

**DATE : 1/5/2020**

**SUBJECT : ENG READER( HONEY COMB)**

**CLASS : VII**

#### **L- 4 THE ASHES THAT MADE TREES BLOOM**

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#### **SUMMARY**

Once there lived an old couple. They had a pet dog. They had no child. They loved the dog as if it were a baby. The dog was called Muko. The kind couple fed the dog with their own chopsticks. In return, the dog also loved them much.

The old man was a farmer. Every morning Muko followed him to his fields. A heron walked in the footsteps of the old man to pick up worms. Like his master, the dog also never harmed the bird.

One day, the dog put his paws against the old man's legs. He motioned with his head to some spot behind. To please his pet, the old man followed him. At a little distance from there, the dog stopped. It started scratching the ground. To help his pet, the old man struck his hoe in the earth. Now there was a pile of gold before him.

So the old couple became rich. They gave a feast to their friends and helped their poor neighbours. In the same village, there lived a wicked old man and his wife. They brought the dog into their garden. They set before him good food. But the dog was afraid. He neither ate nor moved.

They dragged the dog out of doors. They walked with him. When they reached a pine tree, the dog began to scratch the ground. The wicked couple was delighted. Both of them dug the ground. What they got was a dead kitten. The couple was very angry. They killed the dog. Then they flung him into the hole they had dug. They heaped the earth over his carcass.

The incident of the dog's death reached the ears of its owner. He felt so sad as if he had lost his own son. He went to the place where his pet had been buried. He mourned for a long time. He called him with many dear names as if he were alive. That night he saw his dog in his dreams. The dog asked him to cut the pine tree and make a mortar from it and a mill from that wood.

The old man did as he was told. With much labour, he made a small bowl of the wood. Then he made a long handled hammer of wood. When the new year drew near, he decided to make some rice pastry. They put the boiled rice in the wooden mortar. The old man used the wooden hammer to pound the mass into dough. When the pastry was ready for baking, it turned into a mass of gold coins. The old woman took the hand-mill, and filling it with bean sauce began to grind. The gold dropped like rain. At this moment, the envious neighbour peeped through the window. He decided to borrow the mill.

The old couple readily gave their mill to the neighbour. The man began to pound the rice and the woman began to grind. However, this time the pastry and sauce turned into worms. They broke the mill into pieces to use it as firewood.

## Part- II

The Spirit of the dog spoke to the old man, "Take the ashes of the mill, sprinkle them on the withered trees and they would bloom again". The old man somehow managed to get a basket filled with ashes. Then the old man took his wife to the garden. It being winter, their favourite cherry tree was bare. So, he sprinkled a pinch of ashes on it, and it blossoms until it became a cloud of pink blooms which perfumed in the air. Everyone in the village was amazed to see the wonder.

The greedy couple gathered the remaining ashes to make the withered trees bloom. The daimio was to pass along the high road. The old man went to see him with a basket of ashes. He climbed up into an old withered cherry tree. Now in the days of the daimio, it was the custom when the lord passed by, the loyal people shut their windows. People would fall upon their hands and knees. A man warns everyone to get on knees.

When Daimio's palanquin drew near the tree, the old man took ashes and scattered it over the tree, it burst into blossom. Daimio was delighted. He thanked him and offered him presents like silk robes, fans, sponge- cake and many other rewards. When the greedy neighbor heard of it, they did the same thinking that the magical ashes would work the same way for him. The ashes blew into noses and eyes of Daimio and his wife, making them sneeze and choke. The wicked old man was dragged and thrown by the road side.

The wicked old man died in the mud, but the kind friend of dog dwelt in peace and plenty.

**NOTE: CHILDREN YOU WILL WRTE ONLY WORD MEANINGS AND QUESTION/ANSWERS.**

### WORD MEANINGS:

1. Daimio : ( IN 19<sup>th</sup> century Japan) wealthy landowners
2. Snug : comfortable
3. A being with a soul : like a human child (showing emotion)
4. Turned up : dug up
5. On purposes : intentionally
6. Gleamed : shone/ glittered
7. Coaxed : persuaded ; enticed
8. Dainties : tasty food
9. Covetous : greedy
10. Crone : old woman ( old man's wife)
11. Flung : threw
12. Carcass : dead body
13. Mortar : bowl

14. Pounding : crushing ; grinding
15. Stingy : miserly
16. Withered : bare and dry
17. Turned up their noses : treated him with contempt
18. Train : procession
19. Prostrate : lying on the ground face downward
20. Palanquin : royal van/ cart
21. Gleefully : happily
22. A particle : even a little bit
23. Seized : caught
24. Green : (here) healthy, active and prosperous

#### COMPREHENSION CHECK (PAGE – 60)

Q1. Why did the neighbor kill the dog?

Ans. The neighbours when heard about the good luck brought by the dog to the couple coaxed the dog into their garden in hope that he would find treasure for them. They dragged him out of doors and the dog scratched and pawed the ground under a pine tree. When on digging the ground, they saw that there was nothing but a dead kitten, they became furious at the dog. They beat him to death and then flung him into the hole.

#### WORKING WITH THE TEXT.

#### ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

Q1. The old farmer is a kind person. What evidence of his kindness do you find in the first two paragraphs.

Ans. The old farmer was a kind person. He loved his dog as if it was his own baby. He fed it with fish with his own chopsticks and all the boiled rice it wanted. He was patient and kind to everything that had life, and often dug up a sod on purpose to give food to the birds.

Q2. What did the dog do to lead the farmer to the hidden gold?

Ans. The dog came running to the farmer and kept on whining and running to and fro till the farmer followed him. The dog began a lively scratching. Thinking it was possibly a buried bone or fish, the farmer struck his hoe in the earth and found a pile of hidden gold.

Q3. (i) How did the spirit of the dog help the farmer first?

Ans. The spirit of the dog asked the farmer in his dream to cut down the pine tree over his grave and make a mortar for rice pastry and a mill for a bean sauce. When the old couple used them to make rice pastry and bean sauce, mortar and mill gave them a pile of gold.

Q3.(ii) How did it help him next?

Ans. The spirit of the dog informed the farmer in his dream that his wicked neighbours had burnt the hand mill. He advised him to take ashes of the mill and sprinkle them on the withered trees and they would bloom again.

Q4. Why did the daimio reward the farmer but punish his neighbor for the same act?

Ans. The farmer had the magical ashes. He made the old withered cherry tree blossom once again by sprinkling the ashes. So the daimio rewarded the farmer for this. When his greedy neighbor heard about it, he took the ashes and when daimio was passing on the high way , he threw a handful of ashes over the tree. The tree did not blossom and the wind blew the fine dust in the noses and eyes of the daimio and his wife. That is why his neighbor was punished for the same act.

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