

Lesson 16: An Allegory of Independence



Rip Van Winkle

(Adapted from the story
by Washington Irving)

THE BIG QUESTION
How does Washington Irving weave fact and fiction together in the telling of "Rip Van Winkle"?

In a village in the Catskill Mountains, there lived a simple, good-natured fellow by the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was a kind neighbor, and the children would shout with joy whenever he approached. Rip Van Winkle was a lovable soul who was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own. As to keeping his own farm in order, he found it impossible, and his children were as ragged as if they belonged to nobody.

Rip was one of those happy fools who lived without a care, ate white bread or brown, whichever required less thought or trouble, and preferred to starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled his life away in perfect contentment, but his wife was continually complaining about his laziness and the ruin he was bringing upon his family. Rip would shrug his shoulders, shake his head, cast up his eyes, but say nothing. This always **provoked** a fresh attack from his wife, and so he frequently left the house to go outside.

Rip used to **console** himself, when driven from home, with the company of a group of other men who met on a bench in front of an inn. Sitting beneath a portrait of His Majesty King George III, they talked over village gossip and told stories. If by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands, they would listen as Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, read aloud its contents. All kinds of discussions followed the reading of the newspaper. Nicholas Vedder, a respected elder member of the village, made his opinions known by the manner in

Tristan will read aloud the first paragraph on page 72.

What does it mean that Rip Van Winkle is "ready to attend to anybody's business but his own"?

What two details from the paragraph help explain the meaning of the phrase?

Aspen will read the second paragraph aloud.

Based on the description of Rip Van Winkle, why might his wife complain about him?

What kind of relationship do they have?



