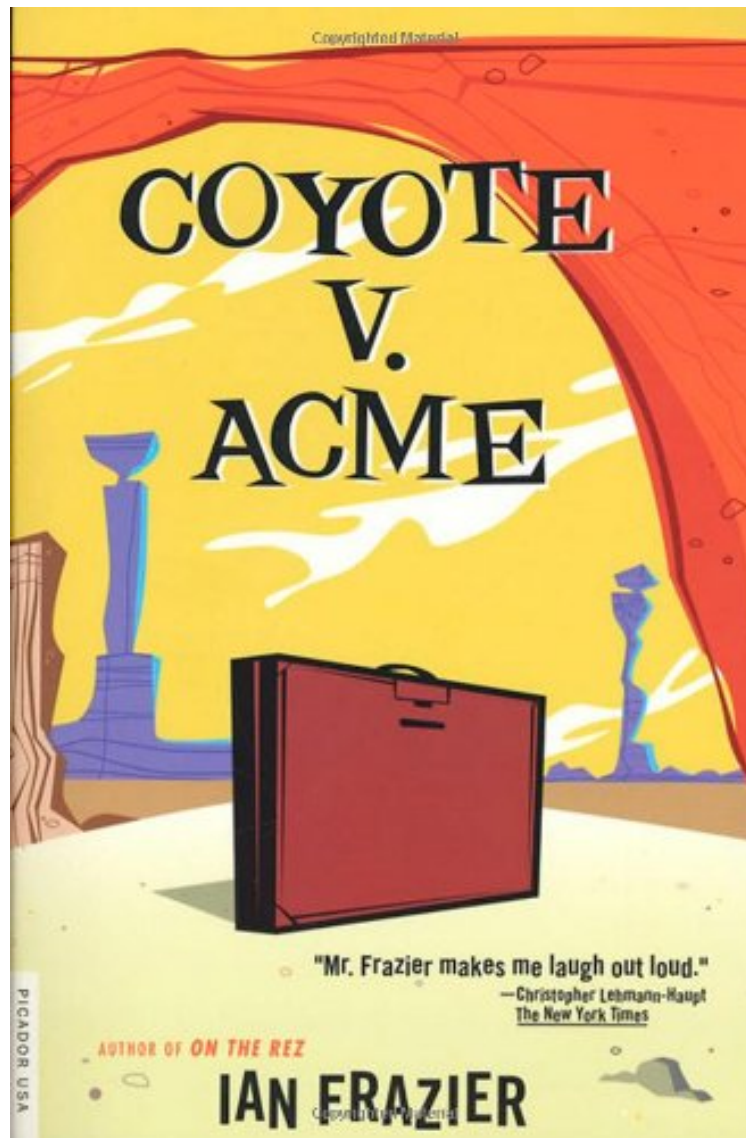


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## Coyote V. Acme

*Ian Frazier*

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**Ian Frazier : Coyote V. Acme** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Coyote V. Acme:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. very clever By Jack Shakely Ian Frazier is one funny guy. His "Shouts and Murmurs" column in the New Yorker is consistently humorous. But he hit his stride with "Coyote V. Acme," a laugh-out-loud summation by Wily Coyote's lawyer explaining the physical and emotional grief his client has come to as a consequence of the Acme Company's continued product failures. If you've ever seen a Roadrunner

cartoon (and who hasn't?), this story alone is worth the price of the book. But there's more, lots more, in this collection of short stories. It ain't Shakespeare, but then again when did Shakespeare make you laugh this hard? Macbeth doesn't count. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not his best but still really good By T. O'Rourke As most of the reviewers note, the title article is the best, and the only one I laughed out loud (for an embarrassingly long time) at, but he takes his creativity to places most people wouldn't and he makes them all pay off in one way or another. This is the 5th book of his I've read, and I will keep buying them as well as enjoying everything he writes for the New Yorker. It is probably more for fans, and you may find some of the others funnier, but don't hold that against this book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Classic Must Read By D. Edgren It doesn't get funnier than this. In the small book of wry essays, Ian Frazier first captures your attention, then proceeds to tickle it mercilessly.

A frequent contributor to The New Yorker magazine, the celebrated humorist offers his second collection of essays, exploring such odd details of American popular culture as the career of cartoon character Wile E. Coyote.

.com Ian Frazier collects some of his funniest essays from The New Yorker and The Atlantic Monthly in *Coyote v. Acme*. Setting the tone is the title piece, consisting of the legal brief filed on behalf of the hapless character who has been irreparably harmed by manufacturer's negligence while pursuing the Road Runner. An excerpt: "As Mr. Coyote gripped the handlebars, the Rocket Sled accelerated with such sudden and precipitate force as to stretch Mr. Coyote's forelimbs to a length of fifty feet." Throughout the nearly two-dozen essays, Frazier demonstrates his remarkable gift for language: he parodies everything from New Yorkers' talent for "getting in people's faces," to the IRS (while using some actual government-issued verbiage), and he mixes the classic with the less-than-classic in Boswell's *Life of Don Johnson*. From Publishers Weekly Frazier's deadpan comic voice was once a staple for New Yorker readers. Two previous book collections resulted: *Dating Your Mom* (1986), an assembly of very short pieces, and *Nobody Better, Better Than Nobody* (1987), featuring longer essays and profiles of odd denizens of American culture, a much superior showcase for the author's prodigious narrative and journalistic skills. These later came into full flower in his acclaimed travel volume, *Great Plains* (1989), and in last year's moving Frazier genealogy, *Family*. This latest collection, much of it also from the New Yorker, harks back to Mom?short, arch, cynical takes on some of the idiocies of American life: letters from banks crowing about their human services; the habit of highbrow reviewers of insisting that impersonal entities ("Language," "Dublin") in a play or a film are in fact "characters." As usual, Frazier is awfully good, smart and wicked at the same time. "Boswell's Don Johnson," for example, is a hilarious ditty written after the style of the famous biographer, but in this case he is engaged in hagiography of the star of Miami Vice. The title essay, with its exposition, in deadly legalese, of one Wile E. Coyote's complaints against a generic purveyor of explosive devices, shows Frazier's great comic range, however trite the subject. Although this book is not Frazier at full-bore, readers of his generation will find an occasional cultural reference long thought lost, and find themselves oddly beholden to a fellow who can resurrect Billy Joe McCallister from beneath the Tallahatchie Bridge. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Frazier's first collection of humor since *Dating Your Mom* (LJ 1/86) contains 22 pieces spoofing a wide range of subjects from Wylie Coyote to Joseph Stalin, from aggressive New Yorkers to the all-powerful Internal Revenue Service. The problem is that Frazier's routines too often target trivial issues, e.g., golf, television shows, and advice columns. Moreover, they aren't funny?at least not to one whose sense of humor was honed on Mad magazine, Saturday Night Live, and Fawlty Towers. Reading one of these stories in a magazine at the dentist's office might prove distracting; reading several could eliminate the need for Novocain. Of course, when it comes to a sense of humor, people vary greatly. If you dissolve into a paroxysm of uncontrollable laughter at the sight of a New Yorker cartoon, this book may be for you. For general collections.?William Gargan, Brooklyn Coll. Lib., CUNY Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.