a richly entertaining survey of our shifting comic universe.



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