

## A TALE OF TWO BROTHERS

1. *During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Cheyenne people of North America had an unusual custom. Whenever they were about to cross a river, even when pursued by a mortal enemy, they would stop and toss food into the water. A tale involving two brothers, passed down by storytellers from one generation to the next, may hold the key to this peculiar tradition.*
2. Two brothers, traveling across the Great Plains of America with little water and no food to speak of, became completely lost. With grassy plains in every direction, they walked for a whole day uncertain of where they were heading. By early evening, when both were ravenous, they stumbled upon a giant, green egg with red spots sitting on the grass directly in their path.
3. "What an unbelievably lucky find!" exclaimed the younger brother, who quickly started gathering sticks to build a fire to cook the egg.
4. The older brother was hesitant. "You do not think it strange, brother, that this very unusual-looking egg, larger than any egg I've ever seen, appears at our feet just as our stomachs are crying out to be fed?"
5. The younger brother dismissed him, suggesting that perhaps a giant turtle had laid the egg. Soon he cracked it open and was digging out the contents with a spoon.
6. "There is plenty here. Have some!" the younger brother offered.
7. The older brother grimaced at the sight of the rubbery, green yolk and the white with a pinkish sheen to it and refused to even try it.
8. As the younger brother continued to devour the egg, he started to feel nauseous and was beginning to regret his decision. However, with his older sibling watching, he kept gobbling it down.
9. The following morning, the older brother noticed a green tinge to his younger sibling's skin and little red spots starting to appear all over him. As they continued their trek, the younger brother exclaimed, "I'm sssssso thirsty I could drink a lake and still need more!" His arms, which had been swinging as he walked, were now hanging limply by his sides as if glued to him. By lunchtime his skin was a brilliant green, and the red spots were far more prominent.
10. As the sun disappeared below the horizon, they came upon a river. The younger man dove straight in, ducking and diving and shrieking with delight. The older brother was so weak and weary by this time, he rested his head on a rock and fell asleep.
11. The next morning, the older brother woke to the sound of singing and discovered a pile of freshly caught fish at his feet. In the river was his brother, who was no longer in human form but was a giant serpent with bright-green scaly skin and red spots. He had a snake-like face and an enormous forked tail, with which he was piercing fish and flinging them onto the bank.
12. "Look at all the fish I have caught for you, my dear brother," he hissed. "But, I don't only want to eat fish for the rest of my daysssss, so bring me some other food every day, too."
13. From that day on, the Cheyenne people threw food into rivers before they crossed them to appease the appetite of the serpent and to be granted safe passage across.

**1.** Which word in Paragraph 2 means ***extremely hungry***?

- (a) *uncertain*
- (b) *ravenous*
- (c) *hesitant*

**2.** It is suggested that the egg was laid by which animal?

- (a) *a turtle*
- (b) *a fish*
- (c) *a snake*

**3.** The day after eating the egg, the younger brother's:

- (a) *hair had turned red.*
- (b) *skin had turned red.*
- (c) *skin had turned green.*

**4.** Which word best describes the appearance of the egg?

- (a) *ordinary*
- (b) *strange*
- (c) *dazzling*

**5.** What did the younger brother do immediately after discovering the egg?

- (a) *ate it with a spoon*
- (b) *built a fire*
- (c) *turned into a serpent*

**6.** The older brother differs from his younger sibling because he is more:

- (a) *cautious.*
- (b) *courageous.*
- (c) *considerate.*

**7.** The younger brother probably continued eating the egg even though he was starting to feel unwell because he:

- (a) *didn't want to admit to his older brother that he should have listened to him.*
- (b) *was so hungry he wanted to eat every last morsel of egg.*
- (c) *didn't want to leave any leftover egg for his brother to eat.*

**8.** The younger brother's speech changed in Paragraph 9 because:

- (a) *his tongue was swollen from the heat.*
- (b) *he was so hungry.*
- (c) *he was turning into a serpent.*

**9.** You can conclude the elder brother was ***weak and weary*** because he was:

- (a) *tired and hungry.*
- (b) *upset about his brother.*
- (c) *feeling nauseous.*

**10.** After the younger brother's transformation into a serpent, his sibling probably:

- (a) *had lots to eat.*
- (b) *found his way home.*
- (c) *became a serpent too.*

**11.** Which statement is a fact, not an opinion?

- (a) *Giant serpents like living in rivers across North America.*
- (b) *The Cheyenne lived in North America in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.*
- (c) *A more varied diet is good for giant serpents.*

**12.** Which statement best summarizes the message of ***A Tale of Two Brothers***?

- (a) *Be wary of things you are unsure of, and listen to your elders.*
- (b) *If lost on the Great Plains of America, green eggs will help you find your way.*
- (c) *Count your blessings.*

## SOMETHING EXTRA

- ★ Rewrite "A Tale of Two Brothers" as a play, and perform it with a partner.
- ★ Think about a custom that you are familiar with. Research to see how that custom started.

# THE WAY OF ST. JAMES

Dear Angus and Sasha,

1. After months of preparing for this trip, I can hardly believe that it is almost over! I hope to reach Santiago de Compostela, in the northwest corner of Spain, in about four days. *Santiago* is Spanish for *St. James*, and this journey is taking me to the church where it is believed that he is buried.
  2. Christian pilgrims have been walking the Way of St. James for over a thousand years. These days, people of all faiths walk the Way. Others ride it on bicycles or on horseback. There are many starting points in France for the route, but they all come together just over the Pyrenees, in Spain—which is where I started.
  3. The symbol for the route is the scallop shell. It is used on wayside markers, telling pilgrims how much further they have to travel. The creases between the ridges of the shell represent the many different routes that lead to Santiago.
  4. The first thing I had to do was get my Pilgrim's Passport, which has allowed me to stay at the cheap pilgrim hostels along the way for just a few euros a night. The warden at each hostel has stamped my passport as proof that I have been there. The accommodation is simple, but after walking about 18 miles each day, all I've wanted is a shower, a warm meal, some conversation, and a good night's sleep!
  5. I've met people from all over the world. Fortunately, most of them speak at least a little English, so I have managed to talk with everyone I've met. It's fun to stay where everyone is doing the same thing but with different stories to tell.
  6. I'm glad I listened to a friend's advice about traveling lightly. Some people have really suffered, trying to carry backpacks that weigh over 30 pounds. I don't know what they put in them! Mine is just right, and I have always managed to wash and dry my clothes ready for the next day. I've seen some people break their toothbrushes in half and cut off the sleeves of their T-shirts to reduce the weight!
  7. The nearly 500-mile journey has taken me through many different environments—from ugly industrial towns and big, vibrant cities to high mountain paths and vast, dusty plains. Some parts of the journey have not been very pleasant, but each place has had something interesting to offer. I've done a lot of thinking over the past month, and I feel like I've really cleared my head!
  8. When I reach Santiago in a few days time, I shall be very proud to receive my "compostela," the certificate that proves I have followed the Way of St. James.
- Looking forward to seeing you very soon,  
Uncle Harry



# Questions

1. In Paragraph 2, the word which means *people who go on a journey to a place of religious importance* is:

- (a) pilgrims.
- (b) Christians.
- (c) people.

2. The Way of St. James ends:

- (a) in a churchyard.
- (b) at a hostel.
- (c) in the Pyrenees.

3. Harry told of some travelers who were suffering because they were:

- (a) carrying heavy backpacks.
- (b) unfit.
- (c) unwell.

4. Modern participation in the Way of St. James is different from the past because:

- (a) only Christian pilgrims participate.
- (b) all people walk.
- (c) all faiths participate.

5. If a person arrived at a pilgrim hostel without a Pilgrim's Passport, he/she would likely be:

- (a) allowed to stay.
- (b) turned away.
- (c) given a meal.

6. People who follow the Way of St. James get their Pilgrim's Passport:

- (a) at the end of their journey.
- (b) at the first hostel they stay at.
- (c) before they begin their journey.

7. The main idea of Paragraph 7 is that the pilgrim's route:

- (a) is scenic.
- (b) includes a range of scenery.
- (c) is unpleasant.

8. Harry was tired at night because he had:

- (a) walked a long way.
- (b) carried a heavy backpack.
- (c) stayed up too late.

9. It is a fact, not an opinion, that the people who follow the Way of St. James are:

- (a) athletic.
- (b) bored.
- (c) from all over the world.

10. To summarize Paragraph 6, the advice is to:

- (a) pack only essential items.
- (b) practice carrying heavy weights for months beforehand.
- (c) cut all excess material off your clothes.

11. From the letter, we can conclude that Uncle Harry was:

- (a) disappointed with his trip.
- (b) relieved that the journey was over.
- (c) proud of his achievement.

12. In Paragraph 6, the pronoun *they* refers to:

- (a) friends.
- (b) fellow travelers.
- (c) backpacks.

## SOMETHING EXTRA

- ★ Conduct research to sketch a simple map of the Way of St. James.
- ★ Design a poster to encourage people to walk the Way of St. James.