

6/11/94

EINSTEIN

The reason the joke is funny is because of the perfect selection of the letter E. It couldn't be a A shaped pie, because "a" is functioning as both article and noun, who needs it. ~~sounds like you're stuttering~~. It can't be a b shaped pie because of the confusion of the letter B with the insect. ~~I'll come back to C and D.~~ An F shaped pie is just plain not funny. An H shaped pie would be unstable: two vertical bars supported by a weaker crossing structure. An I shaped pie is no good because of the dot problem: do you connect the dot to the pie, in which case it's not an i, or do you keep it separate, which raises the question, is it a dot or is it a cupcake? A "K" shaped pie has Kafka written all over it. An M-shaped pie doesn't work because of the M-W dilemma. M to whom? ~~And sideways,~~ need I mention sigma? An O shaped pie doesn't work because a pie is O-shaped. A P shaped pie doesn't work because the phrase "p-shaped pie" has this naughty calypso rhythm!

Freddy

And not a C shaped pie either because that customer would never have known if it was a capital C pie because C looks the same in both upper & lower case pie.

GASTON

Excuse me, you're not going to go through the entire alphabet are you, because I may only have a few good years left.

EINSTEIN

Of course not, some of them are so obvious they needn't be mentioned. Like Q for example.

Big pause while everyone thinks.

GERMAINE

All right, what's the matter with Q?

EINSTEIN

Well a Q is just an O with a comma through it, and a comma shaped pie is just a croissant.

GERMAINE

Thank you.

SUZANNE

You said you would come back to ~~C and D~~ D.

GASTON

NO! I have to L...I'm mean pee.

He exits to the bathroom.

FREDDY

Wait a minute, you said the joke was funny. But it wasn't funny.

EINSTEIN

Oh yes it was. I laughed.

GERMAINE

No you didn't.

EINSTEIN

Not now, no. I'll laugh later. An ice box laugh.

FREDDY

An ice box laugh?

EINSTEIN

Yes. You don't laugh now, but an hour later you're at home, standing at the ice box and you laugh.

GASTON

(offstage) E-shaped pie! Hahahahaha.

EINSTEIN

See? He's just getting it now. Probably through a process of elimination. [Author will be in the downstairs lobby when this joke is delivered](to Freddy) When did you hear the joke?

FREDDY

A year and a half ago.

EINSTEIN

Maybe you already laughed at that joke but thought you were laughing at something else.

FREDDY

You mean, something else funny happened, and I laughed but really I was laughing at this joke, which I may have heard a year ago?

EINSTEIN

Right.

FREDDY

So I might still "owe" a laugh at the other funny thing that happened?

EINSTEIN

Or not. You may have only thought the other thing that happened was funny, but it really wasn't so you don't owe a laugh.

FREDDY

So instead of laughing at the thing I thought was funny, I was laughing at the thing I didn't think was funny.

EINSTEIN

Exactly.

FREDDY

There's only one problem.

EINSTEIN

What?

FREDDY

The thing that you think that I think wasn't really funny was when the cat went running across the kitchen floor to leap through the cat door but it was locked. Now there's no way that wasn't funny.

PICASSO

How about you my dear? What do you say?

SUZANNE

I've had my example of a bad joke.

PICASSO

(sits) Oh come on.

SUZANNE

You're a womanizing bastard fraud.

PICASSO

If you're trying to praise me that's a poor choice of words.

SUZANNE

You're ridiculous.

PICASSO

Look, I meant everything I said that night, I just forgot who I said it to. Stranger things will happen in your young life, believe me. Worse things.

SUZANNE

I believed you.

PICASSO

I believed it too. And now that I see you tonight, my dear, I'm believing it all over again. I remember a blue-green bed with a rose colored spread over it. A tin half-moon on the wall, holding a candle. On your bedside table there were three rings side by side with small turquoise stones, one with garnet, and next to them a pale pink ribbon. Later I picked it up off the floor. I can't remember your name.

SUZANNE

I never told it to you.

PICASSO

Yes, you did. I remember it now.