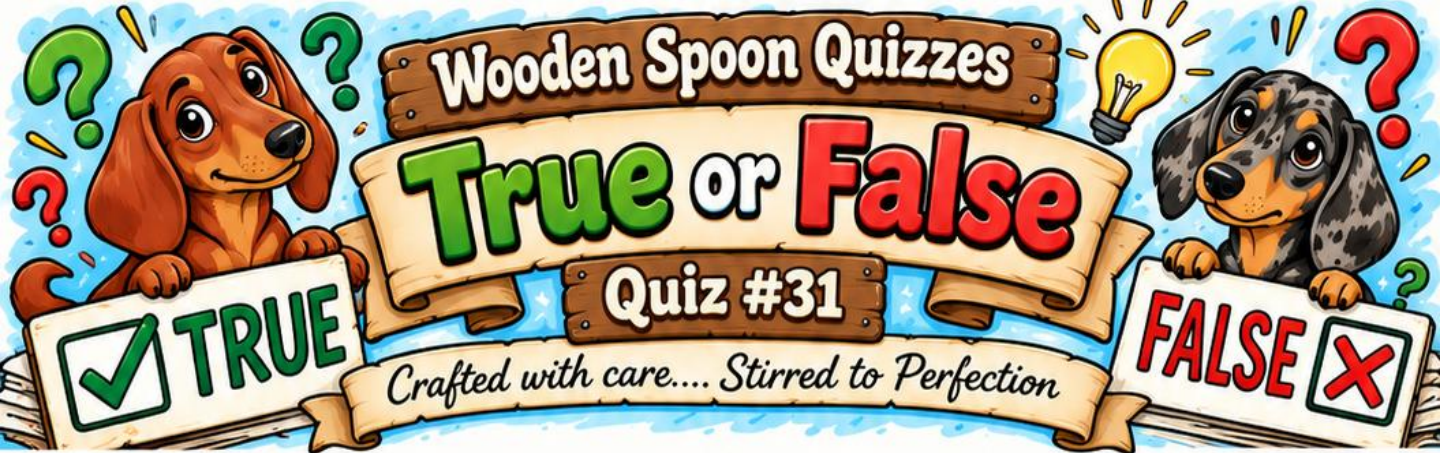




1

The bells fitted to early fire engines weren't originally there to clear the road — they were rung to attract a crowd of spectators to the blaze

2

Donkeys have had some decidedly strange uses around the world — including their ears supposedly being prized as wound dressings in China and donkey skin being used for prestigious sporrans in Scotland

3

A Parisian grocer once ended up behind bars after attacking his wife with perhaps the most French weapon imaginable — a rock-hard wedge of cheese

4

During a bitter New York divorce, a doctor who had donated a kidney to his wife demanded either the organ back or \$1.5 million in compensation

5

A German man once took legal action against the Easter Bunny, accusing the chocolate-peddling rabbit of encouraging addiction and causing grievous bodily harm

6

In Taiwan, exotic dancers have traditionally appeared at some funerals — with one estimate claiming they featured in roughly a third of funeral processions

7

Austrian Adam Rainer holds the extraordinary distinction of being the only person in recorded medical history to have been classified as both a dwarf and a giant

8

The world's first performer officially billed as a "human cannonball" was a teenage girl called Zazel, who was blasted across London's Royal Aquarium in 1877

9

Barbie's famous figure was inspired by a rather more grown-up German novelty doll called Bild Lilli

10

The word "donkey" is relatively modern, replacing the older word "ass" — and an early form of it was pronounced more like "dunkey"

11

According to legend, Irish saint Kevin remained perfectly still with his arm outstretched while a blackbird built a nest in his hand, laid its eggs and raised its chicks

12

The familiar saying "Always a bridesmaid, never a bride" was popularised by a 1920s advertising campaign for Listerine mouthwash



Wooden Spoon Quizzes

True or False

Quiz #31

Quizmaster Answer Sheet

Crafted with care.... Stirred to Perfection

- 1** ? The bells fitted to early fire engines weren't originally there to clear the road — they were rung to attract a crowd of spectators to the blaze



FALSE



Fire-engine bells had a rather more practical purpose: warning pedestrians and other traffic that an emergency vehicle was approaching. Apparently, getting everyone out of the way was more useful than inviting them along for a look.

- 2** ? Donkeys have had some decidedly strange uses around the world — including their ears supposedly being prized as wound dressings in China and donkey skin being used for prestigious sporrans in Scotland



FALSE



Donkey hide really is highly prized in China, particularly for making ejiao, a traditional gelatin product — but the claims about donkey ears being prized as wound dressings and donkey-skin sporrans signifying Scottish nobility don't stand up to scrutiny.

- 3** ? A Parisian grocer once ended up behind bars after attacking his wife with perhaps the most French weapon imaginable — a rock-hard wedge of cheese



TRUE



The bizarre cheese attack reportedly involved Otello Frederici, a Parisian grocer who attacked his wife with a piece of frozen Parmesan. Proof that, in the wrong hands, even the cheeseboard can become dangerous.

- 4** ? During a bitter New York divorce, a doctor who had donated a kidney to his wife demanded either the organ back or \$1.5 million in compensation



TRUE



Dr Richard Batista donated a kidney to his wife in 2001. When their marriage later collapsed, he demanded its return — or \$1.5 million. Divorce settlements can involve the house, the car and the savings... but usually not somebody's internal organs.

- 5** ? A German man once took legal action against the Easter Bunny, accusing the chocolate-peddling rabbit of encouraging addiction and causing grievous bodily harm



TRUE



German lawyer Karl-Friedrich Lentze really did file a complaint against the Easter Bunny, blaming the chocolate-bearing rabbit for encouraging unhealthy eating. The bunny, perhaps wisely, declined to appear for questioning.

- 6** ? In Taiwan, exotic dancers have traditionally appeared at some funerals — with one estimate claiming they featured in roughly a third of funeral processions



TRUE



Erotic performers really have appeared at Taiwanese funerals, particularly in rural communities, with the practice traditionally used to attract a bigger crowd. Greeting sees "respectful farewell" quite like unexpectedly finding yourself at a strip show.

- 7** ? Austrian Adam Rainer holds the extraordinary distinction of being the only person in recorded medical history to have been classified as both a dwarf and a giant



TRUE



Adam Rainer measured only about 1.18 metres in his early twenties before a pituitary condition caused extraordinary growth. By the time he died in 1950, he stood around 2.34 metres — roughly 7 ft 8 in. That's one hell of a late growth spurt.

- 8** ? The world's first performer officially billed as a "human cannonball" was a teenage girl called Zazel, who was blasted across London's Royal Aquarium in 1877



TRUE



Rossa Matilda Richter — better known as Zazel — became the first famous human cannonball when she was fired across London's Royal Aquarium in 1877. The "cannon" actually used springs rather than gunpowder, which was probably of considerable comfort to Zazel.

- 9** ? Barbie's famous figure was inspired by a rather more grown-up German novelty doll called Bild Lilli



TRUE



Bild Lilli began life as a cheeky German comic-strip character before becoming a doll aimed largely at adults. Ruth Handler encountered Lilli in Europe and she became a major inspiration for Barbie — a considerably racier family tree than the pink Dreamhouse suggests.

- 10** ? The word "donkey" is relatively modern, replacing the older word "ass" — and an early form of it was pronounced more like "dunkey"



TRUE



"Donkey" didn't become common in English until around the late 18th century, while "ass" had been used for centuries. The earlier form dunkey is recorded too — giving the humble donkey quite the linguistic makeover.

- 11** ? According to legend, Irish saint Kevin remained perfectly still with his arm outstretched while a blackbird built a nest in his hand, laid its eggs and raised its chicks



TRUE



Legend says St Kevin refused to disturb the nesting blackbird and kept his arm outstretched until its eggs hatched and the chicks eventually flew away. That's dedication — most of us start complaining after holding somebody's coat for five minutes.

- 12** ? The familiar saying "Always a bridesmaid, never a bride" was popularised by a 1920s advertising campaign for Listerine mouthwash



TRUE



Listerine's 1920s advertising famously warned women about being "often a bridesmaid but never a bride," suggesting bad breath might be ruining their romantic prospects. Nothing sells mouthwash quite like a spot of emotional blackmail.