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[Review of] A Treasury of Humor: An Indexed Collection of Anecdotes

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WIT AND HUMOR

1121. Johnson, Eric W. *A Treasury of Humor: An Indexed Collection of Anecdotes*. Buffalo, N.Y., Prometheus Books, 1989. 269p. \$24.95. LC 89-60195. ISBN 0-87975-515-6.

This general collection presents 477 humorous anecdotes (averaging around 100 words) under 15 broad categories: sexuality and sex, children and adolescents, family life and relationships, language, manners, education, religion, politics, speakers and writers, organizations, fund-raising, problems of life, old age, drama, and history. Each entry is usually preceded by a short, chatty introduction that provides a transition from the previous anecdote and ties the chapters together. To make each anecdote more accessible, an index of over 1,000 terms guides users to specific items through "identification entries" (a key phrase, usually from the punch line) and subject entries (around 12 per anecdote). The identification entries are often unenlightening if one has not heard the joke (e.g., cauliflower, bone), but overall the index makes the work more useful. However, Johnson's work does not approach the breadth and accessibility of Jacob M. Braude's classic collections. *Braude's Handbook of Stories for Toastmasters and Speakers* (Prentice-Hall, 1967), for example, has nearly 3,000 anecdotes under hundreds of categories while providing even more specific access through nearly 4,500 index terms. Nonetheless, Johnson's work provides a good update to the Braude works, and, more important, most of its anecdotes are actually funny.—ROBERT AKEN