

THE MELON CITY

Q 1. Why did the king ride down the thoroughfare and what was the result?

Answer. The king proclaimed/ordered to build a thoroughfare in the state. The arch would glorify the king. He thought that it would improve people's mind. But when he rode down the thoroughfare, the crown struck against it and fell down on the ground. The crown banged against the arch. The king was exasperated on this indignity. He called it his disgrace and ordered to punish those who caused this disgrace to the king.

Q 2. Why did the king order the chief of the builders to be hanged?

Answer. The king had ordered to build a major thoroughfare in the heart of the state to edify the people. But the arch was built too low and the king lost his crown which struck against it. It was a serious disgrace to the king. He saw red and went out of himself. He took chief of the builder responsible for this humiliation and ordered to hand the culprit.

Q 3. What argument did the architect put in his self defense?

Answer. The architect was a clever man who acted cleverly to save himself from the wrath of the king. He told the king that he had brought some amendments/changes in the design as per advised by the king himself. So the king was chiefly responsible for the disgrace. When the king listened the argument, he lost his sense.

Q 4. Why did the king need some council? Who was the wisest man and what was his suggestion?

Answer. All the convicts had put some certain logic/reasons in their self defense. So the king needed the council/advice by the wisest man of the state. An old man with grey hair was selected as the wisest man. He could not even stand on his feet. He could neither see nor listen properly. His voice trembled in utterance. The lunatic old man held the arch responsible for the shameful state.

Q 5. What ordered did the king pass regarding the arch and what happened next?

Answer. A very old man, with shaking legs, unable to see and listen, declared that he arch was responsible who shamefully hit the crown to fall and caused disgrace to the king.

Thereupon the king ordered to hand the arch for the offence. Suddenly one of the councilor advised that it would be shameful to hand the thing that touched the head of the king. the king mused at this flattery revoke his order.

Q 6. What was the result of king's thoughtless order?

Answer. The king noticed that the crowd was getting restless and they were demanding to see an execution. The king lost his ability to act sensibly. So he ordered to hang anybody to pacify the agitated crowd who wanted to see an execution regardless the finer point of guilt or not guilt. The noose was set up at somewhat high. Each man present there was measured but only one man was tall enough to reach the noose and it was the king himself. Thus the king ordered to hang himself.

Q 7. What was the ultimate result of the king?

Answer. The architect very cleverly shifted the blame to the king. Now the king ordered to hang anybody to pacify the agitated crowd. One by one many men were measured but nobody was tall enough to fit the noose except the king. Finally the king was hanged by the royal decree/order.

Q 8. How did the ministers choose the next king?

Or

Q. What was the problem faced by the ministers after the execution of the king and how was it solved?

Or

Q . How does a melon become the ruler of the state:

Answer. After the execution of the just and placid king, the ministers faced the problem of selecting the next king of the state. The custom says that, the first man who passed the city gate would choose the next king of the state. This method looked very awkward and illogical as an eccentric idiot passed the city gate. When asked to announce the next king, he cried out the name of a 'Melon.' It was his fix answer to every question as he like melon very much. The minister declared that a melon would be the next king of the state. Following his 'sound' suggestion, the minsters placed a melon on the royal throne and reverently crowned the it as the next king of the state.

Q 9. What do you mean by the principle of, 'Laissez-faire'?

Answer. 'Laissez-faire' has been derived from French that means 'allow to do'. Thus the world is used to talk about a doctrine that does not allow any government intervention in a person's life. The words here depicts the stupidity of the king, ministers and the people of the melon city where everyone was free to live his life without any interference of the king or the authority.

Q 10. How did the accused try to shift the blame on one another? How did they succeed?

Or

Q. 'Melon City' shows the stupidity of a king and his unruly kingdom. Elaborate.

Answer. 'The Melon City' by **Vikram Seth** is a satire on a stupid king and his unruly town. The story shows the stupidity of the king and his ultimate fate. Once he ordered to build a thoroughfare to edify the people. Unfortunately his crown fell down because the arch was built too low. The king was exasperated/very angry and ordered to hang the Chief of the builders. But he culprit shifted the blame to the workmen. They put the logic that the brick men were responsible for it because the bricks were made in wrong size. Then the masons were summoned. They were trembling with fear. They shifted the blame to the chief of the architect. He put the logic that it was the king who had ordered to bring some certain changes/amendments in the design. So the king himself was responsible for the disgrace. On the other hand the crowd was getting/becoming impatient to see the execution. To pacify the agitated crowd, the king ordered to hang anybody. The noose was fixed high.

Many men were brought but nobody was tall enough to fit the noose except the king. Finally the king ordered to hang himself.

Q 11. 'Melon City' is piece of work laced with irony and humour' Elaborate.

Answer. 'Melon City' is laced with elements of humour and irony scattered throughout the poem. There is humour in the description of each characters the king, the minsters and the wisest man of the city, the councilor and melon idiot are all fools. Vikram seth takes a jibe when he calls the king a just and placid man who carries his notion of justice a bit too far and be hanged to gallows by the royal decree. It is really ironical that the arch, built to edify the people, becomes the cause of his disgrace when it shamefully knocks down the crown of the king. The way all the convicts shift the onus to one another shows the incompetence of the king and his minster to ascertain who is the real culprit. The just and placid king orders to hang anybody to assuage the

agitated crowd. On the unthoughtful suggestion of a very old man, the king orders to bring the arch to the gallows shows the stupidity of the king.

The stupid kings and masses believed in the principal of laissez-faire were happy with their life as long as they do not face any outside interference. They all live in a self-rule and self-determined world and has nothing to do with the delicate question of being guilty or not being guilty. All they want to see an execution to satisfy themselves. Finally a lunatic and idiot man declares a melon to be the next king of the state. Even the ministers had no objection crowning a melon as the next king of the state.