

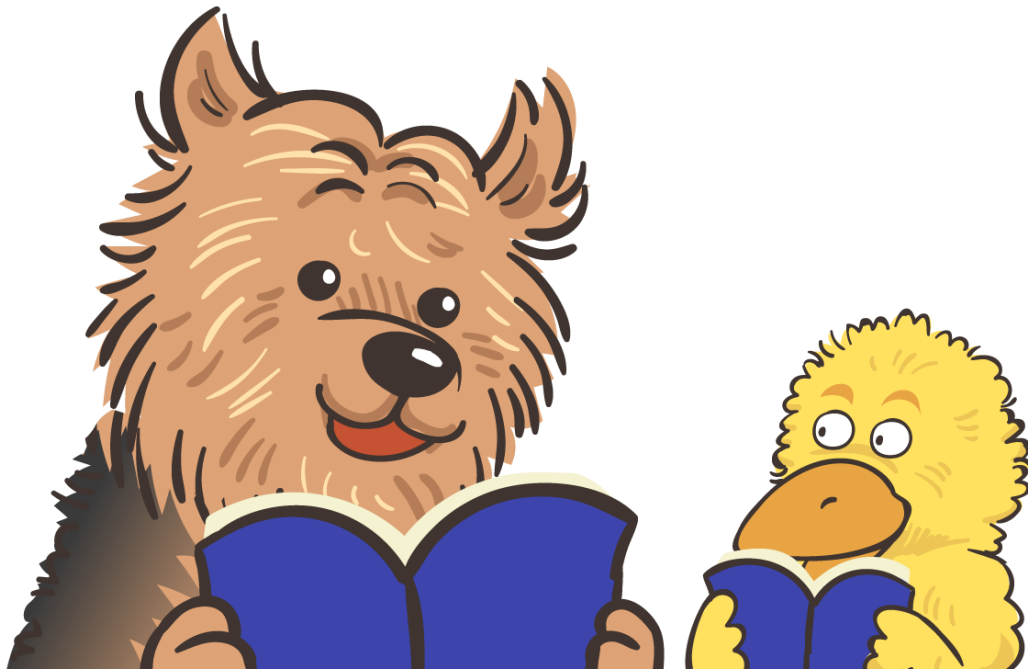
BEHIND THE JOKES

*A Parent's Guide to Finding the Puns, References,
and Hidden Details in*

Happy Birthday Meatball, Love Spaghetti

Can you find all the laughs?

• A-Z •



Anchovy

Hooked up: Meaning “got together” and a “fish hooked on a fishing line.”

Ann Chové: It's the word Anchovy, but as a French name.

“Something is fishy around here!”: As in suspicious or anchovies smell very fishy!

“Can it!” Ann said: She's asking Meatball to be quiet, and anchovies come in cans.

Bee

Frizz the Bee—or “Frisbee” which is a flying disc you throw at a friend.

“Have you heard any buzz?” Buzz is another word for news as well as the sound a Bee makes.

“Oh honey, it's none of your beeswax! Honey is a term of endearment, and Bees make Honey. “None of your beeswax” means to mind your business, and bees make wax.

Clown Fish

“Keep your distance, at least two feet!” Two feet as in distance and his mom has two feet.

Illustration: Check out Giggles' computer screen, it's an iLilypad, like an iPad for fish!

Deer

“Deerest friends:” The term “dear friend” means someone close to you and a deer friend is a friend who happens to be a... you guessed it, a deer.

“... couldn't hear very well over the music so he used sign language:” Sign language is a form of communication using your hands, but Meatball created an actual sign to send his message.

Illustration: Check out DJ Rudy's nose. He was sent by someone jolly special; does he look familiar?

Elephant

“If anyone nose where Spaghetti is:” Instead of “knows” the elephant “nose” as in his trunk.

Her name, Ellie Phant, is the word “elephant” split into two names.

“Meatball was amazed watching Ellie pull poop emojis, the letter Es, and pasta out of her trunk...” The word “trunk” can mean both a storage chest and an elephant's nose.

Meatball performed his own trick and disappeared. Meatball became the magician!

Illustration: Becks Comedy Club, our last name!

Fly

Meatball's three fly friends: Butter, Fire, and Thyme or Butterfly, Firefly, and Thyme Fly (or time flies).

Meatball told the flies to zip it! As in keeping quiet and a fly is another word for zipper.

Giraffe

The giraffe's name is Guppy, which is a very small fish, and he is a very tall animal.

“Someone who is willing to stick his neck out for his friends,” meaning he is both caring and has a long neck.

“You're a real pain in the neck!” A pain in the neck is an expression for someone who is bothersome and because he is making a joke about the length of his own neck.

Illustration: Check out Meatball and Guppy having to use cell phones because Guppy is so tall!

Horse

Meatball received a “tip” from Horace the horse. A tip as in an idea on where Spaghetti is hiding and a “tip “is given to a bettor in horse racing.

Meatball got him tea with honey because he spoke in a deep, scratchy voice. “This is so you don't sound so... hoarse!” A hoarse voice is a deep scratchy voice and is pronounced the same as horse the animal.

Irish Doodles

“Then... the Yankee Doodles went to town, riding on their pony” The Yankee Doodles are the Irish Doodle dogs who are Yankees fans who rode a pony, and it’s from a nursery rhyme, Yankee Doodle Dandy.

Jaguar

“Meatball needed a new ride, so he went to get a Jaguar,” implying the Jaguar sports car but he met up with the cat.

“You’re a Cheetah!”: Meatball realized the Leopard was the animal Cheetah, which is pronounced the same as cheater, someone who is dishonest at games.

Celebrity Sighting

Jerilyn the Jaguar: Meatball’s Aunt Jerilyn

Bob the Bobcat: Meatball’s Uncle Bobby

Larry the Leopard: Meatball’s Great Uncle Larry

Aunt Joyce: Meatball’s Great Aunt.

King Crab

His “Highness,” as in royalty for the “king” crab.

“Cake grumbled that he hadn’t seen Spaghetti and snapped.” Snap means an irritable response and crabs snap their claws.

“Go bother someone else—I’m in a pinch!” Pinch as another crab claw reference.

Meatball barked, “Stop being such a crummy crab, Cake!” Someone who is crummy is poor quality. When put his name, Cake, next to the term, crummy crab, the joke is that he is an overly breaded “Crummy Crabcake.”

Lion

“You’re a Lying lying lion!” - She was lying, (making up stories), lying (laying down on a rock), lion (animal). Say it fast three times, it becomes a tongue twister!

Celebrity Sighting

Linda the Lion: Meatball’s Grandmother (and Matzah Ball’s mom!)

Macaw

Meatball went to see the all-knowing fourteen-year-old, Aubrey the Macaw, a parrot-card reader. That is a play on a tarot card reader, who provides insight into someone’s past, present, or future using cards.

“Squawk, have you seen Spaghetti?”: Parrots imitate speech, and Aubrey repeated Meatball without giving him the answer.

“It turned into a parrot!” A parrot is a spoof on the word parody, that is pronounced the same as parrot and is a word meaning imitation of someone with deliberate exaggeration for comic effect.

Celebrity Sighting: Aubrey the “all-knowing fourteen-year-old” Macaw is also my Beautiful and talented, “all-knowing fourteen-year-old” daughter.

Illustration: Check out the letters on the cards. It may be a hint!

Gnat

Nat was an amazing baker, but a terrible speller—he always came in last at every spelling bee.

Gnat’s bakery Dough! was misspelled as Doh! He also spelled brownie wrong, as browknee!

And he spelled Nat wrong!!

Owl

“Meatball met with his very wise friend.” Owls are considered to be “wise” because of their large eyes and posture.

His name, Thurston Owl III is a play on a 1970s TV show called Gilligan’s Island, about a three-hour boat tour.

“Something was afowl.” Is a play on the word “afoul,” which is a state of confusion and a fowl is a bird.

Panda Meatball yelled “BamBoo!” which is a play on bamboo, what pandas eat, and boo, something you scream when you are trying to scare someone.

“There was a Pandamonium of giggles!” Pandemonium is a crazy situation and Pandamonium is a crazy situation with a Panda.

Celebrity Sighting

Pop-Pop the Panda was my wonderful father and grandfather to our girls.

Quahog

In your best Boston accent:

Meatball went to the Southy Smaat Spaa, a spa is South Boston.

Lynn Guine (pronounced Gweenie), is a play on Linguine the pasta.

“Lynn Guine yelled out NAWT TOO HAWT,” (in Boston accent) because the Quahog Clam was nervous that if the water got too hot, then she would become a cooked clam.

Illustration: Check out Meatball reaching for the temperature dial and Lynn Guine nervous.

Rhino

“Meatball went to pick the brain...” Meatball went to ask questions of his friend who is a nose doctor and some people pick the ir noses (ewwww)...

His name is “Sir Jin the Rhino,”: A play on the name, surgeon since he is a nose doctor and in Britain, to use the name Sir, he needed to be knighted in the United Kingdom.

“Invented a type of plaster for sculpting known as Rhino-plasty” Rhinoplasty is plastic surgery performed on the nose.

“Sir Jin could scents that Spaghetti was up to something special” Sense or perceive something special was going to happen, scents is a distinctive smell.

Illustration: Check out the name “Sign-us Studio,” a play on “sinus” a cavity in the nose.

Also, Sir Jin is wearing scrubs and a surgical mask.

Sloth

Moe kept asking the waiter slowly, “Can. You. Re.heat. My. Alphabet. Soup?” Moe the Sloth was eating his soup so slowly that it kept cooling off.

“Bro! You’re such a slow Moe!” Slow-mo is an abbreviation for slow motion in cinema.

Illustration: Check out Meatball looking at his watch concerned he’ll be late.

Turtle

“A famous winter clothes designer iconic for her high-neck sweaters.” High-neck sweaters are also known as turtlenecks, which is what Myrtle is.

“Shopping for neckties for Myrtle’s boxing brothers, Cuff and Link Balboa.”

Cuff and Link Balboa are the turtles from the boxing movie Rocky.

Illustration: Check out the name of the store, Sly’s Ties, making a reference to Sylvester Stallone.

UniCorn

This is a play on the animal Unicorn and a single piece “uni” meaning one, and a kernel of corn.

Illustration: Take a look at Spaghetti hiding with a real unicorn!

Vampire Bat

“Meatball went to meet Dee Racula, the Vampire Bat.” Dee Racula is a play on Count Dracula, a famous novel.

Illustration: Meatball is using the Vampire Bat as an actual bat and hits a home run!

Worm

“Bought a beautiful diamond pinky ringworm.” A ringworm is a play on jewelry made by a worm, and an actual circular rash.

Celebrity sighting: Check out Meatball’s daddy, Matzah Ball, making his first appearance in the book. Matzah Ball is Brian Beck the writer!

Axolotl

“Do you know why I’m coming up dry on Spaghetti?” Is a reference to sauce on Spaghetti as well as McKennalotl replying, “You need to see someone who’s got the sauce!”

Celebrity Sighting: McKennalotl the Axolotl is our beautiful and funny ten-year-old, McKenna whose favorite animal is the Axolotl.

Yorkie

Illustration: Check out the real Meatball and his real Mommy. Meatball can sit and stare into her eyes for hours. It is his safest place.

Zorse

Celebrity Sighting: Zany Aunt Zodi is a play on Aunt Jodi, a truly zany and special Aunt and sister.

Finale

“Meatball zoomed off to his favorite restaurant, Woofgangs” Woofgangs is a play on our favorite restaurant, Wolfgang’s in NYC .