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VULCAN AND HIS INVENTIONS

All the gods and goddesses had perfect bodies, except one. Vulcan, the son of Jupiter and Juno, was a bright, sweet-tempered lad, but he was born disabled. It is said that Juno was so displeased that her baby was imperfect that she threw him down from heaven.

Many tales are told of the wonderful works this god created. He made the first robots—gold and silver handmaidens with mechanical brains and tongues who became his faithful servants. Vulcan also invented the first wheelchairs—moving tripods which carried him around and even scurried out of the way when not in use.

Vulcan worked at a forge on Mount Olympus and there he designed and built brass palaces for the other gods. He made armor which could not be pierced by any weapon. Vulcan also invented special golden shoes for the gods and their horses. These shoes enabled their owners to walk on air and water as easily as they could walk upon land.

The ancients believed that Vulcan had made the thunderbolts they saw descending fearsomely from the sky. Vulcan made them for his father, Jupiter. When Jupiter became angry, they believed, he would hurl these weapons from Mt. Olympus at the earth below.

Vulcan also worked at his forges, which were built inside special mountains on earth. These mountains were hollow, and one could see smoke and flame rising from them. The ancients named these special mountains after the god they believed to work within them. Can you guess the name?

1. Ancient people believed that thunderbolts were a sign of
   A. Jupiter's anger.
   B. Vulcan making shoes.
   C. Juno's displeasure.
   D. Vulcan making robots.

2. The “special mountains” said to hold Vulcan’s forges are most likely called
   A. smoky mountains.
   B. hollow hills.
   C. volcanoes.
   D. eminences.
3. How was Vulcan different from the other gods?
   A. He was bright.
   B. He was perfect.
   C. He was sweet-tempered.
   D. He was disabled.

4. In the fourth paragraph, the word fearsomely means
   A. carefully.
   B. frighteningly.
   C. fearfully.
   D. quietly.

5. Which of the following statements is an opinion?
   A. Vulcan created special shoes for the gods and their horses.
   B. No weapon could break through the armor that Vulcan had made.
   C. The gods looked ridiculous in Vulcan’s golden shoes.
   D. Vulcan created the first form of a wheelchair.

6. The author asks a question about mountains
   A. to show that Vulcan is a real person.
   B. to connect Vulcan’s story with real life.
   C. to complain about the dangers of nature.
   D. to prove that all mountains are alike.

7. According to the passage, which of these is true of the gods of ancient Greece?
   A. They were important to the people.
   B. They were actually humans.
   C. They were cruel to one another.
   D. They were hidden away in mountains.
8. Vulcan created many wondrous inventions.
   • List THREE of Vulcan’s inventions.
   • Describe HOW these inventions changed his life or the lives of others.

Use information from the story to support your response.
The guns squatted in a row like savage chiefs. They argued with abrupt violence. It was a grim pow-wow. Their busy servants ran hither and thither.

A small procession of wounded men were going drearily toward the rear. It was a flow of blood from the torn body of the brigade.

To the right and to the left were the dark lines of other troops. Far in front he thought he could see lighter masses protruding in points from the forest. They were suggestive of unnumbered thousands.

Once he saw a tiny battery go dashing along the line of the horizon. The tiny riders were beating the tiny horses.

From a sloping hill came the sound of cheerings and clashes. Smoke welled slowly through the leaves.

Batteries were speaking with thunderous oratorical effort. Here and there were flags, the red in the stripes dominating. They splashed bits of warm color upon the dark lines of troops.

The youth felt the old thrill at the sight of the emblems. They were like beautiful birds strangely undaunted in a storm.

As he listened to the din from the hillside, to a deep pulsating thunder that came from afar to the left, and to the lesser clamors which came from many directions, it occurred to him that they were fighting, too, over there, and over there, and over there. Heretofore he had supposed that all the battle was directly under his nose.

As he gazed around him the youth felt a flash of astonishment at the blue, pure sky and the sun gleamings on the trees and fields. It was surprising that Nature had gone tranquilly on with her golden process in the midst of so much devilment.

1. According to the passage, the word *emblems* means
   A. shapes.
   B. scenery.
   C. soldiers.
   D. symbols.
2. By the end of the passage, what did the youth come to realize?
   A. He had the power to change the things around him.
   B. The troops on both sides of the battle were the same.
   C. Nature continued to go on even in troubled times.
   D. The battle was much smaller than he had first imagined.

3. Which word BEST describes the mood of this passage?
   A. hopeful
   B. cheerful
   C. wild
   D. angry

4. Which of the following BEST describes how the youth felt about the flag?
   A. He was pleased every time he saw it.
   B. He felt that the flag was too small.
   C. He was fearful every time he saw it.
   D. He felt that the flag was too colorful.
5. Imagine that you are the youth in the story. Write a letter to a friend that explains how you feel about the battle. Use details from the passage that show how the youth feels about the battle.
When Robert Frost’s father died in 1885, Robert was eleven years old. The family left California. They settled in Massachusetts. Frost attended Lawrence High School. He later married the girl who had tied him there for the best grades. He then entered Dartmouth College. He remained there less than one semester. Returning to Massachusetts, Frost taught school. He also worked in a mill and as a newspaper reporter. From 1897 to 1899, he attended Harvard College as a special student. He left without a degree. Over the next ten years, he wrote (but rarely published) poems and operated a farm in Derry, New Hampshire. Frost supplemented his income by teaching at Pinkerton Academy.

THREE POEMS
by Robert Frost

“Fire and Ice”

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I’ve tasted of desire
I hold with those who favour fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.
My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.
He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound’s the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.
The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

“The Road Not Taken”

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
1. To which of the following senses do the first two lines of “Fire and Ice” appeal?

   A. sight
   B. smell
   C. hearing
   D. touch

2. What does the speaker in “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” want to do?

   A. meet the farmer
   B. stay in the woods
   C. get back home
   D. go to sleep

3. In “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” why doesn’t the speaker remain to watch the snow fall in the woods?

   A. The owner of the woods will be returning soon.
   B. The horse is warning him that danger is near.
   C. The evening is too cold to be standing outside.
   D. The speaker has certain places he needs to be.

4. Which word BEST describes the mood in “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”?

   A. bored
   B. reflective
   C. foolish
   D. cowardly

5. At the end of “The Road Not Taken,” how does the speaker feel?

   A. The speaker wishes that he could live his life over again.
   B. The speaker prefers to take walks in the morning.
   C. The speaker is happy with how his life has turned out.
   D. The speaker thinks that he missed his one chance to fall in love.
6. Many poets today do not use rhyme. Robert Frost once said that he would just as soon play tennis without a net than write poetry without rhyme. How important do you think rhyming is to good poetry? Why? Use details from the poems in your answer.