

11th Standard- English

The Tale of Melon City Summary

Once there was a just and gentle king who ruled over a country. The king announced publicly that a curved structure should be built which should extend across the major public road in a victorious manner to benefit the beholders spiritually.

Obeying the king's orders, the workmen went there and built the arch. The king rode down the thoroughfare to enlighten the spectators. Since the arch was built too low, the king lost his crown under the arch. The eyebrows of the gentle king were knit in displeasure. He called it a disgrace and declared that the chief of builders would be hanged.

The rope and gallows were arranged and the chief of builders was led out. As he passed the king, he shouted, "O king, it was the workmen's fault." The king stopped the proceedings and Ordered that all the workmen be hanged instead. The workmen looked surprised and said to the king that he had not realized that the bricks were made of the wrong size.

The king ordered that the masons be called there. The masons were brought there. They stood trembling with fear. They now blamed the architect. The architect was called. The king ordered that the architect was to be hanged. The architect reminded the king that he had made certain improvements in the plans when he showed them to the king. On hearing this, the king became very angry and was unable to act calmly.

Being a just and gentle king, he observed that it was a very difficult business and he needed some advice. He ordered that the wisest man in the country be brought there. The wisest man was found and brought to the Royal Court. He was so old that he could not walk or see. So he had to be carried there. He said in a trembling voice that the culprit must be punished. It was the arch that had hit the crown off, so it must be hanged. The arch was then taken to the scaffold. Then a councillor observed how they could hang something that had touched the head of the king.

The king thought carefully and said it was true. However, by now the crowd became restless and was muttering aloud. The king noticed their mood and trembled. He asked the people who had assembled there to postpone deliberation over finer points like guilt. Since the nation wants a hanging, someone must be hanged and that too immediately.

The noose was setup somewhat high. Each man was measured by and by. Only one man was tall enough to fit it. That man was the king. So he was hanged by the Royal ordinance. The ministers felt satisfied that they had found someone to be hanged. Otherwise the unruly town might have rebelled against the king. They shouted "Long live the king!"

Since the king was dead, the practical minded ministers sent messengers to declare in the name of His (former) Majesty that the next to pass the City Gate would choose the ruler of their state. It was their custom and it would be observed with proper respect. An idiot passed by the City Gate. The guards asked him to decide: "Who is to be the King?" The idiot replied "a melon" because it was his standard answer to all questions.

The ministers crowned a melon as their king. Then they led (carried) the Melon to the throne and set it down there with proper respect. When asked how their king happens to be a melon, the people would reply that it was on account of customary choice. If the king felt happy in being a melon, it was all right for them. They would not question him taking any shape as long as he left them in peace and liberty and allowed them to carry on their private business without government control.

