



# The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious (Penguin Classics)

Sigmund Freud

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Why do we laugh? The answer, argued Freud in this groundbreaking study of humor, is that jokes, like dreams, satisfy our unconscious desires. *The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious* explains how jokes provide immense pleasure by releasing us from our inhibitions and allowing us to express sexual, aggressive, playful, or cynical instincts that would otherwise remain hidden. In elaborating this theory, Freud brings together a rich collection of puns, witticisms, one-liners, and anecdotes, which, as Freud shows, are a method of giving ourselves away.

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