



# Mathematics and Humor: A Study of the Logic of Humor

*John Allen Paulos*

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## **Mathematics and Humor: A Study of the Logic of Humor** John Allen Paulos

John Allen Paulos cleverly scrutinizes the mathematical structures of jokes, puns, paradoxes, spoonerisms, riddles, and other forms of humor, drawing examples from such sources as Rabelais, Shakespeare, James Beattie, René Thom, Lewis Carroll, Arthur Koestler, W. C. Fields, and Woody Allen.

"Jokes, paradoxes, riddles, and the art of non-sequitur are revealed with great perception and insight in this illuminating account of the relationship between humor and mathematics."—Joseph Williams, *New York Times*

"'Leave your *mind* alone,' said a Thurber cartoon, and a really complete and convincing analysis of what humour is might spoil all jokes forever. This book avoids that danger. What it does. . . is describe broadly several kinds of mathematical theory and apply them to throw sidelights on how many kinds of jokes work."—*New Scientist*

"Many scholars nowadays write seriously about the ludicrous. Some merely manage to be dull. A few—like Paulos—are brilliant in an odd endeavor."—*Los Angeles Times Book Review*

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