

## 2. THE DENIAL

*But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. Matthew 26:70*

Peter leaned closer into the fire, wishing he were invisible.

The night had turned cold.

Hearts had turned even colder.

But it was the eyes that bothered him most.

Prying eyes.

Suspicious eyes.

Accusing eyes.

A servant girl sat next to him.

Watching silently.

Probing silently.

Questioning silently.

Finally, she spoke, her voice cutting through the cold night air like a dagger.

"This man was with Him."

He **was** with Him. For three years he had walked with Him, laughed with Him, prayed with Him.

But tonight, he denied it.

"Woman, I don't know Him," he said.

Fear hovered over him like a vulture. He turned away from the flickering firelight, hiding his face in the shadows. The temple soldiers who had arrested Jesus took a closer look at the stranger in the courtyard, their eyes crawling over him like insects.

But they said nothing.

Safe.

For now.

Not long afterwards, another man looked at him.

And watched silently.

And wondered silently.

And finally pointed a finger and said, "You are also one of them."

He **was** one of them. Not long before this very night, he had said to Jesus, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" and Jesus had said to him, "And you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."

But tonight he denied it.

"Man, I am not!"

Morning.

Another man nodded toward Peter and said, "Certainly this fellow was with Him, for he is a Galilean."

He **was** with Him. Only hours ago he had told Jesus, "Even if everyone else deserts you, I never will."

But tonight he denied it.

"Man, I don't know what you're talking about!"

Just then the rooster crowed.

From inside, Jesus turned and looked toward Peter.

Their eyes met.

And Peter remembered what Jesus had said to him: "Tonight, before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times."

Peter rose from the fire, walked to the gate and quietly slipped away.

Away from the eyes of his accusers.

Away from the eyes of Jesus.

Away.

As far as possible.

But he could not escape his own eyes.

Searching his soul.

Seeing what he had done.

And he wept.

And wept.

And wept.

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## **RELATED QUIZZES**

### **VOCABULARY**

1. Suspicious: mistrustful; doubtful
2. Accusing: blaming; finding fault with
3. Probing: searching into; examining thoroughly
4. Hovered: hanging in the air
5. Flickering: burning unsteadily
6. Messiah: the promised deliverer of the Jewish people

7. Galilean: someone who was born in Galilee
8. Deserts: abandons; leaves behind
9. Disown: to refuse to know someone
10. Vulture: a person or thing that preys on people

1. The people around the fire were very \_\_\_\_\_ of Peter.

- A. Flickering
- B. Suspicious
- C. Probing

2. Peter believed that Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_

- A. Messiah
- B. Galilean
- C. Probing

3. The firelight was \_\_\_\_\_ in the darkness.

- A. Flickering
- B. Hovered
- C. Accusing

4. People looked at Peter with \_\_\_\_\_ eyes.

- A. Suspicious
- B. Probing
- C. Accusing
- D. all three of the above

5. Fear was \_\_\_\_\_ over Peter like a vulture.

- A. Flickering
- B. Accusing
- C. Hovered

### **TRUE/FALSE**

1. Peter was nervous and afraid because people were staring at him. True.
2. Peter admitted that he was friends with Jesus. False. Peter said three times that he didn't know who Jesus was.

3. Jesus had predicted that Peter would pretend not to know Him. True.
4. Peter was from Italy. False. Peter was a Galilean.
5. Peter was not sorry that he had pretended not to know Jesus. False. He was so sorry that he wept and wept.

## **READING COMPREHENSION**

### **WHAT IS THE MAIN IDEA OF THE STORY?**

- A. Peter learns to never sit by the fire with people he doesn't know.
- B. Peter denies being friends with Jesus.
- C. Peter was afraid of the dark.

### **WHAT BELONGS IN THE MIDDLE?**

1. Peter was warming himself by the fire.
  2. ?
  3. Peter tells the servant girl that he doesn't know Jesus.
- A. Jesus turned and looked toward Peter.
  - B. The temple soldiers took a closer look at Peter.
  - C. The servant girl says "This man was with Him."

## **CAUSE AND EFFECT**

1. When Peter denied knowing Jesus for the third time
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- A. The rooster crowed.
- B. The servant girl said "Okay, I believe you."
- C. The fire went out.

2. Peter was very upset with himself for not telling the truth about his friendship with Jesus because
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- A. He thought Jesus would be angry with him.
- B. He had once promised Jesus that he would never desert Him.
- C. He thought the other disciples would be not be his friend anymore.

## **INFERENCES**

The rooster crowed after Peter had lied about knowing Jesus a third time because \_\_\_\_\_

- A. It wanted breakfast
- B. Jesus had predicted that it would
- C. It was time to wake everyone up.

### **FACTS AND DETAILS**

1. One of the people who accused Peter of being friends with Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_

- A. The servant girl
- B. The man who owned the rooster.
- C. Pontius Pilate

2. Peter pretended not to know Jesus because \_\_\_\_\_

- A. Jesus told him to.
- B. He was afraid.
- C. He was planning to secretly rescue Jesus.

3. Peter had been friends with Jesus for \_\_\_\_\_

- A. Three weeks.
- B. Three months.
- C. Three years.

4. After Peter left the garden, he felt so bad that he \_\_\_\_\_

- A. Wept.
- B. Tore his clothes.
- C. Kicked the gate shut behind him.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Roosters don't just crow in the morning. They crow when they find food, they crow to warn that an enemy is near, they crow all day. If you shine a flashlight on a rooster in the dark, it will probably crow. Maybe that's why they also crow at sunrise.