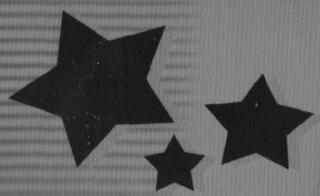
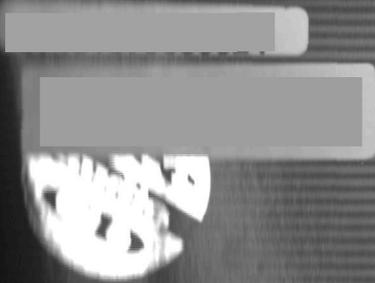


book 02 What's So Funny?



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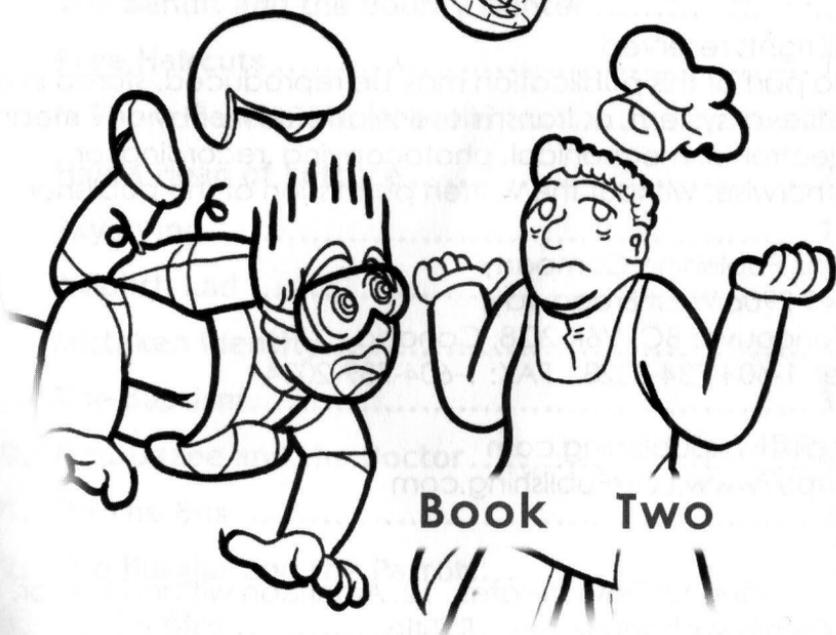
# What's So Funny?

Gene-Michael Higney

Learning English through Laughter

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# What's **So Funny?**



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# Foreword

By Somebody Not Famous

(sorry)

Forewords to books usually are written by famous people. I tried to get this one written by a well-known writer friend of mine, someone whose romantic bestsellers have financed for her many a trip to Europe, the Far East, and the plastic surgeon. She told me she couldn't write the Foreword to my book because she was too busy trimming her toenails!

Anyway, I wanted to help people who are learning English as a second language, and I thought it would be interesting to try something different than the usual serious textbook. Everybody loves jokes, so by combining vocabulary lists with laughter, I hope to make practicing English fun.

For me, jokes are sort of like getting lint on my clothes: I kind of collect them as I go through my day, and I don't always know where they came from. Some of the jokes in this book were told to me in person by friends, who in turn heard them from other friends. Other jokes I remembered from my childhood, and I thought this would be a good place to share the laughter they brought me.

Some of the jokes came from my cyber-friends in other countries. We do our part for world peace by exchanging jokes and bits of news all the time, proving that people from around

the world can get along quite nicely if they want to... and if they have a sense of humor.

Some things may not be as funny in one culture as they are in another, but that is yet another way we can learn about our fascinating differences and similarities. Jokes are a good way to see a culture as it really is, which means, sometimes, not at its prettiest. Jokes can show us parts of ourselves that we need to improve, and that's why I've included some jokes that not everyone will think are "politically correct." I think we can learn more about each other by laughing *with* each other at our faults and by admitting, with smiles on our faces, that we're not perfect. It's hard to get angry at each other if we remember to laugh at ourselves.

Please come and enjoy laughing along with us.

Gene-Michael Higney

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# Introduction

***What's So Funny?*** is a joke book for students who are learning English as a second or foreign language. Students with reading level over 1,500 words may begin with **Book 1**; those with 3,000 words, with **Book 2**. The series is designed for leisure reading or as a homework assignment over a long school holiday.

- **Text**

Humor plays an important role in the English language. It is beneficial for students to become familiar with English humor to advance their communication skills. **Book 1** has 30 jokes, for a total of 3,000 words. **Book 2** has 24 jokes, for a total of 6,000 words.

- **Vocabulary**

A short vocabulary list provides clues that will help students figure out the meanings of new words they encounter while reading the jokes. This encourages students to think harder and to read between the lines rather than to habitually rely on a dictionary for an immediate translation.

- **Quiz**

A short quiz ensures that students get the main idea of each joke. The questions are intended to challenge students' comprehension skills. If students miss the point, they can always go back to the text and read it again. The subjects and

lengths of the jokes should help make reading them a pleasant experience.

- **Remarks**

The remarks offer relevant cultural background as well as the key to the humor of each joke. In most cases, students should be able to figure out the **answer to the quiz** simply by reading through the remarks. The remarks also give students a chance to walk through the joke from the author's point of view.

- **Audio CD or Tape**

An audio CD or tape of the jokes is attached to the back cover of the book. Students may practice pronunciation or, better yet, learn to recite the jokes to become socially involved in an English speaking environment.

- **Answer Key**

The Answer Key is available from local distributors or upon request through email to: **mail@lynxpublishing.com**

We look forward to hearing from you!

# 1 Can You Give Me a Push?

---



## Can You Give Me a Push?

Perry Parsnipp and his wife Patty were awakened at 3 a.m. by someone pounding on their front door. Perry got up, grumbling, and hurried downstairs. When he opened the door, he found a drunken stranger standing on the front steps in the pouring rain.

"*Shay* (say), buddy, can you give me a push?" slurred the drunk.

"Not a chance!" yelled Perry over the sound of the rain.  
"It's three o'clock in the morning! Get lost!"

Perry slammed the door and went back to bed.

"Who was it?" asked Patty.

"Some drunk asking for a push," Perry replied.

"Did you help him?" Patty asked.

"No, I didn't help him! It's three in the morning and raining like hell!"

"Well, I'm disappointed in you," said Patty. "Remember

when our car broke down while we were on vacation and those two guys helped us? Didn't you appreciate that? The world is in a sorry state because too few people are willing to give a helping hand to someone in need."

"When you're right, you're right," said Perry. "Now I feel guilty." So he got dressed and went out into the rain.

"Hello, *fella* (fellow)," he called into the dark. "Are you still out there?"

"*Yesh* (yes)," came the answer. "Are *ya gonna* (you going to) give me a push?"

"Where are you?" Perry called.

The drunk answered, "I'm over here on the swing!"

## ◆ Vocabulary

- |                     |   |   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| pounding            | – | beating   |
| grumbling           | – | complaining   |
| pouring rain        | – | heavy rain  |
| slurred             | – | not clearly spoken  |
| get lost            | – | go away   |
| slam the door       | – | shut the door with force  |
| appreciate          | – | feel grateful   |
| give a helping hand | – | to help   |
| in a sorry state    | – | in bad condition  |
| in need             | – | needing help  |
| swing               | – | a child's plaything; hanging chair<br>that moves back and forth |

## ◆ Question

What does the man need a push for?

- a. his car
- b. the swing

## ◆ Remarks

When adults ask for a "push," they usually mean that their car is not working and they need a "push" to get it started. But when children ask for a "push," they usually are sitting in a swing and want to go higher.

# 2

## The Bandit and the Bounty Hunter



## The Bandit and the Bounty Hunter

A notorious Mexican bandit used to cross the Rio Grande to rob banks in Texas and then cross back into Mexico to spend the loot.

Finally, a border town hired a bloodthirsty bounty hunter to catch the bandit and reclaim the stolen money.

After searching for months, the bounty hunter finally tracked the bandit to his favorite bar, where he sneaked up behind the bandit, pointed his six-shooter at the back of the bandit's head, and said, "I got you now, you crook. Tell me where you hid the loot, or I'll blow your brains out."

Unfortunately, the bandit didn't speak English, and the bounty hunter didn't speak Spanish. However, a bilingual lawyer was sitting in the saloon and offered to translate.

In Spanish, the lawyer told the bandit how the bounty hunter had said he'd blow the bandit's brains out if the bandit didn't tell him where the bank money was hidden.

Terrified, the bandit said in Spanish that the loot was buried under the oak tree right behind the bar.

"What did he say?" asked the bounty hunter.

"Well," the lawyer answered, "he said, 'Go ahead and shoot me, you moron. I'd rather die than tell you where the money is!'"

## ◆ Vocabulary

- bandit – outlaw, robber, thief
- bounty hunter – someone hired to catch bad guys
- notorious – infamous, dishonorable, disreputable
- Rio Grande – a river that borders Texas and Mexico
- loot – money or items taken during a robbery or theft
- bloodthirsty – cruel, vicious
- reclaim – take back
- sneak up – quietly walk up behind
- six-shooter – a gun with six bullets
- crook – criminal, bad guy
- bilingual – able to speaking two languages
- saloon – bar, pub
- moron – idiot, fool

## ◆ Question

Which is true?

- a. The bounty hunter may die.
- b. The lawyer may get all the money.

## ◆ Remarks

Lawyers are often made fun of in western jokes because they are seen as greedy and dishonorable. In this joke the bilingual lawyer thinks that if the bounty hunter shoots the bandit without knowing where the money is, the lawyer can keep the money for himself. The bandit got away with it... *this time!*

# 3

## Free Haircuts

---



## Free Haircuts

One day, a florist went to his neighborhood barbershop for a haircut. Afterward, when he started to pay the barber, the barber said, "I can't take your money. As a community service, I cut the hair of my first twelve customers each day for free."

The florist left, quite happy. The next morning, waiting at the door of his shop, the barber found a "Thank You" card and a dozen roses from the florist.

The next day, the policeman on the beat went to the barbershop for a haircut. When he started to pay for it, the barber said, "No way, officer. As a community service, I cut the hair of my first twelve customers each day for free."

The policeman grinned and left, contented. The next morning, waiting at the door of his shop, the barber found another "Thank You" card and a dozen donuts from the policeman.

The following day, a Scotsman who lived nearby went to the barbershop for a haircut. When he started to pay for it, the barber said, "No, thank you. As a community service, I cut the hair of my first twelve customers each day for free."

The Scotsman was ecstatic and left the shop whistling gleefully.

The next morning, waiting at the door of his shop, the barber discovered twelve Scotsmen standing in line for free haircuts.

## ◆ Vocabulary

- florist – a person who runs a flower shop
- community service – an act of kindness to the neighborhood
- on the beat – assigned to cover the area
- grin – smile
- contented – pleased, satisfied
- ecstatic – overjoyed, delighted
- gleefully – happily
- standing in line – lining up

## ◆ Question

What's so funny?

- a. It makes fun of the reputation Scotsmen have for being thrifty.
- b. It makes fun of how badly Scotsmen need haircuts.

## ◆ Remarks

There are many jokes about the reputations of different races. For example, Scotsmen have a reputation for being thrifty and unwilling to spend their money unless they have to. Here, instead of giving the barber a thank-you tip, the Scotsman tells some of his countrymen about how he got a free haircut, and they decide to do the same!

4

# Is There Baseball in Heaven?



## Is There Baseball in Heaven?

Two old fellows named Farfel and Blinky are doing what they've done every day for thirty years, since they retired from their careers as baseball players. They're sitting on a park bench feeding pigeons and talking about baseball.

Out of nowhere, Farfel asks Blinky, "Do you think there's baseball in Heaven?"

Blinky thinks about it for a minute and answers, "I don't know. To me, it sure wouldn't seem like Heaven without it. But I'll tell you what. Let's make a deal. If I die first, I'll come back and tell you if there's baseball in Heaven. And if you die first, you do the same."

They shake hands on it.

A few months later, Farfel passes on. A week after that, Blinky is sitting on their favorite bench by himself, feeding the pigeons, when he hears a voice whisper, "Yo, Blinky."

Blinky looks around him and sees no one there. But he

whispers, "Farfel? Is that you?"

"Yep, it's me," says the voice. "Remember our deal? Whoever croaked first was supposed to come back and tell the other whether there's baseball in Heaven."

Amazed, Blinky says, "Sure I remember. So, is there baseball in Heaven?"

"Well," says Farfel, "I've got some good news and some bad news."

"Give me the good news first," says Blinky.

"There is baseball in Heaven," replies Farfel.

"That's great!" says Blinky. "Now, what's the bad news?"

Farfel sighs and says, "You're pitching on Friday."

## ◆ Vocabulary

fellow	–	man, guy
park bench	–	long chair in a park
pigeon	–	bird, dove
out of nowhere	–	suddenly
make a deal	–	make a promise with each other
croak	–	die
amazed	–	surprised
pitching	–	throwing the ball

## ◆ Question

What's so funny?

- Blinky doesn't like to pitch.
- Blinky will soon join Farfel in Heaven.

## ◆ Remarks

Elderly people often enjoy sitting in a park and feeding the animals they find there. These two men were baseball players. When the first man dies and brings back the good news about baseball being played in Heaven, the second man is very happy. He is *not* so happy to find out that *he* is due to appear in Heaven the following week!

# 5

## Half a Head of Lettuce

---



## Half a Head of Lettuce

A man walked into the produce section of his local supermarket and asked to buy *half* a head of lettuce.

Marvin, the boy working in that department, explained that the store sold only *whole* heads of lettuce. The man insisted that he wanted *half* a head of lettuce and asked Marvin to check with the store manager about it.

Marvin walked into the back room and told the manager, "Some jerk wants to buy only half a head of lettuce." Just as he finished the sentence, Marvin turned to find the man standing right behind him. Marvin quickly added: "And *this* gentleman wants to buy the *other* half!"

Later, the manager went to Marvin and said, "I was pretty impressed with the way you got yourself out of that sticky situation. I like people who can think on their feet. Where are you from, son?"

"Mosquitobuns, Idaho, sir," Marvin said.

"Why did you leave Mosquitobuns?" the manager asked.

"Sir," Marvin answered, "there's nothing there but ugly

women and baseball players."

"Really!" said the manager, turning an angry shade of red.

"Well, my *wife* is from Mosquitobuns!"

"No kidding?" Marvin quickly replied. "What *team* did she play for?"

## ◆ Vocabulary

- |                     |   |  |
|---------------------|---|--|
| produce             | – | fresh vegetables and fruit   |
| insist              | – | demand   |
| perk                | – | slang for stupid guy   |
| impressed           | – | persuaded to feel respect  |
| ticky situation     | – | difficult situation to get out of  |
| think on their feet | – | react quickly in a situation   |
| Mosquitobuns        | – | The author used this name for a town because, as you can imagine, mosquitoes have <i>very</i> small behinds (buns = hips), and Idaho sounds like "I don't know." |

## ◆ Question

Which is true?

- a. The manager has an ugly wife.
- b. Marvin is really smart.

## ◆ Remarks

The young man in the story got himself out of *two* very sticky situations by thinking quickly and using his wits. But maybe he could have stayed out of trouble if he just did not make comments out loud.



## Skydiving

A man went skydiving for the first time in his life. After listening to the instructor's lecture, he felt confident and ready to go.

When it was his turn, he jumped out of the plane, thrilled at the view and the rush of air past his ears. About five seconds later, he pulled the ripcord. Nothing happened. No parachute opened up!

He tried again. Still nothing.

He was zooming toward earth faster and faster. Just when he started to panic, he remembered his back-up chute. He pulled its cord. Nothing happened.

He started frantically pulling both cords, but still no parachute appeared.

Suddenly, he looked down, and he couldn't believe what he saw! There was another man sailing through the air, but the man was going up, not down!

As the two men passed each other in mid-air, the first man

yelled, "Hey! Do you know anything about skydiving?"

The second man yelled back, "No! Do you know anything about gas stoves?"

## ► Vocabulary

skydiving	– jumping from an airplane with a parachute
lecture	– talk, speech
confident	– sure, certain, secure
thrilled	– excited
the rush of air	– fast movement of air, wind
ripcord	– rope pulled to release the parachute
zooming	– going very fast
stand up	– stand-by
madly	– madly, crazily
become visible	– become visible
in the sky	– in the sky

## ◆ Question

What's so funny?

- a. The second man had an accident – his gas stove exploded.
- b. The second man suggests that the first man use gas stove next time.

## ◆ Remarks

The man on the way down asks the man on the way up for help. But the man on the way up, who has been blown into the sky by a gas stove explosion, is in just as bad a situation as the first man!



## A Polish Lad

After he'd been in America for only a year, a young Polish lad named Lech Downhillski married a sweet American girl. For the first two months of their marriage, even though Lech's English was not very good, they were as happy as could be.

But one day, a panicky Lech hurried into a lawyer's office.

"Please!" gasped Lech, who seemed quite terrified. "Please to make me divorce! Very quick one!"

"Well, how quickly you can get a divorce depends on your circumstances," said the lawyer. "Do you have any grounds?"

"Yah, yah," answered Lech. "I got two acres."

"No, no. I meant... Oh, never mind," said the lawyer. "Look, does your wife beat you up?"

"Oh, no," replied Lech. "I always up before her."

"No, no," said the lawyer. "What I mean is why do you want this divorce so quickly?"

"My wife ... she gonna KILL me!" cried Lech.

"Goodness! How do you know that?" asked the lawyer.

"Oh, I know she plan to kill me," said Lech. "I got proof."

"What kind of proof?" asked the lawyer.

Excitedly, Lech leaned across the lawyer's desk. "She bought bottle at drug store and put on shelf in bathroom. I can read a little English. It says on bottle: 'Polish Remover!'"

## Vocabulary

- el – young man
- ep – speak between quick breaths
- circumstance – condition, fact
- ground – reason (or: land or property)
- rod – measurement for land
- hit – hit repeatedly (or: get ahead)
- "Always up before her" – I always get up in the morning before her
- remover – a chemical that takes away something, such as dirt or a stain
- polish – from Poland (or: paint for fingernails)

## ◆ Question

What's so funny?

- a. It is a printing error on the bottle.
- b. The guy doesn't know the other meaning of the word "Polish."

## ◆ Remarks

This is a joke that people who are studying a second language will understand. Part of the difficulty in learning a new language is remembering that words may have more than one meaning. The fellow from Poland doesn't know that there is more than one meaning for the word "Polish." When he sees a bottle that seems to say it will remove or get rid of a person from Poland, he doesn't know that the contents are used to remove fingernail paint.

# 8

## Mistaken Identity

---



## Mistaken Identity

A middle-aged lady had a heart attack and was rushed to the hospital.

While on the operating table, she had a near-death experience. Seeing a brilliant white light with a glowing figure at its center, she asked, "Are you God?"

"Yes," said the figure.

"God," she said, "is my time up?"

"No," God told her. "You have another 40 years, two months and eight days to live."

Overjoyed, the lady returned to her physical being. When she recovered from her heart attack, she decided to make the most of the time she had left to live. So she stayed in the hospital and got a facelift, full-body liposuction and a tummy tuck. She even had someone come in to restyle her hair and change its color from brunette to blonde.

By the time she was released from the hospital, she looked sleek and slim and years younger.

While crossing the street on her way home, she was run over and killed by an ambulance.

Arriving quickly back at the white light and seeing God again, she demanded, "Why didn't you pull me out of the path of that ambulance? You said I had another 40 years to live!"

God shrugged and said, "Sorry. I didn't *recognize* you."

## ◆ Vocabulary

- |                |   |                                   |
|----------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| entity         | – | personality, individuality        |
| glittering     | – | very bright                       |
| gleaming       | – | shiny, beaming with light         |
| physical being | – | body                              |
| suction        | – | operation to suck out fat         |
| tightening     | – | tightening                        |
| brunette       | – | brown-haired                      |
| blonde         | – | golden-haired                     |
| smooth         | – | smooth                            |
| shrug          | – | gesture by lifting both shoulders |
| recognize      | – | identify, realize who someone is  |

## ◆ Question

Which is true?

- a. It proves that God is also changeable.
- b. It proves the woman was *too* changeable.

## ◆ Remarks

The lady made such an effort to change her appearance that she no longer looked like the lady God had spoken to earlier. Maybe she was sorry she "improved" her looks so much!



## **The Baptism**

As a drunk stumbles alongside a river, he sees that a nearby church is having an outdoor baptism service.

The minister is standing hip-deep in the river, preaching. The drunk wanders down to the water, wades in and stands next to the minister.

The preacher turns when he smells the liquor on the drunk's breath and asks, "Mister, are you ready to find Jesus?"

The drunk squints at the minister and says, "Yesh, preacher."

The minister then takes the drunk by the shoulders, dunks him under the water, and pulls him right back up.

"Have you found Jesus?" the preacher asks.

"No-o-o," says the drunk.

The preacher dunks him underwater for a bit longer, brings him up and asks, "Now, brother, have you found Jesus?"

"Not yet," answers the drunk.

Somewhat irritated, the preacher holds the drunk underwater for a full minute, pulls him out and demands, "Haven't you found Jesus YET?"

The drunk snorts some water out of his nose, wipes his eyes and says to the preacher, "No! Are you SURE this is where he fell *in*?"

## ► Vocabulary

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| stumble         | – trying to walk, but tripping occasionally   |
| baptism service | – a Christian ceremony where someone is lowered under water briefly to symbolically cleanse or purify him |
| hip deep        | – up to the waist   |
| preaching       | – giving a sermon, teaching   |
| wade            | – walk into water   |
| irritated       | – annoyed   |
| demand          | – require an answer   |
| snort           | – exhale, breathe out   |

## ◆ Question

Which is true?

- a. The drunk wants to join the church.
- b. The preacher doesn't realize that the drunk does not understand the question.

## ◆ Remarks

When a preacher asks someone if they have "found Jesus," he means he wants to know if they have decided to believe in Jesus and follow His teachings. The drunk, not thinking clearly, assumes the preacher is asking him to find someone named Jesus who has fallen into the water!

# Mrs. Dazee and the Doctor

---



## **Mrs. Dazee and the Doctor**

Mr. and Mrs. Dazee, an elderly couple, are at their doctor's office. After examining Mr. Dazee, the doctor asks him to step outside so that the doctor may speak to Mrs. Dazee alone.

When Mr. Dazee steps out of the office, the doctor pulls his chair closer to Mrs. Dazee.

"I must be honest with you," he tells her. "Your husband is a very sick man. He has only one chance to survive his illness, and that chance depends on *you*."

"What do I have to do?" asks Mrs. Dazee.

"Well," answers the doctor, "you have to cook all his favorite foods from now on. Every meal has to be gourmet quality and exactly how he likes it."

"Go on," says Mrs. Dazee.

"You also must never ever nag him about anything at all. His life must be completely free of any pressure from you. Even if he gets irritable and tries to pick an argument with you, you must let him have his way, and smile at him. You must never lose your temper at him or yell at him for *any* reason."

"Anything else?" asks Mrs. Dazee.

"You must not let him do *any* chores around the house. He must have complete rest. Let him sleep as long as he wants. Let him watch TV or read a book or nap whenever he wishes. You need to give him anything he wants and make his life completely stress-free. If you don't do all these things, Mr. Dazee will not make it."

"I see," says Mrs. Dazee, and she leaves the doctor's office.

On the way home, Mr. Dazee asks his wife, "so what did the doctor tell you?"

Mrs. Dazee replies, "He says you're gonna die."

## ◆ Vocabulary

- |                    |   |                                |
|--------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| step outside       | – | leave the room                 |
| gourmet            | – | fine, especially delicious     |
| survive an illness | – | get well from a sickness       |
| nag                | – | repeatedly annoy, bother       |
| irritable          | – | short-tempered, easily-annoyed |
| pick an argument   | – | start a quarrel or fight       |
| chore              | – | boring tasks, housework        |
| nap                | – | sleep for a short time         |
| stress-free        | – | without pressure               |

## ▶ Question

What's so funny?

- a. Mrs. Dazee believes her husband can not make it.
- b. Mrs. Dazee decides it is too much trouble to keep Mr. Dazee alive.

## ◆ Remarks

Mrs. Dazee would be glad to help her husband get well...  
if doing so didn't mean so much *work* for *her*!



## **On the Bus**

A drunk, reeking of alcohol, sat next to a priest on a bus. The drunk's tie was stained, his face was plastered with red lipstick, and a half-empty bottle of gin stuck out of his ripped coat pocket. Seeing that the priest was giving him a dirty look, he tried to appear casual by opening a newspaper and starting to read.

After a few minutes, the drunk turned to the priest and said, "Father, do you know what causes arthritis?"

The priest answered sharply, "Arthritis is caused by loose living, drinking too much alcohol, fooling around with cheap women, and not bathing often enough!"

"Well, imagine that," the drunk muttered, returning to his newspaper.

The priest, feeling guilty about the harsh tone he had taken with the drunk, apologized. "I'm very sorry, sir. I didn't mean to sound so judgmental. How long have you had arthritis?"

"Oh, I don't have arthritis, Father," the drunk said with a grin. "I was just reading that the *Pope* does."

## ◆ Vocabulary

reeking	–	having a strong smell
stained	–	dirty
plastered	–	covered
gin	–	an alcoholic drink
ripped	–	torn
dirty look	–	displeased look
appear casual	–	look relaxed, act normal
arthritis	–	inflammation of the body's joints
imagine that	–	how amazing!
mutter	–	speak in a low voice
harsh	–	unpleasant
guilty	–	to feel badly for something one has done
apologize	–	express regret
judgmental	–	critical, negative, disapproving
grin	–	smile showing teeth

## ▶ Question

Which is true?

- a. The priest demonstrated his knowledge and good judgment.
- b. In attempting to teach the drunk a moral lesson, the priest accidentally suggested that the Pope had been behaving badly.

## ▶ Remarks

Perhaps the priest should not have been so quick to judge the drunk by his appearance. He tried to show the drunk that alcohol was bad for him by suggesting that it was the cause of the drunk's arthritis. Imagine the priest's surprise when he learned it was not the drunk but the Pope who had arthritis!

12

# The Burglar and the Parrot



## The Burglar and the Parrot

Late one night, a burglar broke into a house he thought was empty.

As he tiptoed through the living room, he suddenly froze in his tracks when he heard a voice say, "Jesus is watching you!"

He glanced around nervously but didn't see anyone. After a few minutes, he began to creep forward.

The voice again said, "Jesus is watching you!"

Nearly frightened out of his wits, the burglar stopped and frantically looked around for the owner of the voice. Finally, off in a dark corner, he spotted a birdcage, and in the cage was a parrot.

The burglar breathed a sigh of relief and asked the parrot, "What that you who said Jesus is watching me?"

"Yes," said the parrot.

No longer afraid, the burglar chuckled and asked the parrot, "What's your name?"

"Pippitty," said the bird.

"That's a dumb name for a parrot," sneered the burglar. "What idiot named you Pippitty?"

The parrot replied, "The same idiot who named that pit bull 'Jesus!'"

## ◆ Vocabulary

- burglar – robber who enters people's homes
- tiptoe – walk on one's toes, walk carefully and quietly
- froze in his tracks – stood very still
- creep forward – move carefully
- frightened out of his wits – very scared
- frantically – desperately
- chuckle – laugh quietly, laugh to yourself
- snear – curl up the upper lip, speak with contempt
- idiot – fool, stupid person
- pit bull – a kind of vicious dog often used to protect homes

## ◆ Question

The burglar needs to watch for

- a. dog bites.
- b. God's punishment.

## ◆ Remarks

The expression that "Jesus is watching you" is sometimes used to encourage children to behave themselves. The burglar was afraid at hearing a voice from an unseen person say this, but once he knew the voice was that of a parrot, he decided he had nothing to fear. He soon found out differently, though. It was the *parrot* who had nothing to fear. *You* would be calm, too, if a pit bull was protecting *you*!



## **Wokka Bird**

A woman walks into a pet shop and looks around hesitantly. The owner greets her.

"How may I help you today?" he asks.

"Well, I really want a bird, but my husband hates animals, especially birds. He doesn't want me to get any kind of pet, but I just have to have one. I've been thinking that, if I got a very unusual bird, he might change his mind. Do you have a bird that's truly extraordinary?"

The owner nods, "I think I have just the bird you're looking for."

He goes to the back of the shop and returns with a large perch. Sitting on the perch is the biggest, meanest looking bird the woman has ever seen. It has hooded eyes and an enormous pointed beak.

"It's called a Wokka Bird," says the storeowner.

"No offense," says the woman, "but it's really ugly. What

makes it so special?"

"Watch this!" The owner sets down the perch, takes an apple from his lunch bag, puts the apple on the counter and says in a loud voice: "Wokka Bird, my *apple!*"

The Wokka Bird leaps from its perch and takes three huge bites out of the apple with its big pointy beak. *Chomp! Chomp! Chomp!* Then it flies back to its perch.

"Oh, my goodness! That's amazing!" says the woman.

"My husband just might be impressed. But will it do that every time?"

The owner pulls a hamburger from his lunch bag, places it on the counter and says in a loud voice: "Wokka Bird, my *hamburger!*"

The Wokka Bird instantly lands on the hamburger and takes three huge bites. *Chomp! Chomp! Chomp!* Then it flies back to its perch.

"I *must* have this bird," says the woman. "My husband

will be amazed. Thank you so much!"

So the woman takes the Wokka Bird home, perch and all, and sits it in the living room.

When her husband comes home from work, the first thing he sees as he comes through the door is the Wokka Bird staring at him from its perch.

"What on earth is THAT?" yells the husband.

Hurrying to his side, the woman says, "Now calm down, dear. You're going to be amazed. That is a Wokka Bird."

Completely exasperated with his wife, the man yells, "Wokka Bird, my ass!"

## ► Vocabulary

hesitantly	–	not sure of
greet		welcome
extraordinary		unusual
perch		a rod or branch for birds to sit on
hooded eyes		covered with big eye lids
enormous		<b>extra large</b>
pointed beak		sharp cone shaped mouth
no offense		not meant to cause anger
leap		jump
chomp		bite
instantly		right away
what on earth		what <b>exactly</b>
exasperated	–	annoyed

## ◆ Question

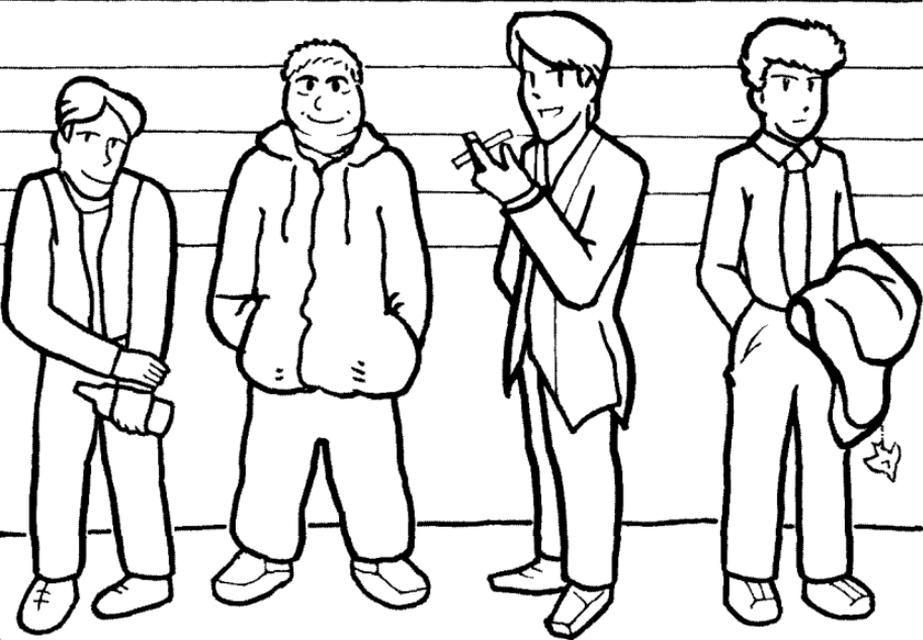
Which is true?

- a. The man's ass is going to suffer.
- b. The man is not surprised by the bird.

## ◆ Remarks

We can assume that the husband's behind is going to get the same treatment as the apple and the hamburger.

Perhaps he should have been more patient and allowed his wife to explain what the Wokka Bird was trained to do.



MATH

TEST

## Math Test

Four university math majors had done so well on all their quizzes and midterms that each had an 'A' average.

They felt so sure of themselves that they decided to go away the weekend before their final exam and party instead of study. Unfortunately, they partied so heartily that they slept all day Sunday and didn't make it back to school until Monday afternoon, which meant that they missed their final exam.

Rather than tell their professor the real reason they missed the test, they told him that they had a flat tire over the weekend, and it took so long to get help and fix the tire that they did not get back in time for the test.

The professor looked at them thoughtfully for a while and then agreed that they could take the final the following day. The students were relieved and went back to their rooms bragging about how they'd fooled the professor with their excuse.

The next day, they went to the professor's office to take the exam. He put them each in a separate room in which to take the test alone, and gave them each a copy of the exam.

In their separate rooms, the students looked at the first page of the final, which had only one question worth five points. The question was: "What is 400 times two?" They couldn't believe how ridiculously easy it was, and each was sure he would ace the test.

When they turned the page, they found only one more question, which was worth ninety-five points.

The question was: "Which tire went flat?"

## ◆ Vocabulary

- quiz – a short test
- midterm – test given halfway through the course
- an 'A' average – top marks
- final exam – the course's last test
- make it back to school – return to school
- rather than – instead of
- brag – show off, speak with pride
- in a separate room – in a different room
- 400 times two –  $400 \times 2$
- ridiculously – laughably, unbelievably
- ace the test – get an 'A' grade

## ◆ Question

What's so funny?

- a. The teacher is **smarter than** they think.
- b. The teacher tries to be **easy** on them.

## Remarks

The students should have thought more about the excuse they used. The professor suspected they were not telling the truth. He put them in separate rooms so they could not discuss which tire was supposed to have been flat.

Smart professor; silly students.

15

# Ten Dollars



## Ten Dollars

Aging farmers Bill and Hilda Wildabeest went to the Utah state fair every year. Every year, Bill would stand in front of the shelter where airplane rides were offered and say, "Hilda, I'd like to have a ride in that airplane."

And every year, Hilda answered, "I know you would, Bill, but that airplane ride costs ten dollars, and ten dollars is ten dollars."

One year, Bill and Hilda went to the fair, and Bill said, "Hilda, I'm 71 years old. If I don't ride in that airplane this year, I may never get another chance."

Hilda replied, "Bill, how many times do I gotta tell you? That airplane ride costs ten dollars, and ten dollars is ten dollars."

As luck would have it, the pilot overheard them talking and said, "Folks, I'll make you a deal. I'll take you both up for a ride. If you can stay absolutely quiet for the

entire ride, I won't charge you anything at all. But if you say one word, it'll cost you the full ten dollars."

Bill and Hilda agreed. Hilda socked Bill on the shoulder and threatened him with a black eye if he said one word, and then up they went.

The pilot did all kinds of twists and turns, rolls and dives, without a word from Bill and Hilda. He performed his most thrilling stunts over and over again, but he still didn't hear a word from his passengers.

At last, the pilot brought them in for a landing.

Once they came to a stop, the pilot turned to Bill and said, "By golly, I did everything I could think of to get you to yell, but you didn't make a sound!"

Bill replied, "Well, I was gonna say something when Hilda fell out, but like she always used to say... ten dollars is ten dollars."

## ◆ Vocabulary

- shelter – a structure that provides cover
- as luck would have it – as it turned out, somehow
- overhear – hear something by accident
- make a deal – offer a bargain or discount
- absolutely – completely
- entire – whole
- sock – hit, punch
- threaten with a black eye – warn that the person will get punched in the eye
- twists and turns, rolls and dives – flying moves where the pilot makes the airplane go upside down and turn quickly sideways
- thrilling – exciting
- stunts – actions requiring skills or **daring**
- by golly – an expression of surprise

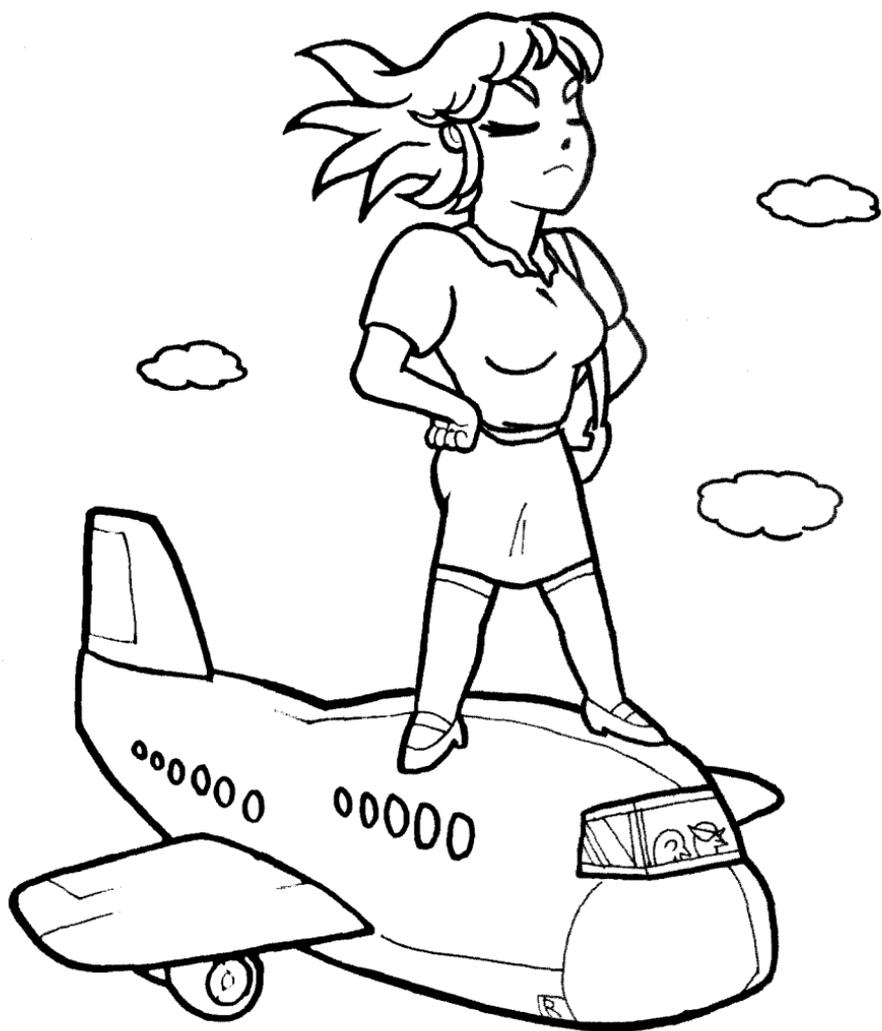
## ◆ Question

What's so funny?

- a. Flying was more important than saving ten dollars.
- b. It was too late to save Hilda, but Bill still could save the ten dollars.

## ◆ Remarks

A state fair is an event where farmers bring their best animals and vegetables to show and enter into contests to win prizes. There is also entertainment, plus games and amusement rides of all kinds. After years of teaching Bill the value of ten dollars, Hilda finally succeeded.



## **First Class Blonde**

A jet was on its way to New York, when a blonde seated in Economy Class got up, moved to the First Class section, found an empty seat and sat down.

The flight attendant watched the blonde make herself comfortable in First Class, then went over and asked to see her boarding pass. Noting that the pass was for an Economy seat, the flight attendant said, "I'm sorry, but you didn't pay for a First Class seat, so you'll have to go back to the Economy section."

The blonde replied, "Listen you, I'm blonde, I'm beautiful, I'm going to New York, and I'm staying right here in First Class."

The flight attendant went to the cockpit and told the pilot and co-pilot that there was a blonde from Economy Class who was sitting in First Class and wouldn't move back to her assigned seat.

The co-pilot went to the passenger area and approached the blonde. He explained that it was against the rules for her to sit in First Class when she had only bought an Economy Class ticket. "I'm sorry," he concluded, "but you'll have to return to your Economy section seat."

The woman snorted and tossed her blonde locks. "Listen you," she snapped, "I'm blonde, I'm beautiful, I'm going to New York, and I'm staying right here in First Class."

The co-pilot returned to the cockpit and told the pilot that he might want to have the police waiting to arrest the blonde when the plane landed. "She refuses to return to her Economy Class seat," the co-pilot explained, "because, she says, she's blonde and beautiful and going to New York."

"I'd better handle this," said the pilot. "I'm married to a blonde, so I have experience speaking their language."

With that, the pilot entered the passenger area, went over to the blonde, and whispered in her ear. The blonde immediately stood up, stormed out of First Class, and sat back in her assigned Economy Class seat.

The flight attendant and the co-pilot were amazed at how easily the pilot had persuaded the blonde to move. "How did you do it?" they asked him.

"Simple," he replied. "I told her that the First Class section wasn't going to New York."

## ◆ Vocabulary

jet	-	airplane
attendant	-	stewardess, air hostess, assistant
cockpit	-	place where pilot sits
assigned	-	given
co-pilot	-	second pilot
approach		come near
tossed her blonde locks	-	flipped her blonde hair
snap		speak angrily
arrest		pick up and take to the police station
immediately		without delay
storm out	-	rush out
persuade	-	convince

## ◆ Question

What's so funny?

- a. It proves the pilot knows airline regulations better.
- b. It proves the pilot knows blondes better.

## ◆ Remarks

People like to tell stories about others who are not very smart. Recently, people with blonde hair have become subjects of such stories. Most of the jokes are harmless, and are told in the spirit of fun. This is one reason why it's important to be able to laugh at ourselves; so we can find the humor in jokes about groups to which we belong.

17

# Mr. Vapors and the Whisperer



## **Mr. Vapors and the Whisperer**

Working alone in the office over the weekend, Mr. Vapors, the company president, discovered a problem with one of the computers. He decided to phone his computer expert at home.

Someone picked up the phone, and a child's voice whispered, "Hello?"

Annoyed at the inconvenience of having to talk to a youngster, Mr. Vapors asked, "Is your daddy home?"

"Yes," whispered the small voice.

"May I talk to him?"

To Mr. Vapors' increasing annoyance, the small voice whispered, "No."

"OK then, is your mommy there?"

"Yes," came the answer.

"May I talk to her?"

Again the small voice whispered, "No."

Knowing it wasn't likely that a young child would be left home alone, the boss decided he would leave a message with whoever was there watching the child.

"Is anyone else there?" he asked.

"Yes," whispered the child. "A policeman."

Wondering what a cop would be doing at his employee's home, Mr. Vapors asked, "Well then, may I speak with the policeman?"

"No, he's busy," whispered the child.

"Busy doing *what*?" asked Mr. Vapors, his blood pressure rising steadily.

"The policeman is busy talking to Daddy and Mommy and the fireman."

Suddenly, Mr. Vapors became worried, especially since he heard what sounded like a helicopter in the background.

"What's that noise?" he asked.

"A hello-copper," answered the whispering child.

"What is going on there?" asked Mr. Vapors, now more alarmed than annoyed.

The child answered, "The search team just landed a hello-copper in our yard."

Now *very* alarmed and frustrated, Mr. Vapors asked, "What are they searching for?"

Still whispering, the young voice replied with a muffled giggle, "Me."

## ◆ Vocabulary

- |               |   |   |
|---------------|---|---|
| discover      | – | find out  |
| annoy         | – | bother, irritate                                |
| inconvenience | – | difficulty, trouble                             |
| youngster     | – | child   |
| increasing    | – | becoming greater or larger                      |
| frustrated    | – | feeling defeated or confused                    |
| steadily      | – | little by little                                |
| hello-copper  | – | “helicopter” as it sounds to a very young child |
| muffled       | – | quiet, soft                                     |
| giggle        | – | light laughter                                  |

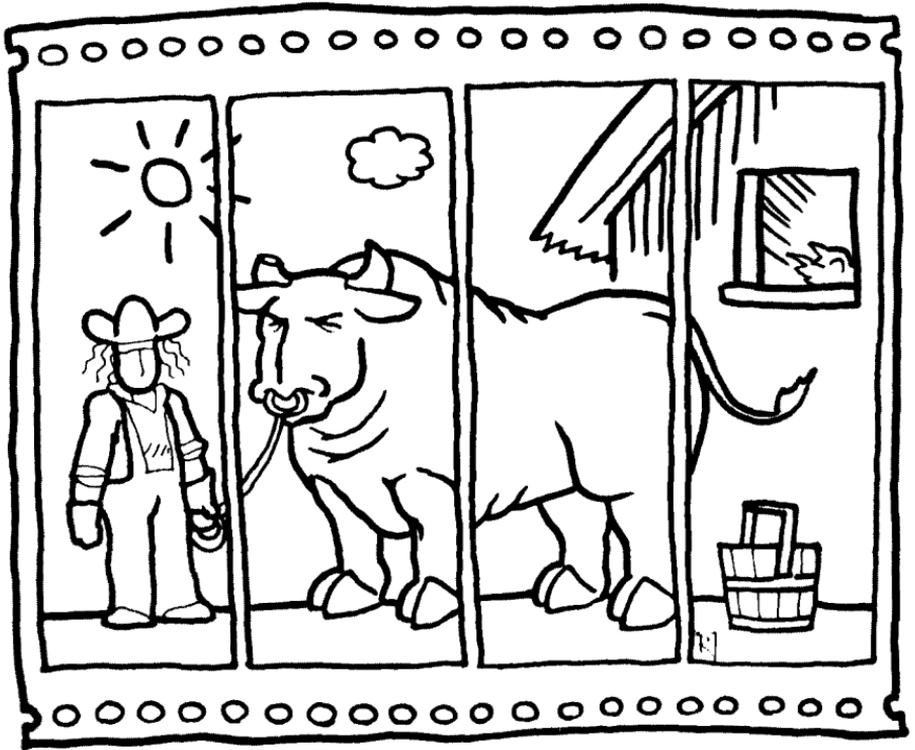
## ◆ Question

What's so funny?

- a. The child is in great danger.
- b. The child is having great fun.

## ◆ Remarks

All Mr. Vapors wants is to talk to his computer expert, instead he finds out in steadily increasing detail that he is talking to a *very* naughty child. Have you ever flown in a "hello-copper"?



## **Come for the Bull**

Two sisters, Matty and Hattie, inherit the family ranch. The ranch is in financial trouble, and in order to keep the bank from repossessing it, they need to purchase a bull so that they can breed their own stock.

Matty is in charge of the business affairs, because Hattie is a bit scatterbrained. So when Matty reads about a bull for sale in another state, she's the one who goes to check it out.

Matty takes their last \$700 and tells her sister, "If I decide to buy the bull, I'll contact you so you can drive the truck up to meet me and haul the bull back home."

Matty travels to the other state, inspects the bull, and decides that she wants to buy it. She and the owner agree on a price of \$699.

After **paying** for the bull, Matty needs to contact Hattie about **driving** the truck up. She walks into the telegraph office and says to the telegraph operator, "I want to send a telegram to my sister telling her that I've bought a bull for our ranch. I need her to hitch the trailer to our truck and drive up here so we can haul it home."

"Sure thing," says the telegraph operator. "It'll cost you 99 cents a word."

Matty realizes that, after paying \$699 for the bull, she has only \$1 left, so she can only afford a one-word message. After thinking for a minute, she tells the telegraph operator, "I want you to send her the word 'comfortable'."

The telegraph operator shakes his head. "How is your sister ever going to understand that you want her to hitch

the trailer to your truck and drive up here to haul the bull back to your ranch if you just send her the word 'comfortable'?"

Matty smiles. "My sister's a bit scatterbrained. For her, 'comfortable' is a big word, so she'll read it very *slowly*."

## ◆ Vocabulary

inherit	–	take over after parents die
ranch	–	farm where animals are raised
financial trouble	–	money problems
repossess	–	take back
purchase	–	buy
breed	–	raise
stock	–	farm animals
affairs	–	matters
scatterbrained	–	empty-headed, dumb
truck	–	car for transportation of goods
haul	–	pull, drag
inspect	–	check, examine
hitch	–	connect, attach
trailer	–	towing cart
afford	–	have money for
big word	–	a difficult word, a long word
comfortable	–	at ease, relaxed

## ◆ Question

What's so funny?

- a. It shows how stupid Hattie is.
- b. It shows how smart Matty is.

## ◆ Remarks

Matty is being very smart when she sends the one word "comfortable." If Hattie reads it slowly, the word will sound like: "come for the bull," which is what Matty wants Hattie to do.



## Highway to Hawaii

A man was told by his doctor that he had only six months to live. He went home, quite depressed, and started to pray.

"Lord, I've had a good life and I'm grateful, so don't think I'm complaining or anything. But I've always had a dream, and now it looks like I'm going to pass away without fulfilling it. I wish you'd reconsider and let me live out my dream before you call me to the Great Beyond."

A soft glowing light suddenly filled the room, and the man heard a deep voice ask, "My son, what is this dream you've had?"

"Well, Lord," said the man, "I've always been terrified of airplanes and ships, so I've never traveled anywhere off the continent. But I've always dreamed of going to Hawaii. If you could just build me a bridge from here to Hawaii, so I could drive there, then I could die content."

"My son," said the voice, "do you have any idea how difficult that would be? Think of how much steel and concrete it would take to build a bridge that long! Think of how deep its base would have to be to reach the bottom of the ocean! Think of how it would upset the ecological systems of the ocean and the continent! I'm sorry, but I couldn't do that. It's just impossible."

The man nodded sadly, "I understand. But since you can't build a bridge to Hawaii, could you grant me a different wish? Could you find me a woman to spend my last months with? A woman who truly enjoys watching football, hockey and soccer, and who doesn't mind picking up after me, who will bring me a beer once in a while, and who listens more than she talks. Could you at least do that for me, Lord?"

There was a long silence, and the voice finally answered, "You want that bridge two lanes or four?"

## ◆ Vocabulary

- depressed – unhappy, sad
- fulfill – complete, achieve
- to the Great Beyond – to Heaven
- glowing – shining, glowing
- concrete – cement, building material
- ecological – natural, environmental
- continent – large area of land, such as North America or Africa
- picking up after me – cleaning up the messes I make
- lanes – road or highway parts for lines of cars

## ◆ Question

Which is true?

- a. God decides it's easier to build a bridge.
- b. God decides a trip to Hawaii would be more fun.

## ◆ Remarks

At first, building a highway to Hawaii seems like the more difficult task to God. But after hearing what the man would want the woman to do, God decides it would be easier to build the bridge than to find the perfect woman.



## **Newlyweds**

On the way to their own wedding, Nick and Nora are involved in a fatal car accident. The young couple find themselves sitting in a reception area just outside the Pearly Gates, waiting for Saint Peter to process them into Heaven.

As they wait, Nora asks Nick, "Do you think we'll be able to get married in Heaven?"

"I don't know," says Nick. "I **guess** we'll have to ask Saint Peter."

When Saint Peter shows up, they ask him, "Do you think we could get married in Heaven? We were really looking forward to it on Earth."

Saint Peter gives it some thought and says, "I honestly don't know. This is the first time anyone has ever asked for that. You folks wait here. I'll go find out."

Saint Peter leaves, and Nick and Nora wait and wait and wait some more. In fact, they sit waiting for an entire month for Saint Peter to return. During their lengthy wait,

they have time to discuss the situation in greater depth.

"Since we're here for all eternity," says Nick, "what if it doesn't work out between us? What if we discover we're not right for each other? Are we stuck with each other forever?"

"We'd better ask Saint Peter about that, too," answers Nora. Finally, Saint Peter returns, looking exhausted.

"Yes!" he tells the couple. "You can get married in Heaven!"

"Great!" says Nora.

"But now we've been wondering," says Nick. "What if things don't work out between us? Is it possible for us to get a divorce in Heaven?"

Saint Peter throws his arms up in dismay and yells, "Give me a break! It took me a month to find a *priest* up here! Do you have ANY idea how long it'll take me to find a *lawyer*?"

## ◆ Vocabulary

- newlyweds – a couple who just got married
- fatal – deadly
- reception – greeting, welcome
- Pearly Gates – the gates to Heaven
- process into – take the proper steps to admit, complete the necessary forms
- you folks – you people
- lengthy – long
- in greater depth – in more detail
- eternity – forever
- stuck with – trapped with, tied to
- exhausted – tired
- dismay – disappointment, upset
- give me a break – a slang expression meaning "I need a rest"

## ◆ Question

What's so funny?

- a. It shows respect to priests and lawyers.
- b. It makes fun of priests and lawyers.

## ◆ Remarks

We've already discussed how people often make jokes about lawyers. This time, the joke is about both lawyers and priests!

Saint Peter is often portrayed as being in charge of letting people into Heaven. Here, he suggests that few priest or lawyers get into heaven.

Seems like in *this* joke, priests are almost as naughty as lawyers!

21

# Mr. Midlife and the State Trooper



## **Mr. Midlife and the State Trooper**

Mr. Midlife had just bought a brand new sports car and wanted to see what it could do. He took it out on the open highway and accelerated until he was doing 95 miles an hour.

Suddenly, behind him, he saw a State Trooper's lights flashing.

"I can outrun him," thought Mr. Midlife, and he pressed the pedal to the metal. The sports car sprang to life and sped up even more, topping 120 miles per hour.

Then Mr. Midlife had a change of heart. "I'm too old to try to outrun a cop." So he slowed down and pulled over to the shoulder of the road.

The State Trooper pulled up behind him, walked to the side of the sports car, and glared down at Mr. Midlife.

"Goin' (going) pretty fast there, weren't you?" asked the Trooper.

"Yes, officer. I'm sorry."

"I see you changed your mind, though."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'll tell you what. If you can give me a reason for trying to outrun me that I've never heard before, I'll let you go without a ticket."

Mr. Midlife thought for a moment and then answered, "Well, last week my wife left me and ran off with a State Trooper. I thought *you* were *him* behind me trying to give her *back*."

The State Trooper smiled and waved as he walked back to his car. "Have a nice day."

## ◆ Vocabulary

- accelerate – speed up
- State Trooper – police officer who works for the state
- flashing – blinking
- outrun – run faster than
- pressed the pedal to the metal – slang, pressed the car's accelerator closer to the floor to speed up the car
- sprang to life – leaped into motion, moved suddenly
- topping – exceeding, surpassing
- a change of heart – a different emotion or mood
- outrun – run faster than
- pulled over – stopped the car at the side of the road
- glared down – looked angrily

## ◆ Question

Which is true?

- a. The policeman is amused by the excuse Mr. Midlife made up
- b. The officer doesn't like Mrs. Midlife either.

## ◆ Remarks

The man is called Mr. Midlife because many articles and books have been written about what is called "a midlife crisis." A midlife crisis occurs when a man in his mid-thirties to mid-fifties begins to act like a man of a much younger age.

Mr. Midlife's made-up excuse for speeding obviously amused the State Trooper!



## **Goodbye, Daddy**

Mr. Wapple was putting his three-year-old daughter Faloota to bed. He told her a story and then listened while she said her prayers, which she ended by saying, "God bless Mommy, God bless Daddy, God bless Grandma, and goodbye Grandpa."

"Why did you say 'goodbye Grandpa'?" Mr. Wapple asked Faloota.

The little girl replied, "It just seemed like the thing to say."

The next day, Grandpa suddenly died. Mr. Wapple remembered his daughter's prayer and thought it was a strange coincidence.

A few months later, he was again putting Faloota to bed and listening to her prayers, which she ended by saying, "God bless Mommy, God bless Daddy, and goodbye Grandma."

"How strange," thought Mr. Wapple.

But the very next day, Grandma died.

"Oh, my gosh!" Mr. Wapple thought. "This is uncanny! This *couldn't* be a coincidence. My kid must be in contact with the Other Side."

Two weeks later, as Faloota was going to bed, Mr. Wapple heard her say, "God bless Mommy and goodbye Daddy."

Mr. Wapple nearly had a heart attack. Little Faloota had been right about Grandpa and Grandma, so she was probably right about Daddy!

Terrified that he was going to die suddenly, Mr. Wapple couldn't sleep that night. He tossed and turned and jumped at every sound. He got up at the crack of dawn to go to his office. He was nervous all day long, he refused to eat lunch in case the food was poisoned, and he constantly watched the clock.

"Maybe if I can survive until midnight I'll be OK," he thought. "I feel safe in my office, so instead of going

home at the end of the day, I'll just stay here and drink coffee until after midnight. Then I'll go home."

The night went by as slowly as molasses dripping up a hill, and Mr. Wapple's stomach was tied up in stress-related knots. He hadn't been this upset since the time he thought his wife had been cheating on him, although he could never prove it.

Finally, midnight arrived, and he was still alive. He breathed a sigh of relief and went home, driving very carefully the whole way.

When he got home, his wife said, "I hope you never have to work this late again."

Mr. Wapple said, "I don't even want to talk about it. I've just spent the worst day of my life."

His wife answered, "You think *you've* had a bad day? You'll never believe what happened to *me*. This morning, the *mailman* dropped dead on our porch!"

## ◆ Vocabulary

- coincidence – accident, result of fate
- uncanny – strange, weird
- the Other Side – the world of after life
- tossed – moved from side to side
- crack of dawn – very early in the morning, just as the sun is coming up
- constantly – always, continually
- survive – stay alive
- molasses – syrup
- dripping up – as when honey is spilled on a slanting surface and moves downward slowly, only this is used as an expression for slowness because no liquid moves *upward*
- porch – deck around the front or back of a house
- breathed a sigh of relief – slang, let go of fear or stress, relax

## ◆ Question

What's so funny?

- a. Faloota was wrong this time.
- b. Mr. Wapple's wife had been cheating on him.

## ◆ Remarks

In the West, a favorite subject of jokes is the mailman having an affair with someone's wife.

Mr. Wapple was afraid he would die, but instead, he finally got the proof that Mrs. Wapple *had* cheated on him! Little Faloota's daddy *did* die... the *mailman!*



## Spiritual Advice

Mr. Pocketlint was in serious financial trouble. He had invested his entire life savings and all his other assets, but his business was still failing. He owed so much money to so many creditors that he saw no way out. He was even contemplating suicide.

As a last resort, he went to his minister, Pastor Castor, and poured out his troubles. When he finished, Pastor Castor said, "Here is what I suggest you do. Put your Bible in your car and drive to the top of a high hill. Park where there is a wide view and a strong wind blowing. Put your Bible in your lap and let the wind riffle the pages. When the pages stop fluttering, look down and read the first words you see. That will be your answer. It will tell you what you should do."

A year later, Mr. Pocketlint went back to the minister, and he brought his wife with him. The businessman looked prosperous in a custom tailored suit, and his wife was wearing a mink coat. Mr. Pocketlint handed the

minister an envelope stuffed with money.

"This is to thank you for the advice you gave me," said Mr Pocketlint. "It really worked."

"So you took your Bible to a high hill as I suggested?" asked Pastor Castor.

"Yup," confirmed the businessman.

"You let the wind riffle the pages until they stopped?" continued the minister.

"Yup," repeated the businessman.

"And what were the first words you saw?" asked Pastor Castor.

Mr. Pocketlint replied, "Chapter Eleven."

## ◆ Vocabulary

- Pocketlint – a name made up by two words: pocket and lint. Lint is a very small piece of fiber or fluff. The man has no money, so he has only lint in his pocket.
- assets – valuables
- creditors – people to whom money is owed
- contemplating – considering, thinking about
- suicide – killing oneself
- a last resort – search for help, final effort
- poured out – told all
- lap – upper legs of a seated person
- riffle – shuffle, randomly change
- fluttering – flapping, waving
- prosperous – successful, doing well
- custom tailored suit – specially made clothing
- mink coat – fur coat
- stuffed – filled

## ◆ Question

What's so funny?

- a. The minister gave the man advice that saved his soul.
- b. The man received a useful answer to his problem, but it was not what the minister intended.

## ◆ Remarks

As mentioned before, words and phrases often have more than one meaning. “Chapter Eleven” not only is a section of a book (in this case the Bible), but it also is a legal expression (“Chapter Eleven” of the U.S. Federal Bankruptcy Law) for stopping people collecting money from a business while that business creates a new financial plan.

In this joke, the minister thinks he is giving the man advice about getting in touch with his spirituality, but the man gets a different message – not about saving his soul, but about how to escape paying his bills.



## Two Bad Brothers

Once there were two brothers, Harry and Barry, who were very bad. They also were very rich, and they used their money to keep their wicked ways out of the public eye. They pretended to be very religious and attended church regularly, all the while cheating their business partners, cheating on their wives and committing a number of other crimes — but all secretly, without the public ever finding out, because outward appearances were very important to them.

The pastor of their church was a very honest man, and he was very unhappy with the brothers. He tried warning them about the error of their ways, but they just laughed. In fact, to punish him, they sent someone to burn down the church.

The pastor had to start all over and began trying to raise enough money to build another church.

All of a sudden, Harry died. His surviving brother Barry went to the pastor and offered him a check for enough

money to build a new church. "There's just one condition," said Barry. "Everyone knows you never lie. So at my brother's funeral, you have to say that Harry was a saint."

The pastor thought about this for a moment and then agreed, depositing Barry's check without delay.

At the funeral, Barry sat back in his pew and awaited the pastor's message in which he had promised to call Harry a saint. Everyone would have to believe that Harry was a saint, because the pastor never lied.

But the pastor began by saying exactly the opposite. "Harry was a wicked man," he said. "He cheated his business partners and abused his family." After going on this way for quite a while, the pastor's gaze came to rest on the outraged Barry.

The pastor then ended his message by saying, "But compared to his brother Barry, *Harry was a saint.*"

## ◆ Vocabulary

- wicked – evil, bad
- out of the public eye – not to let people know
- pretended – made believe, act as if
- religious – spiritual, devoted to God
- committing – doing
- outward appearances – public images
- pastor – minister, preacher
- saint – holy person, good person
- depositing – putting in the bank
- without delay – right away; immediately
- pew – long seat in a church where people sit, bench
- going on this way – continuing
- abused – hurt, mistreated
- gaze – look
- outraged – violently angry

## ◆ Question

What's so funny?

- a. The preacher can tell the truth without breaking his promise.
- b. The preacher proves Barry is really the bad guy.

## ◆ Remarks

The pastor is clever as well as honest. He had promised to use the words “Harry was a saint,” so he told the truth about how bad Harry was and then said Harry was a saint compared with his brother Barry – *who was worse!*

**Answer Key**

- |      |       |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. b | 7. b  | 13. a | 19. a |
| 2. b | 8. b  | 14. a | 20. b |
| 3. a | 9. b  | 15. b | 21. a |
| 4. b | 10. b | 16. b | 22. b |
| 5. b | 11. b | 17. b | 23. b |
| 6. a | 12. a | 18. b | 24. a |