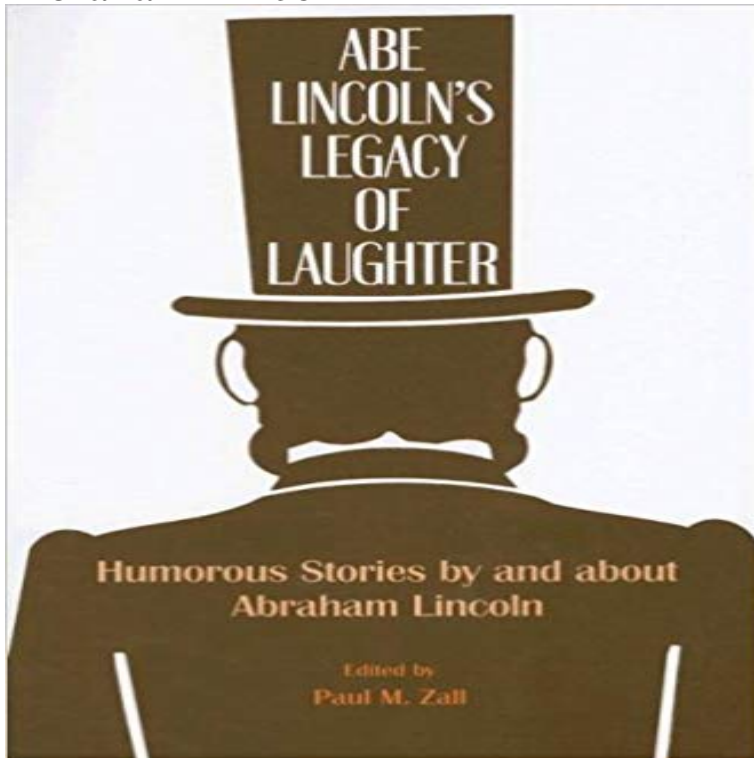


Abe Lincoln's Legacy of Laughter: Humorous Stories by and about Abraham Lincoln



During the Civil War, it was said that two ladies on a train were discussing the likely outcome of the conflict. One insisted Jeff Davis would win the war because he was a praying man. The other replied, But Abrams a praying man. But, said the first, the Lord will think Abrams joking. Abraham Lincoln used his jokes and stories to illustrate a point, sway opinion, and to sustain the national morale during a momentous crisis. Lincoln told many stories based on his own experiences, but much of his material came from other sources and was familiar to his audiences. His contribution to these borrowed stories was his celebrated style of delivery-his performance rather than his invention. To many, his anecdotes resembled the comfort and support of an old shoe. Abraham Lincoln's Legacy of Laughter, a substantial revision of P. M. Zall's 1982 classic, Abe Lincoln Laughing, consists of stories, jokes, and anecdotes on a wide range of topics by and about Abraham Lincoln before and after he became president. Establishing which tales are authentic and which are frauds and delusions, Abraham Lincoln's Legacy of Laughter includes stories derived from Lincoln's writings and speeches; writings by others up to April 1865; post-Civil War writings by those who knew him; and writings by others about Lincoln in later decades, including a sample from the twentieth century. Within each group, entries are arranged in the order they appeared in print. The volume contains notes, a bibliography, an index of the entries by section, and a subject index. As the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial approaches, many are focusing on Lincoln's ideals and contributions to America and the world. Abraham Lincoln's Legacy of Laughter will remind readers of another distinctive, timeless trait that marked him as nearly unique among our political leaders: his quick wit and the wry sense of humor that

