

RIP VAN WINKLE

Once upon a time, in a little Catskill mountain village close by the Hudson River, there lived a pleasant, good-natured fellow by the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was always ready to lend a helping hand to his neighbor, and everybody was very fond of Rip.

1. The Catskill Mountains and the Hudson River are in:

- A) New York
- B) California
- C) Texas

(A) These are in New York State.

But his wife was always in a temper with him, for she could never get him to work for himself. So she kept scolding him and telling him what a worthless fellow he was.

Rip's only escape was to flee with his dog, Wolf, up into the mountains and go hunting, away from the sound of his wife's nagging voice.

2. Rip often used to flee, or:

- A) cry
- B) sleep
- C) run away

(C) To flee is to escape or run away.

One day, after Dame Van Winkle had scolded him even more violently than usual, Rip picked up his gun, whistled to his dog, and fled.

Late in the afternoon, Rip threw himself down to rest on a little hillock. It was just beginning to get dark. Rip knew that he ought to be on his way home, but the thought of Dame Van Winkle's sharp tongue made him hate to go.

3. What time could it have been when Rip knew he should head for home?

- A) 10 o'clock in the morning
- B) 6 o'clock in the evening
- C) 10 o'clock at night

(B) This was probably the hour of dusk, or when it begins to get dark.

Just then, he heard a voice calling from a distance.

"Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!"

Rip looked 'round but he could see nothing. Again, as if from a distance, came the cry, "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!"

At the sound, Rip's dog, Wolf, gave a low growl. The hair bristled on Wolf's back, and he sulked closer to his master's side.

4. The hair on Wolf's back bristled, meaning it:

- A) turned a different color
- B) stood up
- C) fell out

(B) A dog's hair bristles, or stands up, when he is angry or frightened.

A feeling of fear crept over Rip. He stared hard in the direction from which the call came.

Then he thought he saw something coming up from the mountainside. It was a short, little man carrying a heavy keg on his back. Without a word, the little man motioned to Rip to help him carry the keg.

5. A keg must be a kind of:

- A) barrel
- B) knapsack
- C) sleeping bag

(A) A keg is a small barrel that holds liquids.

The little old man led the way towards a deep gully between two mountains, and as they walked, Rip heard rumbling sounds, like distant thunder.

Suddenly, the narrow path opened out into a green meadow between the two high cliffs.

At one end of the meadow was a group of little men dressed in strange green costumes. They were playing ninepins on the green. But the strangest thing about them was their serious way of playing.

And when the ball hit the ninepins, Rip heard the same sound that he had mistaken for thunder.

6. The game of ninepins is very similiar to:

- A) golf
- B) ping pong
- C) bowling

(C) Ninepins is a lot like bowling. However, nine pins are used instead of ten.

As Rip and the little old man approached, the bowlers stopped their game and stared at Rip in complete silence.

Rip lowered the heavy keg to the ground, and the little old man started pouring the contents into large copper mugs.

He indicated that Rip should serve the others with ale.

7. Ale is a kind of:

- A) lemonade
- B) beer
- C) whiskey

(B) Ale is a type of beer.

Rip was less afraid now, and he decided that he might as well help himself to a drink of ale, too.

One mug of ale only made him thirsty for another, and before he knew it . . .

. . . his head began to whirl dizzily, and soon . . .

. . . Rip was fast asleep, lying on the grass.

8. How many mugs of ale do you think Rip drank?

- A) none
- B) one
- C) more than one

(C) One mug only made him thirstier, so he probably drank more than just one mug.

When he awoke, Rip found himself back on the little hillock where he had first heard his name called.

It was morning and birds were singing.

"Good heavens!" he thought, "I have slept here all night!"

Then he remembered the strange little men and the ale he had drunk the night before. "Oh, those drinks I took," thought Rip.

Rip looked around for his gun . . .

. . . but in place of his own shiny musket, he found a rusted old firelock.

9. You can guess that a musket is a type of:

- A) spear
- B) rifle
- C) bow and arrow

(B) A musket is an old-fashioned gun with a barrel that is smooth on the inside. Modern rifle barrels have grooves inside them.

He looked around for his dog, but Wolf was nowhere to be seen.

Rip stood up and whistled for him. He shouted his name, but no dog came.

Finally, he walked slowly back along the trail that the strange little

man had led him over.

But when he got to the meadow, he was astonished to see that it was filled by a rushing mountain stream. How could it have filled with water overnight? Rip shook his head in wonder, and sadly he turned toward home.

10. Did Rip's dog Wolf answer when Rip called him?

- A) yes
- B) no

(B) Wolf was nowhere to be found.

As he approached the village, Rip met a number of men and women, but he didn't recognize a single face. The clothes of these people seemed to be different from his. There were styles he had never seen before.

The men and women stared back at Rip as if he were from another world.

Rip became self-conscious and ran his hand over his chin. He was astonished to find that he had a long beard!

11. As he walked home amid stares, Rip became self-conscious, or:

- A) proud
- B) embarrassed
- C) angry

(B) To be self-conscious is to be very aware, and possibly ashamed, of how you look.

And when he entered the village, Rip was more puzzled than ever. There were strange houses, strange names over the shop doors, and strange people in the streets.

12. As Rip entered the village, he was very puzzled, or:

- A) confused
- B) relieved
- C) tired

(A) To be puzzled is to be confused or perplexed.

Rip found his way to his own house, expecting every minute to hear the shrill voice of Dame Van Winkle. And there poor Rip had his greatest shock.

He found his house gone to wrack and ruin-the roof had caved in, the door was off its hinges, and the windows were broken.

Now he hurried to the village inn. But this, too, was completely changed. The building was painted an entirely different color, and the sign above it no longer read "King's Arms Tavern" but "Catskill Inn."

13. After finding his home, Rip went to the village:

- A) tavern
- B) pharmacy
- C) post office

(A) He visited his old tavern.

He walked over to a group of men who were standing nearby, and in a trembling voice he asked for his friends. "Where's Carl Von Gruder?" he asked.

For a moment, no one spoke. Then an old man said, "Von Gruder? Why he's been dead these past 18 years!"

14. Rip's friend, Carl Von Gruder, had:

- A) moved out of town
- B) been taken to the hospital
- C) died

(C) This man had been dead for 18 years.

He had no courage to ask for any more friends but cried out in despair, "Does anybody here know Rip Van Winkle?"

"Oh, Rip Van Winkle!" two or three people exclaimed. "Sure, we know him. There he is yonder."

Rip looked and saw a young man leaning against a tree. He could have been a twin to himself-before he had gone up the mountain.

15. The Rip Van Winkle that the people pointed to was probably:

- A) Rip's son
- B) Rip's father
- C) Rip's twin brother

(A) He looked like Rip did before his long sleep. He was most likely Rip's son.

Just then a pretty young woman approached. She had a baby in her arms, who began crying at the sight of Rip.

"Hush, baby, the old man won't hurt you. Be quiet, Rip," she said to the baby.

16. The baby in the young woman's arms, also named Rip, was probably Rip's:

- A) son
- B) grandson
- C) nephew

(B) This baby Rip was most likely Rip's grandson.

"What is your name, my good woman?" Rip asked her. "Hilda

Martin," she replied.

"And your father's name?" asked Rip.

"Oh, poor man," she said. "Rip Van Winkle was his name, but it's twenty years since he went away from home and was never heard of again. His dog came home without him, but we never knew what happened to him. I was only a little girl at the time."

17. What happened to Rip's dog Wolf?

- A) He never returned home.
- B) He returned home without Rip.
- C) He returned home after ten years.

(B) Wolf returned to his home, but without his master.

Rip cried, "I . . . I am your father!" And he took his daughter in his arms. "I am old Rip Van Winkle now, but once I was young Rip Van Winkle. Doesn't anybody know me?"

An old woman tottered out from the crowd and looked into Rip's face for a long moment. Then she said, "Yep! It's Rip Van Winkle all right. Welcome home, neighbor. Where have you been these twenty long years?"

18. Who recognized Rip Van Winkle?

- A) his daughter
- B) his dog
- C) his neighbor

(C) Only an old neighbor recognized Rip after twenty years.

It didn't take Rip long to tell his story, for the whole twenty years had been like one night to him. And now everyone stared when they heard it!

And Rip had some things to learn, too. His village was no longer a colony of the British king but was now part of the United States. And Rip was no longer an Englishman but an American.

19. If "Rip was no longer an Englishman but an American," then Rip Van Winkle slept during:

- A) the Revolutionary War
- B) the Civil War
- C) World War I

(A) The United States of America became an independent nation as a result of the Revolutionary War.

Old Rip Van Winkle spent the rest of his days very happily sitting in front of the village inn telling stories to the friends and children that clustered about him.

And the story they liked best was the wonderful tale of the strange little men on the mountain whose ninepins made the sound of thunder . . .

. . . and whose ale had put Rip Van Winkle to sleep for twenty long years.

20. Rip Van Winkle was very _____ for the rest of his life.

- A) lonely
- B) happy
- C) ill

(B) He spent the rest of his life very happily.