

Dear Reader: Stories can be funny and foolish. Fun elements in this story are: animals acting like people. *Alliteration*: repeating the same first letter of word until it turns into a *Tongue-Twister*: letter sounds that are hard to pronounce. So much fun to read aloud! (A 'possum' is short for Opossum, North America's only *marsupial*.)

(Letter P,p (133). The word, possum (19).

Peter Possum Picks a Peck of Pickled Peppers

A mystery hangs over Possum Creek, a town of 30 'possum' families in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia. Possum Creek's peace-loving critters had a 'knack' of growing pickled peppers. Young Peter Possum was the most popular 'pepper-picking, pepper-pickler' in Possum Creek.

(Although some of the old folks whispered, "*that young 'whippersnapper won't never come to no good*").

Each year, at harvest time, all the town critters met in the pepper fields with Peter Possum. They were amazed as Peter Possum picked a peck of pickled peppers. A peck of pickled peppers Peter Possum picked. But the critters wondered, "if Peter Possum picked a peck of pickled peppers, then where is the peck of pickled peppers Peter Possum picked?"

No one knew. Peter Possum had disappeared into the mountains with all the pickled peppers and dropped out of sight. The disappointed possums missed their beloved pickled peppers. They returned to a life of scavenging in the garbage of people.

Now, years later, **Peter Possum**, himself, has returned to **Possum Creek**.

Headlines in the latest edition of The **Possum Creek Post Newspaper** report:

*“Local **Possum** Makes Good - **Opens Pizza Parlor**”*

*The **Mystery of Peter Possum’s** missing **peck** of **pickled peppers** finally solved! **Mr. Possum** has confessed that he used the **pickled peppers** to create a revolutionary new **pizza franchise**, called:*

***Peter Possum’s Pickled Peppers
Pepperoni Pasta Pizza Pie***

*Business will be **open** to the **public** for drive-through **pick-up** tomorrow. And **Peter** has **promised** that each customer that buys a 16” **Pizza** for \$19.99 will receive a free **peck** (2 gallons) of **pickled peppers** snacks with their order! (Now hiring delivery drivers. Must be fast, **punctual**, honest, and courteous).*

THE END



Did You Know?

For Your Information (FYI)

- There is a “Possum” in Australia of a different *marsupial* species with a bushy tail.
- The ‘possum’ in the story is the ‘opossum’ of North America, nicknamed ‘possum’, for short;

The facts listed below will be referring to the North American opossum ‘possum’

- The habitat is woodland trees, marsh/swamps
- It has a hairless, *prehensile* tail
- It is the ‘Common Virginia Possum’ found across North America
- It is named by Native Americans from a word meaning ‘white animal’
- It has a white-faced with a pink nose
- They are the only marsupials in North America (carries baby in stomach pouch)
- They are the size of a domestic cat
- Will *play dead* when they are afraid
- They are immune to snake bites (except coral snake)
- The babies are size of a ‘jelly bean’ when born and crawl into the mother’s pouch for milk
- Will eat insects, chickens, worms, mice, birds, and human garbage
- They are of the ‘least concern’ (LC) on conservation scale of extinction



Peter Possum Picks A Peck of Pickled Peppers - True/False Quiz

Answers are in the Story and Did You Know

- 1. The North American possum is the same as the Australian Possum.*
- 2. A 'marsupial' animal keeps babies in a pouch.*
- 3. The town of Possum Creek had a population of 50 families.*
- 4. The town of Possum Creek was in the mountains.*
- 5. A possum is the size of a grasshopper.*
- 6. There are many marsupial animals in North America.*
- 7. If a poison snake bites a possum, the possum will die immediately.*
- 8. A 'peck' of pickled peppers is equal to 2 gallons.*
- 9. A real possum would really eat pizza.*
- 10. Possums are about to go extinct.*

Draw a Possum

