Campfire “Lateral Thinking” Puzzles

(Solve with yes/no questions)

Jack can’t go home because the man in the mask is waiting for him.

(Jack is on third base.)

(Follow-up: What’s the catcher’s name? Answer: No. “What” is on second base. “Today” is the catcher. See how many Scouts catch onto the classic Abbott and Costello sketch!)

Every morning, John says goodbye to Mary as he leaves his apartment. One day, he comes home to find a pool of water on the living room floor, with broken glass nearby. There is no sign of Mary. He immediately knows it’s a case of cold-blooded murder. Who killed Mary?

(The cat knocked the fish bowl off the table and ate Mary. Mary is a goldfish).

Every morning, Bill leaves his apartment on the 10th floor of his building, pushes the button to go to the first floor, gets out, and goes to work. In the evening, he gets on the elevator, pushes the button for the 4th floor, gets off, and walks up the last 6 floors to his apartment. He hates climbing stairs, so why does he do this?

(Bill is short and can’t reach the buttons for the higher floors, so he rides the elevator as far as he can, then walks up the rest of the way.)

Simon walks into a bar and asks the bartender for a glass of water. Instead, the bartender pulls out a gun and points it at Simon. Simon says ‘Thank you’ and walks out happily, without getting his water. What happened?

(Simon had the hiccups.)

Bruce won a major race. At the end of the race, he was surrounded by TV cameras and reporters, but no one interviewed him. Why not?

(Bruce was a horse.)

Paul is out hunting. He sees bear tracks and follows them due south for one mile, then they turn and he follows them due east for one mile. Then the tracks turn again and he follows them due north for one mile. Then, he sees the bear, but realizes that because he has returned to exactly the spot he started from when he first saw the tracks, he can’t shoot the bear. Why not?

(Paul is at the North Pole – the only place where traveling south, then east, then north, gets you back to your starting point. It’s a polar bear, which is an endangered species.)

Elsa can turn off her bedroom light at the door to her bedroom and still make it across the room and into bed before the room gets dark.

(It’s daytime; sunlight is streaming in the window.)

Peter married 20 women from the same village the same day, but no one charged him with a crime. Instead, they thanked him. Why?

(Peter was the village priest. He conducted a mass wedding ceremony.)

A horse jumps over a tower and lands on a man, who disappears. Why?

(Knight takes pawn, with a rook on one of the intervening spaces.)

Andrea asks Mrs. White for tea and gets $5,000. She asks Mrs. White for eyes, but Mrs. White can’t give her any. Where is Andrea?

(Mrs. White’s first name is Vanna. Andrea is a contestant on Wheel of Fortune.)

Five pieces of coal, a carrot and a scarf are lying on the lawn. Nobody put them on the lawn but there is a perfectly logical reason why they should be there. What is it?

(They were the decorations on a snowman that has melted. The children put them on the snowman, not on the lawn.)