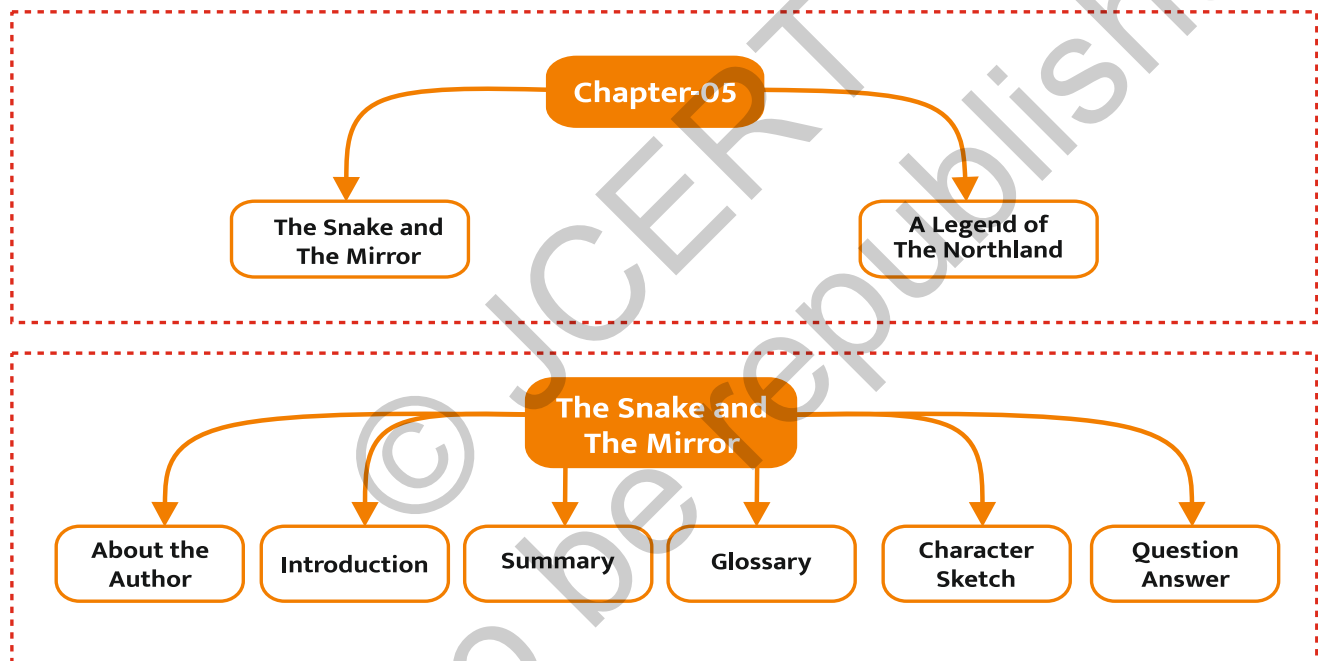
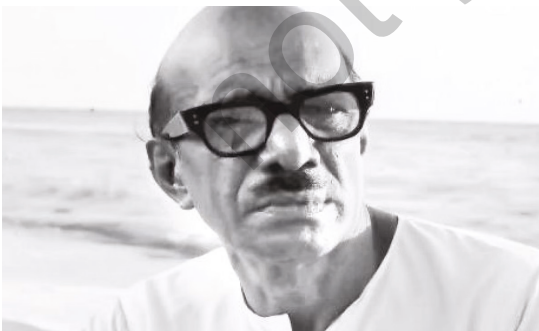


The Snake And The Mirror



About the author:



Vaikom Muhammad Basheer (21 January 1908 – 5 July 1994) was a writer of Malayalam literature. He was a writer, humanist, freedom fighter, novelist and short story writer, noted for his path-breaking, down-to-earth style of writing that made him equally

popular among literary critics as well as the common man. He was popularly referred to as Beypore Sulthan. His notable works include Balyakalasakhi, Shabdangal, Pathummayude Aadu, Ntuppuppakkoranendarnnu, Mathilukal, Janmadinam and Anargha Nimisham and the translations of his works into other languages have earned him worldwide acclaim. The Government of India awarded him the fourth highest Civilian honor of the Padma Shri in 1982. He was also a recipient of the Sahitya Academy Fellowship, Kerala Sahitya Academy Fellowship, and the Kerala State Film Award for Best Story. He was a recipient of the Vallathol Award in 1993.

Introduction:

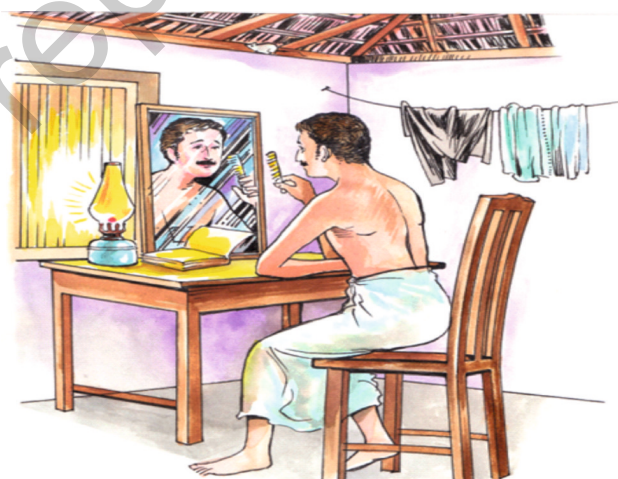
The story written in frame narrative style i.e., is a narrative within the narrative. The writer tells us the story which was told to him by a homeopathic doctor. As we see from the title the snake and the mirror are the two most important things in the story. This homeopathic doctor encountered a snake, the snake fell on the doctor. When the snake saw its reflection in the mirror, it was more interested in that and the doctor's life was saved.

Summary:

It tells the tale of a snake encounter with a homeopathic physician. The doctor resided in a tiny rental space

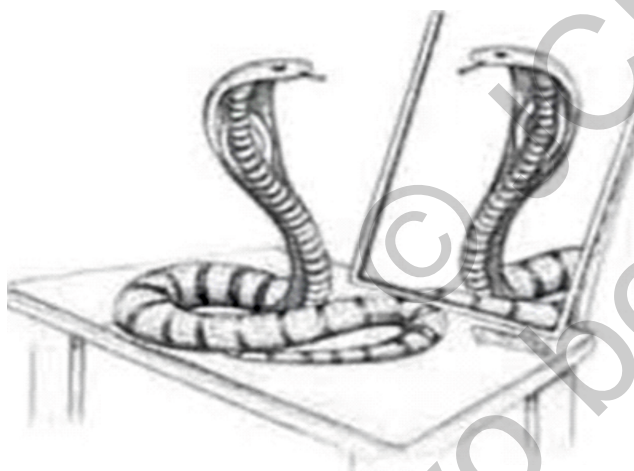
that served as an outhouse. It had a tiled roof and two windows. There was no power in the chamber, and the gables that supported the tiles leaned on the beam. Rats had taken over the area.

The doctor left the restaurant after eating dinner one hot summer night and went home. He opened the two windows, removed his coat and shirt, and lighted the kerosene lamp. He sat down in the chair and opened a medical book. There was a large mirror on the table on which stood a lamp. Since it was too hot to sleep, and he had nothing better to do, he sat down in front of the mirror, admiring himself, planning to improve his appearance as he was an eligible bachelor.



His attention gradually turned from self-adulation to preparations for his upcoming marriage. In order to prevent her from running after him, he planned to wed a wealthy doctor with a successful practice and chose a large woman as his wife.

He did not give the sudden silence any thought because he was so caught up in his daydream. The rodents had ceased scurrying, and something was heard dropping behind him. But he took a while to respond. A snake had climbed over the chair's back and onto his shoulders by the time he turned around to take a look. Above the elbow, it wound itself around his left arm. The hood of the venomous cobra extended just three inches from his face. The doctor was frozen in place, unable to move for fear of being bitten by the snake. If the snake did bite him, he wondered if any of the medications he carried would be able to save him.



He became aware of God throughout this period of death terror. Because of his excessive pride and haughtiness, God had penalized him. He understood that he was just a regular person, a poor man, and had nothing to be proud of.

The snake crawled off and perched on the table in front of the mirror the

instant he realised how valuable he truly was. Silently getting to his feet, the doctor hurried out the door. All of his possessions had been stolen when he returned the following morning, save for his filthy vest, which was too filthy for the burglar to touch.

पाठ का सारांश

यह एक होम्योपैथिक चिकित्सक के साथ सांप के मुठभेड़ की कहानी बताता है। डॉक्टर एक छोटे से किराये की जगह में रहता था जो एक आउटहाउस के रूप में काम करता था। इसकी एक टाइल वाली छत और दो खिड़कियां थीं। कक्ष में कोई शक्ति नहीं थी, और टाइलों का समर्थन करने वाले गैबल्स बीम पर झुक गए थे। चूहों ने क्षेत्र पर कब्जा कर लिया था।

डॉक्टर एक भीषण गर्मी की रात खाना खाकर रेस्टोरेंट से निकल गए और घर चले गए। उसने दो खिड़कियाँ खोलीं, अपना कोट और कमीज उतारी और मिट्टी के तेल का दीपक जलाया। वह कुर्सी पर बैठ गया और एक मेडिकल किताब खोली। मेज पर एक बड़ा सा शीशा था जिस पर एक दीया खड़ा था। चूंकि यह सोने के लिए बहुत गर्म था, और उसके पास करने के लिए कुछ भी बेहतर नहीं था, वह आईने के सामने बैठ गया, खुद को निहार रहा था, अपनी उपस्थिति में सुधार करने की योजना बना रहा था क्योंकि वह एक योग्य कुंवारा था। उनका ध्यान धीरे-धीरे आत्ममुग्धता से हटकर अपने आगामी विवाह की तैयारियों की ओर गया। उसे अपने पीछे

भागने से रोकने के लिए, उसने एक सफल चिकित्सक के साथ एक सफल चिकित्सक से शादी करने की योजना बनाई और एक बड़ी महिला को अपनी पत्नी के रूप में चुना।

उसने अचानक मौन को कोई विचार नहीं दिया क्योंकि वह अपने दिवास्वप्न में इतना फंस गया था। कृन्तकों ने भागना बंद कर दिया था, और उसके पीछे कुछ गिरते हुए सुना गया था। लेकिन उन्होंने जवाब देने में थोड़ा समय लिया। जब तक वह देखने के लिए मुड़ा एक सांप कुर्सी की पीठ पर और उसके कंधों पर चढ़ गया था। कोहनी के ऊपर, यह उसकी बायीं भुजा के चारों ओर घाव कर चुका था। जहरीले कोबरा का फन उसके चेहरे से सिर्फ तीन इंच दूर था। डॉक्टर जगह-जगह जमे हुए थे, सांप के काटे जाने के डर से हिल भी नहीं पा रहे थे। अगर सांप ने उसे काट लिया, तो उसने सोचा कि क्या उसके द्वारा ली गई कोई भी दवा उसे बचा पाएगी।

वह मौत के आतंक की इस अवधि के दौरान भगवान के बारे में जागरूक हो गया। उसके अत्यधिक अभिमान और अहंकार के कारण, भगवान ने उसे दंडित किया था। वह समझ गया था कि वह सिर्फ एक नियमित व्यक्ति था, एक गरीब आदमी था, और उसके पास गर्व करने के लिए कुछ भी नहीं था।

सांप रेंग-रेंग कर आईने के सामने मेज पर बैठ गया, जैसे ही उसने महसूस किया कि वह वास्तव में कितना मूल्यवान है। चुपचाप अपने पैरों पर खड़े होकर, डॉक्टर ने जल्दी से बाहर निकाला दरवाजा। अगली सुबह जब

वह लौटा, तो उसकी सारी संपत्ति चोरी हो गई थी, उसकी बनियान इतना गंदा था कि चोर छू भी नहीं सकता था और इसलिए वह उसे छोड़ देता है।

Glossary:

[PAGE 46) :

Coil = wind = लपेटना ;

full-blooded = frightening = डरावना ;

homeopath = a kind of doctor = होम्योपैथी का डॉक्टर ;

attentively = with attention = ध्यान से ;

meal = food = भोजन ; familiar = known = परिचित ;

share = lived together = साथ रहना ;

kerosene = paraffin oil = मिट्टी का तेल ;

rented = hired = किराए का ;

earnings = income = आमदनी ;

meagre = small = तुच्छ ;

possessed = had = रखता था ;

solitary = only = एक मात्र अकेला ;

vest = undergarment = बनियान ;

facing = in front of = के सामने ;

yard = open space at the front Of back of the house = आंगन ;

supporting = giving the support = सहारा देने वाले ;

gable = three cornered part of a wall below the sloping roof = ढलान वाली छत

के नीचे तीन कोनों वाली दीवार का भाग ;
beam = rafter = शहतीर ; close = near
= नजदीक ।

[PAGE 47] :

Taken time off = on leave = छुट्टी पर ;
beneath = under = नीचे ;
beside = near = पास ; tempted =
inclined = प्रेरित हुआ ;
admirer = one who praises = प्रशंसक ;
handsome = good looking = सुंदर ;
adjusted = set = व्यवस्थित किया ;
parting = division = भाग ;
moustache = hair on the upper lip =
मूँछ ;
attractive = charming = आकर्षक ; earth
shaking = important = महत्वपूर्ण ;
bachelor = unmarried = कुंवारा ;
paced = walked = चहलकदमी की ;
up and down = from one side to the
other = इधर –उधर ;
plenty = much = काफी ; valid = proper
= उचित ;
silly = foolish = मूर्ख ;
resumed = took again = फिर से लिया ;
dull thud = heavy sound = भारी आवाज़ ;
wiggled = made a sharp movement =
बलखाते हुए आया ।

[PAGE 48] :

Landed = came = आया ;
simultaneous = at the same time =
साथ — साथ ; tremble = shiver = कांपना ;

slither = slip = फिसलना ;
hood = the spread head of the snake
= फन ;
merely = only = केवल ;
image = statue = मूर्ति ;
drained of = without = के बिना ;
flesh = flesh = माँस ;
lead = made of lead = दर्पण का ;
molten = turned to liquid with fire =
पिघला हुआ ;
crushing = pressing hard = कुचलना ;
lurked = hidden = छिपा हुआ ;
struck = attacked = प्रहार किया ;
feebly = weakly = कमजोरी से ;
stupid = foolish = मूर्ख ;
appreciated = valued = तारीफ करना,
अच्छा समझना ;
reflection = image = प्रतिबिंब ;
admiring = praising = प्रशंसा करना ;
mascara = an item of cosmetics = एक
सौंदर्य प्रसाधन ;
vermilion = red lead = सिंदूर ।

[PAGE 49] :

unwound = uncoiled = अलग किया ;
slithered = slid = फिसला ;
crept = crawled =
रेंगने लगा ;
granite = stone = पत्थर ;
veranda = veranda = बरामदा ; leapt =
jumped = कूदा ;
for all I was worth = with all my force =

पूरी ताकत से ;

willed = desired = इच्छा की ;

reedy = very thin = बहुत पतला ; sprinter
= racer = धावक ;

smeared = applied = मला ;

rascal = rogue = धूर्त ;

rinse = wash = धोना ।

Character Sketch:

The Doctor:

In the story "The Snake and the Mirror," the homeopathic doctor has been portrayed as a person who can assess himself critically and humorously. He honestly admits that as a new practitioner of medicine, he could not earn much and had to rent a poor, rat-infested house without even the facility of electricity. He also admits with a funny intent that he wanted to marry a fat and rich lady-doctor as it would help him run away without getting caught when he would make some silly mistake. This witty side of the doctor is seen again at the end of the story when he remarks that the thief did not take away his dirty vest because he had a sense of cleanliness.

The doctor was quite vain about his appearance and his qualification. He often admired his reflection in the mirror and thought of ways to look more handsome. He was a bachelor

and wanted to look handsome. However, his ability to admit his follies helped him to realise that to be alive was more important than to look good. His arrogance turned into modesty after his encounter with the snake. In addition, he had admirable patience and presence of mind. When the snake landed on him, he did not jump or cry. Keeping his cool, he remembered God and actively thought about the medicine he would require in case the snake bit him. He also made the most of the opportunity when the snake was absorbed in its reflection in the mirror. Thus, the doctor is a candid person, a witty man, and an interesting character who relates his encounter with the snake in a lighter vein.

MCQ Questions:

1. While looking at the mirror, the doctor smiled, and he found his smile
 - (a) Unattractive
 - (b) Attractive
 - (c) Wide
 - (d) Ugly

Answer: (b) Attractive
2. The doctor described the snake as the one
 - (a) Very poisonous
 - (b) Taken with its own beauty

- (c) Thick and ugly
- (d) That had bitten the thief

Answer: (b) Taken with its own beauty

3. According to the doctor, the thief had a sense of
- (a) Good clothes
 - (b) Cleanliness
 - (c) Logic
 - (d) None of the above

Answer: (b) Cleanliness

4. Why did the doctor have very little things to carry?
- (a) Because the storm destroyed most of the things
 - (b) He was too poor to have many things
 - (c) The room was too small to keep a lot of things
 - (d) Some thief had stolen most of the things

Answer: (d) Some thief had stolen most of the things

5. What did the doctor do immediately after reaching his friend's house?
- (a) Smeared oil all over his body and took a bath
 - (b) Drank a glass of water
 - (c) Took medicines
 - (d) Narrated the incident of the snake

Answer: (a) Smeared oil all over his body and took a bath

6. How did the doctor's wife actually look like?
- (a) Thin
 - (b) Fat
 - (c) Short
 - (d) None of the above

Answer: (a) Thin

7. After the snake moved towards the mirror, the doctor was
- (a) A stone in a flesh
 - (b) A man of flesh and blood
 - (c) A crying man
 - (d) A paralyzed man

Answer: (b) A man of flesh and blood

8. From the doctor's arm, the snake slithered into his
- (a) Leg
 - (b) Lap
 - (c) Head
 - (d) Back

Answer: (b) Lap

9. The snake looked at the mirror. Seeing that, the doctor wandered
- (a) If the snake was admiring its own beauty
 - (b) If it's going to bite him

(c) If it's going to make a noise

(d) If it's going to smile

Answer: (a) If the snake was admiring its own beauty

10. While sitting wrapped around by a snake, the doctor felt

(a) The presence of God

(b) The presence of the ghost

(c) The presence of rats

(d) The presence of devils

Answer: (a) The presence of God

11. The doctor turned to

(a) Stone (b) Ghost

(c) Snake (d) Devil

Answer: (a) Stone

12. What did the snake do after landing on the doctor's shoulder?

(a) Coiled around his left arm above the elbow

(b) Coiled around his right arm above the elbow

(c) Coiled around his neck

(d) Coiled around his head

Answer: (a) Coiled around his left arm above the elbow

13. Suddenly, the doctor heard a dull sound that resembled

(a) Sound of frogs

(b) Rubber tube falling on the

ground

(c) An opening of a box

(d) Hails falling on the roof

Answer: (b) Rubber tube falling on the ground

14. Whom did the doctor want to marry?

(a) A scientist

(b) A teacher

(c) A woman doctor

(d) A singer

Answer: (c) A woman doctor

15. The doctor believed in making himself

(a) Thinner

(b) Honest

(c) Hardworking

(d) Handsome

Answer: (d) Handsome

16. What was the change in the doctor's thoughts?

(a) from a valuable man to a helpless, foolish man

(b) from a poor to rich man

(c) from a frown to smile

(d) from no moustache to moustache

Answer: (a) from a valuable man to a helpless, foolish man

17. was the doctor's life saved?

- (a) because of the mirror
- (b) because of rats
- (c) because of his dirty vest
- (d) because of his wife

Answer: (a) because of the mirror

18. Why did the doctor smile at himself?

- (a) for looking into the mirror
- (b) for his smart looks
- (c) for his helplessness and foolishness
- (d) none

Answer: (c) for his helplessness and foolishness

19. What words did the doctor think of writing in his imagination?

- (a) save (b) smart
- (c) look (d) O God

Answer: (d) O God

20. Why did the doctor decide to always smile?

- (a) to attract customers
- (b) to attract people
- (c) to look more handsome
- (d) none

Answer: (c) to look more handsome

21. Who told this story to the writer?

- (a) His granny
- (b) his mother
- (c) his father
- (d) homeopath doctor

Answer: (d) a homeopath doctor

22. How many times did the doctor hear the sound of rats?

- (a) once
- (b) twice
- (c) thrice
- (d) four times

Answer: (c) thrice

23. What was the regular traffic referred to?

- (a) the sound of vehicles
- (b) too many people coming and going
- (c) traffic of rats roaming here and there
- (d) none

Answer: (c) traffic of rats roaming here and there

24. Why did he decide to always smile?

- (a) he could hide his inner feelings
- (b) because he thought that smiling made him look smart

- (c) he could attract people
- (d) all

Answer: (b) because he thought that smiling made him look smart

25. What was the plight of the doctor when he noticed a snake around his arm?

- (a) like a stone image in the flesh
- (b) frightened
- (c) screaming
- (d) smiling

Answer: (a) like a stone image in the flesh

26. What kind of a woman does he want to get married to?

- (a) a fat, rich doctor
- (b) a beautiful woman
- (c) a slim woman
- (d) none

Answer: (a) a fat, rich doctor

27. What is this story about?

- (a) about a frightening incident which is narrated in a humorous manner
- (b) about a doctor's plight
- (c) a foolish doctor
- (d) about rats

Answer: (a) about a frightening incident which is narrated in a humorous manner

28. Which two important decisions did the doctor take?

- (a) to shave daily and always smile
- (b) not to give medicines
- (c) to leave the room
- (d) to kill the rats

Answer: (a) to shave daily and always smile

29. What kind of a sound did the doctor hear?

- (a) music
- (b) hissing sound
- (c) sound of rats
- (d) none

Answer: (c) sound of rats

30. What does the word meager in the lesson mean?

- (a) big
- (b) huge
- (c) very little
- (d) small

Answer: (c) very little

Thinking about the Text:

(Page 60)

1. "The sound was a familiar one." What sound did the doctor hear? What did he think it was? How many times did he hear it? (Find

the places in the text.) When and why did the sounds stop?

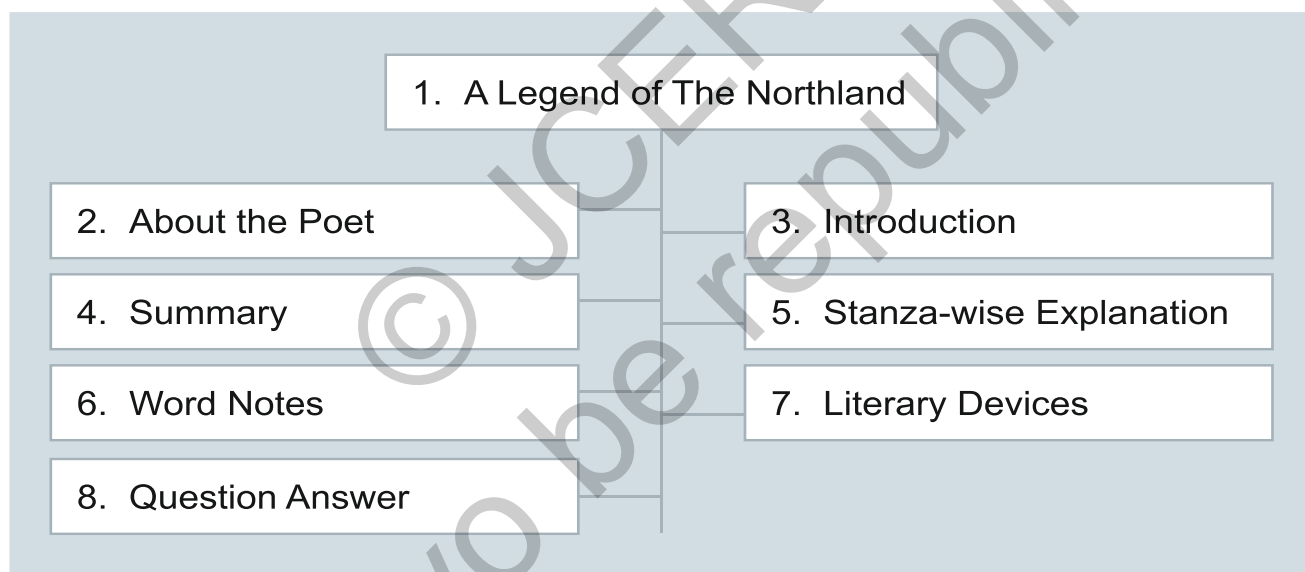
Answer: The doctor heard the sound of rats. The sound was a familiar one. He heard this sound four times. The phrases are ‘Again I heard that sound from above’, ‘Again came that noise from above’, ‘Suddenly there came a dull thud as if a rubber tube has fallen’. The sounds stopped after the appearance of the snake.

2. What two “important” and “earth-shaking” decisions did the doctor take while he was looking into the mirror?

Answer: The doctor took the following two ‘important’ and ‘earth shaking’ decisions:

- (a) He would shave daily and grow a thin moustache to look more handsome.
- (b) He would always keep that attractive smile on his face.

A Legend of the Northland



About the Poet



(Phoebe Cary)

American poet Phoebe Cary was born in 1824 and grew up on a farm near Cincinnati, Ohio, in an area later immortalized by her sister Alice's Clovernook stories. They published their book, *Poems of Alice and Phoebe Cary*. After this literary debut, the sisters moved to New York City, where they became central figures in the

East Coast literary milieu, contributed regularly to national periodicals, and hosted a famous salon on Sunday evenings. They were also active in the early days of the women's rights movement, with Phoebe Cary serving as an assistant editor for Susan B. Anthony's newspaper *The Revolution*. Cary published two volumes of poetry, *Poems and Parodies* (1854) and *Poems of Faith, Hope and Love* (1868). Sick with malaria and grieving her sister's recent death, Phoebe Cary died in 1871.

Introduction

This poem is a legend about an old lady who angered Saint Peter because of her greed. The poem is simple but teaches us a moral lesson that we should not be greedy. We must help the poor and hungry people. Humanity is above all. It is the only quality that differentiates us from the animals. So, we should be compassionate towards those who genuinely need our help. Only then can we become a perfect human being. By not giving food to hungry Peter, the old lady provokes his anger who punishes her by turning her into a woodpecker.

Summary

As a human, the little woman wore a red cap. When she was converted into a woodpecker, only her red cap remained

and all her clothes had burned. In other words, the woodpecker has a red head but the rest of its body is black. The poet then says that since then, every schoolboy has seen the woodpecker i.e. the little woman in the forest. She had denied offering a piece of cake to a helpless, hungry human being. She had to face the consequences for her insensitivity, inhuman behaviour by roaming for food in the forests for the rest of her life. She still lives there digging into the dry and hard wood to look for food.

In this poem, the poetess tells us a story of the Northland. At that time Saint Peter lived on the earth. He used to go round the world to preach to people whom he met on the way. One day, he came to the door of a cottage where a little woman was making cakes and baking them on the hearth. Saint Peter had eaten nothing the whole day. So, he was fainting with hunger.

He asked the lady to give him a piece of cake. The woman was greedy and selfish. Giving something to anyone was a very difficult task for her. The cake that she was baking appeared to be too big. So she made a small cake for the hungry saint. But that also appeared to be too big to give away. So she made another one which was smaller even than the first. But when it was ready, it appeared to be big so she did not give him that also. Then she took an extremely little scrap of dough and rolled it flat.

She had it as thin as a wafer but she was too greedy to part with even this cake and put it on the shelf. This angered Saint Peter a lot. He told the greedy lady that she was not fit to live in the world in human form and enjoy food and shelter and warmth of fire. He cursed her and transformed her into a woodpecker who has to bore in the dry wood hard to get its scanty food. She can be seen in the woods where she still lives and keeps boring trees for her food all day.

Stanza-wise Explanation:

1. Stanza 1 and Stanza 2

“Away Away, away in the North Land In their funny, furry clothes.”

In the first two stanzas of the poem, the poet describes the place where the story had originated. The story originated in the cold region of Northland where the days are short and nights are very long in winter. The people of the Northland couldn't sleep at night due to extreme cold conditions. When the snow falls in Northland, the people living there tie their beautiful reindeers to sledges to travel. The children wear warm, furry clothes that make them look like bear cubs.



2. Stanza 3 and Stanza 4

“They tell them a curious story Just as he did, you know.”

The third and fourth stanzas of the poem tell us that in Northland, parents narrate their children a story. The poet does not think that the story is true but still tells the tale. The poet believes that it contains an important lesson which we all must learn. The poet then begins the tale. Once, Saint Peter lived on Earth as a human. He traveled the world teaching about God.

3. Stanza 5 and Stanza 6

“He came to the door of a cottage, To give him a single one.”



In the fifth and sixth stanzas of the poem, while traveling around the world, Saint Peter came to a cottage door. In the cottage, a little woman was baking cakes in the fireplace. Saint Peter had been fasting for the whole day and he was very hungry and tired. The day was almost over. So, Saint Peter asked the woman to give him a cake from her store of cakes.

4. Stanza 7 and Stanza 8

**“So she made a very little cake,
As large as the first had done.”**

In the seventh and eighth stanzas of the poem, the woman started baking cake for Saint Peter but before she could give it to him, she felt that it was too big to give away. So, the woman went to make another small cake but when she turned it over, the cake looked as big as the first one.

5. Stanza 9 and Stanza 10

**“Then she took a tiny scrap of
dough, So she put them on
the shelf.”**

In the ninth and tenth stanzas of the poem, the woman took a small piece of dough and rolled it as thin as she could. The cake baked from it was as thin as a wafer but the woman could not give that also to Saint Peter. She said that her cakes seemed too small when she would eat them. However,

those cakes became too large to give away for free. Consequently, she put all the cakes on the shelf and did not give any cake to Saint Peter.

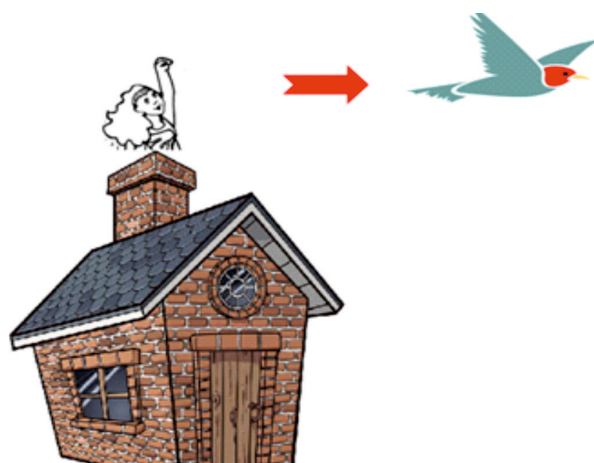
6. Stanza 11 and Stanza 12

**“Then good Saint Peter grew angry,
..... And fire to keep you warm.”**

In the eleventh and twelfth stanzas of the poem, the selfish behaviour of the woman made Saint Peter angry. He was very tired and hungry. It is not easy for a compassionate and kind saint like Saint Peter to become angry but the actions of the woman had been able to do so. Hence, Saint Peter told her that she was very selfish. She did not deserve to be a human being and live a comfortable life with good food to eat, a house to live in with fire to keep her warm.

7. Stanza 13 and Stanza 14

**“Now, you shall build as the birds
do, For she was changed to a
bird.”**



has now changed into a woodpecker.

8. Stanza 15 and Stanza 16

**“She had a scarlet cap on her head,
..... Boring and boring for food.”**

As a human, the little woman wore a red cap. When she was converted into a woodpecker, only her red cap remained and all her clothes had burned. In other words, the woodpecker has a red head but the rest of its body is black. The poet then says that since then, every schoolboy has seen the woodpecker i.e. the little woman in the forest. She had denied offering a piece of cake to a helpless, hungry human being. She had to face the consequences for her insensitivity, inhuman behaviour by roaming for food in the forests for the rest of her life. She still lives there digging into the dry and hard wood to look for food.



Word Notes:

Ballad: A ballad is a song narrating a story in short stanzas. Ballads are a part of folk culture or popular culture and are passed on orally from one generation to the next. ‘A Legend of the Northland’ is a ballad.

Sledges: a vehicle on runners for conveying loads or passengers over snow or ice, often pulled by draught animals.

To harness means to tie the reindeers with a rope to a sledge so that it can be used for transportation.



Swift: something which runs very fast

Curious: strange

Saint Peter: an apostle of Christ, a disciple or follower of Jesus Christ

Preaching: to give a religious talk

hearth: fire place where you do cooking

faint: to be weak, famished, kneaded –

to make dough from flour.

scrap: small amount

provoke: cause to get angry

dwelt: to live

scanty: very little

boring: make a hole in something with a tool or by digging.

scarlet: brilliant red colour

country: belonging to the countryside i.e. rural areas

Literary Devices:

1. **Rhyme Scheme:** abcb
2. **Alliteration:** the repetition of a consonant sound in two or more close words. that, they, them through- "th" sound is repeating; look, like-'l' sound is repeating etc..

3. **Repetition:** Any word or sentence is repeated to lay emphasis on it.

Stanza 1-away" word is repeated

Stanza 9-'rolled' word is repeated

Stanza 13, 16-"boring" word is repeated

4. **Enjambment:** Running lines of poetry from one to the next without using any kind of punctuation to indicate a stop

Stanza 1-line 3 and 4

Stanza 2-Line 1 and 2: line 3 and 4 etc

5. **Simile:** Comparison using 'as' or 'like'

Stanza 2-"the children look like bear's cubs"; Children compared to bear's cubs

Stanza 9- "baked it thin as a wafer"; Cake is compared to a wafer

MCQ Questions:

1. Every country schools boys find that woman in the
 - (a) Sea shore
 - (b) Bakery shops
 - (c) Wood
 - (d) Garden

Answer : C

2. How do the children wearing furry clothes look?
 - (a) They look like little pups.
 - (b) They look like foxes.
 - (c) They look like fawns.
 - (d) They look like bear's cubs.

Answer : D

3. Where is Northland situated?
 - (a) It is near Scotland.

- (b) It is in Holland.
- (c) It is an island of New Zealand.
- (d) It is an island of Ireland.

Answer : C

4. What made Saint Peter angry?
- (a) The woman's greed.
 - (b) The woman's selfishness.
 - (c) The woman's pride.
 - (d) The woman's kindness.

Answer : B

5. Why have the words like away, boring and rolled have been repeated ?
- (a) to make it lyrical
 - (b) to enhance their impact
 - (c) to add rhythm
 - (d) all

Answer : C

6. The woman cake maker was too—nature.
- (a) Lazy
 - (b) Greedy
 - (c) Clever
 - (d) Kind

Answer : B

7. What did Saint Peter ask for from the little woman?
- (a) A single cake.
 - (b) A dozen cakes.

- (c) A loaf of bread.
- (d) Something to eat.

Answer : A

8. What did the little woman think of the cakes she baked?
- (a) She thought they were too big
 - (b) She thought they were too small
 - (c) She thought they were too small for her but too big to give away
 - (d) She thought they were too big for her but too small to give away

Answer : C

9. The poem 'A Legend of the Northland' was written by :
- (a) Robert Frost
 - (b) Phoebe Cary
 - (c) W. B. Yeats.
 - (d) Coates Kinney.

Answer : B

10. Why did the poet use alliteration in the poem?
- (a) to add pun to it
 - (b) to give a rhyming scheme
 - (c) to make it lyrical
 - (d) none

Answer : C

11. How do the children wearing furry clothes look?

- (a) They look like little pups.
- (b) They look like foxes.
- (c) They look like fawns.
- (d) They look like bear's cubs.

Answer : D

12. Children of the Northland look like — cubs in the winter season.

- (a) Tiger
- (b) Bear
- (c) Lion
- (d) Deer

Answer : B

13. Where did the story of this poem occur?

- (a) Switzerland
- (b) Scotland
- (c) Northland
- (d) Netherland

Answer : C

14. What was the selfish woman changed into?

- (a) Into a fox.
- (b) Into a crow.
- (c) Into an eagle.
- (d) Into a woodpecker.

Answer : D

15. The poet told the story of a saint — in the third stanza of the poem.

- (a) Augustin
- (b) George
- (c) Peter
- (d) Devis

Answer : C

16. What did Saint Peter do during his travels around the world?

- (a) He looked after the poor and the rich
- (b) He preached the people
- (c) He met little women
- (d) He begged for food

Answer : B

17. Where did the story of this poem occur?

- (a) Switzerland
- (b) Scotland
- (c) Northland
- (d) Netherland

Answer : C

18. How do the children wearing furry clothes look?

- (a) They look like little pups
- (b) They look like foxes
- (c) They look like fawns
- (d) They look like bear's cubs

Answer : D

19. What was the little woman doing when Saint Peter went to her?

- (a) She was eating cakes.
- (b) She was giving away cakes to the poor.
- (c) She was making and baking cakes.
- (d) She was putting cakes on the shelf.

Answer : C

20. How was Saint Peter feeling when he reached the little woman's cottage?

- (a) Tired and hungry
- (b) Hale and hearty
- (c) Happy and refreshed
- (d) Trembling with cold and fever

Answer : A

NCERT Textbook Questions

Thinking About the Poem (Page 67)

1. Which country or countries do you think "the Northland" refers to?

Answer: It is a country in the north where days are short and nights are long.

2. What did Saint Peter ask the old lady for? What was the lady's reaction?

Answer: Saint Peter asked the old lady for a piece of cake. The lady behaved miserly and kept decreasing the size of the cake. At last she did not give him anything to eat.

3. How did he punish her?

Answer: He cursed her and made her a woodpecker.

4. How does the woodpecker get her food?

Answer: The woodpecker bores the hard and dry wood to get its food.

5. Do you think that the old lady would have been so ungenerous if she had known who Saint Peter really was? What would she have done then?

Answer: No, she would not have done this. On the contrary, she would have given him a large piece of cake to make him happy with the greed to get a handsome return.

6. Is this a true story? Which part of this poem do you feel is the most important?

Answer: No, it is an imaginative story. It is a legend. The third stanza of the poem is very important.

7. What is a legend? Why is this poem called a legend?

Answer: A legend is a story from ancient times about people and events. The title of the poem tells that it is a legend. The poet himself says that 'I don't believe it is true'.

8. Write the story of 'A Legend of the Northland' in about ten sentences.

Answer: The poem is a story of an old woman. She is asked by Saint Peter for alms who has become weak because of fasting and traveling. But her greed forces her not to give him anything. He becomes angry and makes her a woodpecker who bores hard, dry wood to get food. Her clothes are burnt to ashes and she is left with a cap on her head. She continues boring into hard wood for her little food.

Additional Questions

Short answer type questions

1. Why was Saint Peter tired and hungry?

Answer: Saint Peter was a holy man. He used to preach people. For his preaching he often made long journeys. During the course of his journey, sometimes, he did

not take food and water. Besides, he had to keep fasts also. Fasts and long journeys were the essential part of his life. Hence, he was tired and hungry.

2. What happened to the cake every time the old lady tried to bake it?

Answer: The old lady was a greedy woman. She had no desire to share her things with others. Once Saint Peter was tired and hungry. He arrived at her cottage to get something. The old lady tried again and again to bake a too small cake for Saint Peter. But the size of the cake always appeared bigger and the lady was even unable to give this cake to the saint.

3. What happened to the old lady when Saint Peter cursed her?

Answer: Saint Peter became angry at her greed because she did not give a piece of cake to Saint Peter to satisfy his hunger. When he cursed the lady, she turned into a bird. She flew through the chimney. Finally, she became a woodpecker. She wore a red cap and her body was black. Besides, she was bound to live in the forest with scanty food.

4. Describe the landscape of the Northland as described in the poem.

Answer: The Northland is far away in the north. In this land of snow and ice, the days are very short. The nights are too long. When it snows, they harness swift reindeer to the sledges. Children are packed with so many layers of clothes to protect from the cold. In their funny and furry clothes they look like cubs of bears.

5. Why does the poet tell a story which he does not believe to be true?

Answer: The poet wants to tell a 'curious' story. It is the story of St. Peter and a greedy little woman. The poet himself doesn't believe in the truth of the story. But still he is compelled to tell this story simply for one reason. The story gives a moral lesson. Greed is an evil trait in man. It is punished in the end. The greedy little woman who didn't want to give a small piece of cake to hungry St. Peter was cursed to be a woodpecker. She had to live with little food. We should show human qualities in our behaviour.

6. Who was St. Peter and why did he come to the cottage of a little woman?

Answer: St. Peter was a holy man and a Christian saint. He went

around different places preaching the people. Too much traveling made him tired and hungry. He needed food and rest badly. Therefore, he came to the cottage of a little woman who was making cakes. He asked the woman to give one from her store of cakes to him.

7. Why did the little woman knead another and still a smaller cake?

Answer: St. Peter asked the little woman to give one cake from her store of cakes. The little woman made a very little piece of cake to give it to the hungry Saint Peter. However, even that little piece seemed too large to be given away. Therefore, the greedy little woman kneaded another and still a smaller cake.

8. Why did the little old woman had to struggle for her scanty food after she was cursed to be a woodpecker?

Answer: The greedy little woman denied hungry St. Peter even a small piece of cake. She made a very small piece of cake but it seemed too large to her to be given away. She went on making it still smaller and smaller. She was cursed by St. Peter to be a woodpecker. She was made to

struggle even for her scanty food. As a woodpecker, she went on boring to get a small morsel of food.

Long answer type questions

1. A holy man should not curse the lady. Justify this statement in the context of the poem 'A Legend of the Northland'.

Answer: A holy man is known for his wisdom. He teaches moral lessons to the people whether they are liberal or greedy. All are equal in his eyes. In the present story, Saint Peter is a holy man. He is also famous for his preaching. He has preached and travelled a lot. So, he is hungry. He asks the lady for some food but she does not share her food with him. Finally, the saint becomes angry and curses her. In fact, he should have shown some mercy and the example of his wisdom. Therefore, it is appropriate to say that a holy man should not curse the lady.

2. How can you say that the old lady was greedy?

Answer: The old lady was running a bakery. Saint Peter was a wise saint. He had travelled and preached a lot so he was tired and hungry. He had arrived at her door

for some food. Still the lady made him wait for the cake for a long time. Every time she tried to bake a too small cake but unfortunately the cake often seemed to her of a bigger size. The old lady did not want to share the cake of this size with the saint. At last, the saint grew angry and cursed her. So, it can be said that her greed had no limit.

3. Why was St. Peter forced to curse the greedy little woman? Do you justify the action of St. Peter?

Answer: St. Peter was a holy man. He was a Christian saint. He spent his time moving around places and preaching the people there. Saints generally bless the people. They don't curse them. However, these holy men resort to cursing when people defy good sense and become evil. The little woman in the story was extremely selfish and greedy. After much traveling and preaching, St. Peter had become tired. He had become weak and hungry after the fast. He came to the cottage of the little woman for food. Seeing her baking cakes, St. Peter asked her to give one from her store of cakes. The greedy woman made a very little piece of cake for him. Even that small piece looked too large to be given away to the

saint. Hence, she went on making it smaller and smaller. The hungry St. Peter cursed the selfish and greedy woman. She was cursed to be a woodpecker, bored and struggling for her scanty food. St. Peter was justified in cursing her. She had deprived a tired and hungry saint even from a small piece of cake. She was rightly punished for her greed.

4. Why was the little woman cursed particularly to be a woodpecker and not another bird? How did she struggle to get her scanty food?

Answer: The little woman aroused the anger of a holy man. The saint spent most of his time travelling and preaching. Constant fasting had made him hungry and weak.

Saint Peter asked for a small piece of cake when he saw a little woman baking cakes. The greedy woman could have easily given a piece of cake to the saint. But the selfish woman thought that even a very little piece was too large to be given away to him. She denied even this little offering. The saint cursed her to be a woodpecker. A woodpecker has to bore for a long time to get even a scanty food. She was cursed to labour hard by boring into the tree to get even her scanty food as she had made

the saint wait so long for such a small piece of cake.

Value based questions

1. What moral lesson do you get from this poem?

Answer: This poem teaches us that true happiness lies in sharing things with the persons who are in need. If we are greedy, we cannot have happiness in our life. On the other hand our charitable nature makes us think about pains and sorrows suffered by other people. The charitable people have many friends and they are always connected with one another with a strong bond of sentiments. But the greedy people hardly have any friends and they often live alone in the world.

2. What quality do you find in saints?

Answer: Saints are wise people. They have gained heavenly power. Riches make no sense for them, for which people often hanker. They need only food to survive in this world. They travel far off land and give people moral lessons.

3. How is true satisfaction spoiled by greed?

Answer: True satisfaction lies in sharing things with others. Peace and satisfaction are the two sides of a coin. If there is satisfaction in our life, peace is bound to come in our life. However greed spoils both. If we are greedy, we cannot get satisfaction as well as peace in our life. In the poem, the old lady was greedy and she failed to give cake to the saint. If she had satisfaction, she would certainly

have shown honour and regard to the saint. So, in the case of this little lady it can be said that her greed had spoiled her peace and satisfaction.

Actually, saints try to create such societies in which all the people shall be treated with equality and greed will have no room in them. With the help of teachings, they desire to bring down heaven on the earth.