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Laughing Matters:: On Writing M*A*S*H, Tootsie, Oh, God!, and a Few Other Funny Things

Larry Gelbart

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Larry Gelbart is the comic genius who developed M*A*S*H for TV, one of the longest-running, most beloved series in history; he was a much-admired member of that memorable gaggle of writers who worked for Sid Caesar, which also included Mel Brooks, Carl Reiner, Woody Allen, and Neil Simon; and he's written successful movies like Tootsie and Oh, God!, smash hits for Broadway, including A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum and City of Angels, TV comedy-dramas like Barbarians at the Gate and Weapons of Mass Distraction, and more.

His book now adds to the fun. Part memoir, part sampler, part love letter, Gelbart tells of writing radio comedy at age sixteen for Danny Thomas--and later for Bob Hope, Jack Paar, and Red Buttons; he offers behind-the-set stories about Milton Berle, George C. Scott, and George Burns, "Klinger" and "Radar" and "Father Mulcahy"; and he lets us know about the places he's lived and how he's lived and what he's learned while doing so.

Not everything is played for laughs. Some of Laughing Matters is serious--Gelbart is a wit, not a gag writer, and he cares deeply about writing. Some is touching--for instance, his account of the last days of M*A*S*H. His sketches of comedy performers and writers are "elegant," said Publishers Weekly in an early review, his sense of form original.

He's won Emmys, Tonys, and Peabody awards, he's twice been nominated for an Academy Award, and now, in print, he may well win your heart.

A lot of funny things happened on the way to this book--and you'll be hugely entertained.

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