

The Tale of Melon City

Introduction

The poem "The Tale of a Melon City" narrates how the city found its new King, a melon. The story unfolds as their King orders to have an arch built which turned out to be too low. It hit the King's head resulting in the falling off of his crown. The King considers it a disgrace and orders for the chief of builders to be hanged. It is then followed by a series of events where they blame each other. Finally, a noose is built to determine the guilty and the only one to fit the noose, is the just and placid King. The new King is then elected by the first person to pass that arch. The poem begins with a description about the King who ordered an arch to be built. When he rode down that arch, it hit his head and his crown fell down. It was because it was built too low. The King thought it was dishonorable and thus commanded the chief of builders to be hanged. The chief of builders put the blame on the workmen who in turn, blamed the bricks. The King orders for the execution of the mason who put the blame on the architect. The architect is brought to the Royal Court and indirectly blames the King for the wrongly constructed arch. The placid King now grows angry and demands for the wisest man in the country to be brought to the Royal Court. They brought the wisest man, who was so old that he could neither see nor walk. According to him, the arch must be hanged. When the arch is supposed to be executed, one of the ministers argue that it would be a shame to punish something that had touched their mighty King's head. Everyone, along with the King, agreed. The crowd grew restless and the King promised them a hanging. Therefore, a noose was set-up and the one to fit it would be hanged. All were measured one by one but the only one to fit was the King. The ministers heaved a sigh of relief upon finding someone to execute. Thus, as a result of the customary choice, the next to pass the City gate would choose the new King and the next to pass it was an idiot who wanted a melon to be their King. The melon was given the throne with due ceremony and the town lived happily ever after without any interruption or interference.

Word Meaning

Just- based on or behaving according to what is morally right and fair

Placid- calm

Proclaimed- announce officially or publicly.

Arch- a curved symmetrical structure spanning an opening and typically supporting the weight of a bridge, roof, or wall above it.

Triumphally- Celebrating or commemorating a victory

Span- Celebrating or commemorating a victory

Thoroughfare- a main road in a town

Edify- instruct or improve (someone) morally or intellectually

Spectators- onlookers

Frown- a facial expression indicating disapproval, displeasure, or concentration, characterized by a furrowing of one's brows.

Gallows- a structure, typically of two uprights and a crosspiece, for the hanging of criminals

Summon- order someone to be present

Masons- a person skilled in cutting, dressing, and laying stone in buildings

Quivering- trembling or shaking with a slight rapid motion

Architect- a person who designs buildings and in many cases also supervises their construction

Q1. RTC

**A. True, mused the King. By now the crowd,
Restless, was muttering aloud.
The King perceived their mood and trembled
And said to all who were assembled –
‘Let us postpone consideration
Of finer points like guilt. The nation
Wants a hanging. Hanged must be
Someone, and that immediately.’
The noose was set up somewhat high.
Each man was measured by and by.**

1 What did the crowd want?

- A) To hang the king
- B) To hang the Architect
- C) To hang the ministers
- D) To hang someone

Ans. D) To hang someone

2 Who was to be hanged according to the royal decree?

- A) One who built the arch
- B) One who fits in the noose
- C) One who provoked the crowd
- D) One who made the crowd wait

Ans. B) One who fits in the noose

3 What does the word ‘Noose’ mean?

- A) A loop formed in a rope.
- B) A Huge pit
- C) An open manhole
- D) A ditch

Ans. A) A loop formed in a rope.

4 Which part of speech does the word ‘Aloud’ belong to?

- A) Verb
- B) Adjective
- C) Pronoun
- D) Adverb

Ans. D) Adverb

**B. *He could not walk and could not see,
So old (and therefore wise) was he-
But in a quavering voice he said,
‘The culprit must be punished.
Truly, the arch it was that banged
The crown is off, and it must be hanged’.
To the scaffold the arch was led When suddenly a Councillor said –
‘How can we hang so shamefully? What touched your head, Your Majesty?’***

1 Who is ‘He’ in the first line?

- A) The King
- B) Architect

C) The wisest man of the town

D) Mason

Ans. C) The wisest man of the town

2 What did the oldest man advise?

A) To hang the king

B) To hang the mason

C) To hang the arch

D) To hang the subjects

Ans. C) To hang the arch

3 Who has been referred to as 'Your Majesty'?

A) The King

B) Architect

C) The wisest man of the town

D) Mason

Ans. A) The King

4 What was ironic about the decision made by the wisest man?

A) Though wisest yet he gave the worst advice

B) Though wisest yet he gave the best advice

C) Though wisest yet he gave better advice

D) None of these

Ans. A) Though wisest yet he gave the worst advice