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Class 11 English (Snapshot) Notes

THE TALE OF MELON CITY





Key Notes and Important Questions with Answers

8. The Tale of Melon City

-Vikram Seth

An aware and participatory citizenry is the key to a successful governance. A disinterested public does not ensure a welfare state . Peace, freedom and liberty exist for a public if a king is just and placid. A reasonable and a rational king serves best the interests of the public. Also, the presence of opportunist ministers harms the public interest.

A. Short Answer Type Questions (30 to 40 words)

Q.1. What kind of king was the one who ruled over the state? What did he proclaim?

Ans. The kind of the state was just and placid. For the welfare of the workers he proclaimed that an arch should be built up which would extend across the major thoroughfare.

Q.2. Why did the king ride down the thoroughfare and what was the result?

Ans. The king rode down the thoroughfare to edify the spectators there. Since the arch was built too low, the lost his crown under it. He felt himself disgraced.

Q.3. How was the new ruler of the state selected?

Ans. After the king the ministers sent the messengers to proclaim that the next man to pass the city gate would choose the ruler of their state. An idiot happened to pass the gate. His standard answer to all the questions was 'A Melon'. So when he was asked to decide about who will be the king, he replied 'A Melon' Ministers declared that a melon would be their new ruler.

1. What proclamation did the king make? Why?
2. How did the chief builder, workmen and masons pass the blame onto each other?
3. How did the king react to the explanation given by the architect?
4. What was the criterion for the choice of "the wisest man." What was his verdict?
5. Who was ultimately hanged? Why?
6. Do you think the king was really 'just and placid'? Why/Why not?
7. What message does the poet give through the use of irony and humour in the poem?
8. Describe the custom of the city to choose the king.
9. The poem portrays the principles of 'laissez faire'. Discuss.
10. Why was the wisest man called by the king?
11. How did the choice of the person 'to be hanged' become ironical for the king?
12. Why was the melon crowned as the next king?

B. Long Answer Type Questions (120 words)

1. Why was the arch blamed at the first instance? Who was ultimately punished?
2. The poem is full of humour and irony. Cite examples.

   How has the poet made fun of the system of governance by using the phrase 'just and placid' for the king?