

Washington Irving:-

In the short story, Rip Van Winkle is plagued by the presence of a nagging wife that ruins many of his joys and luster for love and excitement in life. She even spoils his attempts to escape her nagging by chatting with the local townsmen at the nearby pub. Instead, one day he decides to squirrel hunt in the mountains and stumbles across an older man who leads him into the mountains where an odd scene erupts. Many older individuals are seen drinking and spending time with one another as if it were a party; yet no one makes a single sound. Instead, Rip Van Winkle falls asleep and awakens to find he had slept for several years. The environment and most of what he knows has left him. Herein lays the point of the story, which is where the author describes the many differences of alternate generations as well as letting time pass by without actually living in it. Rip Van Winkle had lost everyone he ever cared for or loved over the twenty years he was asleep. He was free of his nagging wife, but he missed his daughter and son's growth to adulthood and even his one true friend, his dog Wolf, had forgotten him. The politics and social environment of the times had also changed with the Revolutionary War, and the younger generation completely alienated Rip Van Winkle in his new time, which tends to happen to the elderly in today's society as they become less accustomed to younger generations.

It is a distinct possibility that the relationship between Rip Van Winkle and his wife Dame Van Winkle represented the conflict between the American Colonists and the British Empire. Just as England attempted to rule over the Americans without their consent, Dame Van Winkle also attempted to rule over Rip Van Winkle through her nagging and constantly bemoaning him for every little action. Although no direct fighting ensued, it is doubtful that a prolonged period of time of such treatment would not have resulted in some form of confrontation from Rip Van Winkle towards his wife. The same results ultimately occurred between the Americans and British that led to the Revolutionary War. Instead, the author chose to allow time to reconcile all of Rip Van Winkle's problems, which was a more peaceful solution to the conflict.