



# Funnymen: A Novel

*Ted Heller*

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## **Funnymen: A Novel** 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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