

# The Story of Rip Van Winkle by Washington Irving.

A2



**It is the year 1760. A man called Rip Van Winkle lives in a village in the Catskill Mountains, in an English province in America. Rip Van Winkle is not a hardworking man, but all the children in the village love him, because he is always happy to play with them. He is also always happy to help his neighbours... but for his own wife and family he never works, so his family is very poor.**

Day after day, Rip goes to Nicholas Vedder's tavern, drinking beer with the old men, who sit under the portrait of King George III. Sometimes his wife comes looking for him there. "Rip, come home and work! The cows are hungry, and the corn is high in the fields, and I can't do everything myself!" So what does Rip do then? He goes hunting. He takes his dog, Wolf, and his rifle, and he goes into the mountains. Often he comes home with a rabbit or a pheasant to eat. But one day, when Rip is hunting, he sees a bizarre little man in funny old clothes carrying a barrel on his back. "Can you help me?" the man asks. And of course, Rip helps him. The two walk in silence for a long time, and finally arrive at a park, where lots of little people dressed in old clothes are playing games. They all have a drink from the barrel. Rip likes the taste, and drinks more and more. Finally, he falls asleep. When he wakes up, it's morning. "Oh no! Did I sleep all night? My wife will be so angry with me!" He tries to get up. "Oh! My back hurts, my knees hurt... sleeping outside is uncomfortable!"

He whistles for his dog, and picks up his rifle. "That's strange," Rip thinks. "Where is Wolf? And why is my rifle rusty? It was fine yesterday..."

Rip walks slowly back to the village, but when he gets there, everything is changed. His house is in ruins. He doesn't know any of the people in the village. "How strange! And why are they all wearing such bizarre clothes?"

Finally he gets to the tavern. The portrait of George III is changed. Now it says "General Washington". And Rip doesn't know any of the men there. "Where is Nicholas Vedder?" Rip asks.

"Mr Vedder?" one of the men replies. "He died 18 years ago! Who are you old man?"

Rip can't understand why his village is full of strangers, but he takes off his cap and declares, "My name is Rip Van Winkle, and I am a loyal subject of King George III!"

"The King?!? That man's a spy, a traitor. Arrest him!"

Just then, a young woman with a baby comes to see what's happening. The woman looks just like his wife. "What is your name, good woman?" Rip asks.

"Judith Gardenier," she replies.

"And what is your father's name?"

"My father was Rip Van Winkle, but he disappeared 20 years ago, when I was a little girl. He went hunting with his dog one day. The dog came home, but we never saw my poor father again. My poor mother died a few years later."

"I am your father, my dear girl. I have come home!"

"Oh, Father, Father, is it really you?" And Rip lived happily with his daughter for the rest of his life. ■