

Grade VII

Lesson 4. The Ashes that made Trees Bloom

PROSE

SOUL OF THE CHAPTER

The Old Couple's Child-Muko

There was an old childless couple that lived in Japan in 19th century. They had a pet dog called Muko whom they treated as their own child. The old man was rice farmer. He will go to the field with his hoe or spade early in the morning and will work there till sunset. The dog will accompany the man to the farms. He was a kind and patient man always eager to help the animals in need

The Pile of Gold

One day the dog took his master to a certain place and began scratching the ground there. The doubtful old man began digging the Earth and was amazed to see pile of gold in front of him. The old couple was rich now. They bought a piece of land, distributed a part of the wealth to the poor neighbours and arranged a lavish feast for their friends. In the same village there was a wicked old couple.

They were insensitive towards dogs and other creatures till now. But listening to the fortune of the good couple, they too called the dog to their garden and offered food. The dog was so scared of them that it didn't even move from its place. They almost dragged the dog out of their house. The dog began scratching near a pine tree in their garden. The old couple began to dig the place with excitement. They found a dead kitten with a foul smell at the place. They killed the dog in anger and buried it there.

The Mortar and the Mill

The good old man, learning about the incident, came under the pine tree at the night to mourn the death of the pet that was like a child for him. He set-up some bamboo tubes on the ground and kept some food and water over there. In the dream the dog appeared and asked the old man to cut down the pine tree and make mortar for its rice pastry from it and a mill of his bean sauce. The old man did the same. During the New Year they thought of making some rice pastry. They put the rice after boiling in the mortar and the old man began crushing the mass with a hammer to make dough. When the mass was ready for baking, it suddenly got changed into heap of gold coins.

It was gold dropping like rain with the every drop of the bean sauce that the old man was grinding at the hand-mill. The wicked neighbour was peeping from the window and saw everything. Next day they borrowed the mortar and the magic mill from the old couple. But for them the boiled rice and the beans both turned into lumps of foul mass of worms. The angry couple destroyed the mill and planned to use it as firewood.

The Withered Cherry Tree

The spirit of the dog appeared in the dreams of good old man once again. It advised the man to sprinkle the ashes of the mill on withered trees and they will be green again. The old man went to the wicked couple's homes, collected the ashes and sprinkled it over their bare cherry tree. The tree was filled with the pink fruits its fragrance filled the air.

The kind old man came to know that his lord daimio was to pass through the highway near the village. He rushed to catch a glimpse of his lord with the ashes in his basket. He climbed on a dried cherry tree and sat there with the basket. The custom those days for everyone was kneeling down while the procession of daimio's men considering his age. As the procession passed by, the old man sprinkled a pinch of ash on the cherry tree. In a moment the withered tree blossomed.

Daimio was amazed and ordered his men to stop the train and he went out to see the wonder. He was pleased by the old man and rewarded him with many costly gifts. The wicked couple after hearing the story repeated the same. But for them the cherry tree didn't burst into blossom. The ash was blown away by the wind and it created trouble for daimio and his wife. The old man was pulled down from the tree and was beaten to death. While the wicked old man met with such a disastrous end, the kind old couple lived happily with the fortune.



Next Generation School

NCERT FOLDER

COMPREHENSION CHECK

1. Why did the neighbours kill the dog?

The neighbours killed the dog in anger. They have expected the dog to help them get a treasure, but the dog had rather taken them to a foul smelling dead kitten.

2. Mark the right item.

(i) The old farmer and his wife loved the dog

- (a) because it helped them in their day-to-day work.
 - (b) as if it was their own baby.
 - (c) as they were kind to all living beings.
 - (b) as if it was their own baby.
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WORKING WITH THE TEXT

1. The old farmer is a kind person. What evidence of his kindness do you find in the first two paragraphs?

In the first paragraph it is written that the old farmer treated the dog like his own child. He will feed the dog small pieces of fish with their own chopsticks and offer boiled rice to him as much as he wanted. The second paragraph says that to provide food to the birds, the old farmer will often turn up the surface of the ground.

Both these instances proved that the old man was a kind person.

2. What did the dog do to lead the farmer to the hidden gold?

The dog came running towards the farmer. It kept his paws against his legs and with its head it kept on directing towards a spot behind him.

The old man initially ignored the dog, but it kept on whining and running to and from until the farmer followed it to the spot.

3. (i) How did the spirit of the dog help the farmer first?

The spirit of the dog came in the farmer's dream and first asked him to chop the pine tree and make mortar and hand-mill out of it. With the mortar and mill it gave the farmer heaps of gold.

(ii) How did it help him next ?

The dog's spirit again came in the farmer's dream for the second time and told the farmer to collect the ash of the mortar and the mill and sprinkle it on the withered trees and they will blossom.

The farmer had did this in front of the daimio (the landlord) and was awarded with lavish gifts.

4. Why did the daimio reward the farmer, but punish his neighbour for the same act?

The farmer had sprinkled the ash over the withered cherry tree and it blossomed. Daimio was pleased seeing the miracle and he rewarded the farmer. His neighbour poured the ash over the cherry tree, but nothing happened to the tree.

Fine particles from the ash entered the eyes of the daimio and his wife. They began to sneeze and cough.

This spoiled the splendour of the procession and so the neighbour was punished by man of the landlord.

WORKING WITH LANGUAGE

1. Read the following conversation.

Ravi : What are you doing?

Mridu : I'm reading a book

Ravi : Who wrote it?

Mridu : Ruskin Bond.

Ravi : Where did you find it?

Mridu : In the library.



Notice that 'what', 'who', 'where', are **question words**. Questions that require information begin with question words. Some other question words are 'when', 'why', 'where', 'which' and 'how'.

Remember that

- .What asks about action, things etc.
- .Who asks about people.
- .Which asks about people or thing.
- .Where asks about place.
- .When asks about time.
- . Why asks about reason or purpose.
- .How asks about means, manner or degree.
- .Whose asks about possessions.

Read the following paragraph and frame questions on the italicised phrases.

Anil is in *school*. I am in school too. Anil is sitting in the *left row*. He is *reading a book*. Anil's friend is sitting in the second row. He is sharpening his *pencil*. The *teacher* is writing on the blackboard. Children are looking out of *window*.

- (i) Where is Anil?
- (ii) Which row he is sitting in?
- (iii) What is he doing?
- (iv) Where is Anil's friend sitting?
- (v) What is his friend doing?
- (vi) Who is writing on the blackboard?
- (vii) What are some children doing?

2. Write appropriate question words in the blank spaces in the following dialogue.

Neha: did you get this book

Sheela: Yesterday morning.

Neha: Is your sister crying?

Sheela: Because she has lost her doll.

Neha:room is this, yours or hers?

Sheela: I t's ours

Neha: do you go to school?

Sheela: We walk to the school. I t is nearby.

When, Why, Whose, how.

3. Fill in the blanks with the words given in the box.

how what when where which

(i) My friend lost his chemistry book. Now he doesn't knowto do and..... To look for it.

(ii) There are so many toys in the shops. Neena can't decide one to buy.

(iii) You don't know the way to my school. Ask the policeman..... To get there.

(iv) You should decide soon to start building your house.

(v) Do you know To ride a bicycle? I don't remember.....and I learnt it.

(iv) "You should know to talk and to keep your mouth shut" the teacher advised Anil

(i) What, Where,

(ii) Which

(iii) how

(iv) When

(v) how, when, where

(vi) when, where

4. Add in-or in-to each of the following words and use them in place of the italicised words in the sentences given below.

Patient proper possible

Sensitive competent

(i) The project appears *very difficult* at first sight but it can be completed if we work very hard.

(ii) He *lacks competence*. That's why he can't keep any job for more than told me.

(iii) "Don't *lose patience*. Your letter will come one day " the postman told me.

(iv) That's *not a proper* remark to make under the circumstances.

(v) He appears to be *with sensitivity*. In fact, he is very emotional.

(i) impossible

(ii) incompetent

(iii) impatient

(iv) improper

(v) insensitive

5. Read the following sentences.

It was *a* cold morning and still glowed in the sky.

An old man was walking along the road .

The words in italicised are articles 'A' and 'An' are **indefinite articles** and 'the' is the **definite article**

'A' is used before a singular countable noun. 'An' is used before a word that begins with a vowel.

. a boy . an actor .a mango

. an apple . a university .an hour

Use a, an or the in the blanks.

There was once Play which became very successful..... famous actor was acting in it. In play his role was that of..... aristocrat who had been imprisoned in castle for twenty years. In last act of play someone would come onstage with Letter which he would hand over to prisoner. Even though Aristocrat was not expected to read letter at each performance, he always insisted that letter be written out from beginning to end.

- i) a (ii) A (iii) the
(iv) an (v) a (vi) the
(vii) The (viii) the (ix) a
(x) the (xi) the (xii) the (xiii) the.

6. Encircle the correct article.

Nina was looking for (a/ the) job , After

Many interviews she got (a/the) jobs he was looking for.

A: Would you like (a/an/the) apple or (a/an/the) apple or (a/an/ the) banana.

B: I'd like (a/an/the) apple, please.

A: Take (a/an/the) red one in (a/an/the) orange also,
If you like.

B: Which one?

A: (A/An/The) one beside (a/an/the) banana.

(A) an, a (B) an (A) the, the, an (B) - (A) The, the.

SPEAKING AND WRITING

1. **Do you remember an anecdote or a story about a greedy or jealous person and the unhappy result of his/her action? Narrate the story to others in your class.**

Here is one for you to read.

Seeing an old man planting a fig tree, the king asked why he was doing this. The man replied did not, his son would enjoy the figs.

"well" said king, "if you do live to eat the fruit of this tree, please let me know". The man promised to do so and sure enough, before too long, the tree grew and bore fruit.

Packing some figs in the basket the old man set out for the palace to meet the king. The king accepted the gift and gave orders that the old man's basket be filled with gold. Now, next door to the old man, there lived a greedy old man jealous of his neighbour's good fortune. He also packed some figs in a basket and took them to the palace in the hope of getting gold.

The king on learning the man's motive, ordered him to stand in the compound and had him pelted with figs. The old man returned home and told his wife the sad story. She consoled him by saying, "you should be thankful that our neighbours didn't grow coconuts".

Do it yourself.

2. Put each of the following in the correct order.

Then use them appropriately to fill in the blanks in the paragraph that follows. Use correct punctuation marks.

- . English and Hind / both /in /he writes
- . and only / a few short stories /many books in English / in hind
- . I s/ my/ Hind /than my English /much better

Ravi Kant is a writer andOf course, he is much happier writing in English than in Hindi. He has written..... I find his books a little hard to understand.....

- (i) he writes both in English and Hind
- (ii) many books in English and only few short stories in Hindi
- (iii) my Hindi is much better than my English.

3. Are you fond of reading stories? Did you read one last month? If not, read one or two and then write a paragraph about the story. Use the following hints.

- . title of the story
- . name of the author
- . how many characters
- . which one you liked
- . some details of the story
- . main point(s) as you understand it.
- . Tell your friends why they should also read it.



Do it yourself.

CHAPTER PRACTICE

VERY SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTION

1. What did the kind farmer do with the money he made from the gold?

The kind farmer bought a piece of land, hosted a feast for his friends and helped his poor neighbours.

2. How did the daimios reward the kind farmer?

The daimio was pleased seeing the magic of the withered cherry tree bursting into a blossom. So he rewarded the kind farmer with many gifts.

3. What did the leader of the van do with the kind old man?

The leader of the van allowed the old man to remain seated at the cherry tree considering him to be very old.

4. Why did the wicked couple drop their tools?

The wicked couple found the foul smell of the dead kitten unbearable so they dropped their tools.

5. How did the wicked couple behave with the dogs passing by their house?

The wicked couple always used to kick and scold the dogs passing by their house.

6. What preparation did the kind old couple make for the New Year?

For the New Year the old couple planned to make rice pastries and bean sauce.

7. How was the wicked farmer punished for his greed?

The wicked farmer was killed brutally by the daimio's men and was thus punished for his greed.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTION

1. How did the kind old couple treat their dog?

The old couple treated the dog as their own child. The old farmer had created a cushion made of blue crepe for the dog. During the meals they used to feed the dog plenty of rice and titbits of fish from their own chopstick.

2. Describe the change the cherry tree underwent after the kind old poured a pinch of ash over it.

It was winter season and the cherry tree in the old couple's garden didn't have leaves. The old man sprinkled a pinch of the ashes and blossoms sprouted out of it. Pink flowers came on it and their fragrance filled the air.

3. How did the dog repay to his masters?

The dog made his masters rich by giving them gold coins. His masters became prosperous with it and bought a piece of land.

He then asked them to collect the ashes which had the power to sprout blossoms of a withered tree. This magic was seen by the daimio and rewarded the old couple for this magic.

4. What happened when the wicked old farmer sprinkled ash over the cherry tree?

When the wicked farmer sprinkled the ash over the cherry tree it didn't bring in a change on it. The fine particles from the ash entered the eyes of daimio and his wife. They began to cough and sneeze. All the lavishness of the procession was spoiled.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Explain three ways in which the dog helped his master.

The dog when he was alive guided his master to a heap of gold. After his death he asked his master to prepare a mortar and a mill from the woods of the pine tree.

While making the rice pastries and bean sauce during the New Year using the mortar and the mill, the kind old couple again found the dough to be turned into gold coins and gold dripping out from every drop of the sauce.

The dog then asked the master to collect the ashes of the mortar and mill and sprinkle over the withered trees. The withered trees sprouted into blossom immediately with the magic.

2. The wicked farmer wanted to be rich like his neighbour. What happened every time when he tried to do so?

First time when the neighbour tried to be rich, all he got was a foul smelling dead kitten. In their second attempt the old couple got heap of worms from the dough of rice pastry and the bean sauce. In the third attempt the old man failed to create magic with the ashes. He spoiled daimio's procession and was killed by his men as a punishment.

VALUE BASED QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think we should be kind towards animals?

Animals are also living beings like us. They can't speak like us but still can feel the love and emotion. Some animal like dog and horse are very faithful to human beings. We should be kind towards them.

It is good to offer our leftover food to the street dogs because they guard our homes. Chapattis should be offered to homeless cows. In winter we should keep bowls of water for the birds. Injured animal like pigeons, cats and dogs should be taken to veterinary doctors by us.

2. One should not be greedy. Why do you think so?

We should feel contented about what we have. We should strive hard to earn things but not be greedy. Our greed makes us to do many things which are not good or ethical.

We should make just demands that can be fulfilled easily and must make our earnings but not be greedy. Our greedy can turn us into corrupt and dishonest human beings and must restrain ourselves from becoming that. Our needs should be limited and our wishes should be in control.

EXTRACT BASED QUESTIONS

EXTRACT 1

Directions (Q.No.1-6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

Then they dragged him out of doors, taking a spade and hoe with them. No sooner had the dog got near a pine tree growing in the garden than he began to paw and scratch the ground, as if a mighty treasure lay beneath.

1. In the above lines who have been referred as 'they'?

The wicked old couple has been referred as 'they' in the above lines.

2. Whom did they drag out of doors?

They dragged the good old couple's dog from the doors.

3. Why they did so?

They did so to find way to the treasure.

4. What lay beneath the ground?

- (a) Gold coins (b) A vast treasure
c) A dead kitten d) None of these

5. Why did they carry spade and hoe with them?

- (a) To kill the dog (b) To dig the Earth
(c) To plough the field (d) To chase the birds
(b) To dig the Earth

6. What follows immediately after this?

- (a) They begin to dig the ground (b) They killed the dog
(c) They found a cast the birds (d) They ran away with fear
(b) They killed the dog.

EXTRACT 2

Directions (Q.Nos.1-6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

"Goody me ! ' cried the old hag, as she saw each dripping of sauce turning into yellow gold, until in a few minutes the tub under the mill was full of shining mass of gold. So the old couple was rich again

1. Who has been referred as 'old hag' in the above lines?

The wicked old man's wife has been referred as 'old hag' in the above lines.

2. From where was she watching the above incident?

She was peeing from the window to watch the incident.

3. each dripping of sauce.... Which sauce been referred here?

Bean sauce has been referred in above lines.

4. At what time during the year the above incidence is taking place?

- (a) Summer (b) Winter (c) New Year (d) Both 'b' and 'c'
(d) Both 'b' 'c'

5. Find a word from the given lines that means 'which'

- (a) Drip (b) Hag (c) Wicked (d) None of these
(b) Hag

6. What is the process that is taking place in the above lines?

- (a) Baking of pastry (b) Preparing of dough
(c) Boiling of rice (d) Making of bean sauce
(d) making of bean sauce.

EXTRACT 3

Directions (Q.Nos. 1-6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

He sprinkled a pinch of ashes on it, and lo! It sprouted blossoms until it became a cloud of pink blooms which perfumed the air. The news see the wonder. The covetous also heard the story and gathering up the ashes....

1. Who has been referred as 'he' in the above lines?

The kind old farmer has been referred in these lines as 'he'

2. 'It' sprouted blossoms. What has been referred as 'it' in the given lines?

The cherry tree has been referred as 'it' in the given lines.

3. What is the wonder that has been referred to in the given lines?

The withered bare cherry tree has been transformed into a blossom with the ashes of mill and mortar sprinkled over it. This wonder has been referred in the given lines.

4. In the given lines what has been burnt down to form the ashes?

- (a) The dog (b) The pine tree (c) The cherry tree (d) The mortar and the mill
(d) The mortar and the mill

5. Find synonym of 'jealous' from the given lines.

- (a) Pinch (b) Sprinkled (c) Blooms (d) Envious
d) Envious

6. Find word from the given lines that means 'flower'

- (a) Blossom (b) Bloom (c) Sprouted (d) Sprinkled
(b) Bloom .
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