

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 4: THE ASHES THAT MADE THE TREES BLOOM



THE ASHES THAT MADE THE TREES BLOOM

~Summary~

-by William Elliot Griffis

Once there lived a **good old couple** in **Japan** during the nineteenth century. They were **childless** and had a pet dog named **Muko**. Since Muko was their beloved pet, they treated it like a kid and showed more love and care. One day, while **accompanying** the good old man, Muko spotted a place and **compelled** its master to dig there. When the good old man started digging in the location specified by Muko, he was surprised to find a pile of gold coins buried underneath the ground. Thus, the good old couple become **rich** overnight and the kind-hearted couple **distributed a large portion of their riches** to their **poor neighbours**.

However, there lived a **bad old couple** in the same village who were known for their **wickedness** and **greediness**. When the wicked couple came to know about the good old couple's fortune, they **forced Muko** to find a treasure for themselves as well. Muko was scared of the evil couple and showed a place under a pine tree with a dead kitten buried inside it. This enraged the wicked pair, who killed Muko as a result.

When the good old couple came to know about their pet **dog's death**, they went to its grave and mourned for its loss. On that night, **Muko's spirit** appeared in the good old man's **dream** and asked him to create a mortar and mill out of the pine tree from his grave. The good old couple designed a **mortar and mill** out of the pine tree as **instructed** by Muko and used it to prepare rice pastry and bean sauce during the new year. Magic happened as the dough mass inside the mortar was transformed into a heap of **gold coins**, and each drop of bean sauce from mill was changed into **gold bits**. The bad old couple secretly noticed the magic from the window and borrowed the magical mortar and mill the next day. Unexpectedly, the magical mortar and mill gave out a foul **mass of worms** for the bad old couple. This arose their anger, and so they **destroyed** and burnt the **mill**.

Muko's spirit **once again** appeared in the good old man's **dream**. It explained the incident and asked him to collect the ashes of the magical mill burnt by the evil couple. Also, it asked him to throw the ashes on the withered cherry tree, assuring that it would bloom. The kind old man **trusted** his **dream** for the second time and performed the tasks as **instructed** by the **dog's spirit**. Magic happened again. The withered tree bloomed with the ashes sprayed.

The good old man came to know about his lord **daimio's arrival** and wanted to greet him. Despite the officer's instruction to kneel down before the procession, the good old man positioned himself on a cherry tree and threw **ashes** on it, which started to **bloom** while the daimio neared the tree. He was pleased to see the old man's magic and **rewarded** him with many **gifts**.

On having learned about the **incident** mentioned above, the wicked old man went near the procession to perform the same magic with the remaining ashes he had collected. Unfortunately, the ashes did not do any magic and, he was **beaten up to death** as he spoiled the **procession** with

ash particles. The wicked man **died**. The good old couple **happily lived** long with the wealth gained.

~Conclusion~

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.

SHIVOM CLASSES
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NCERT SOLUTIONS

Questions (Page No. 60) (Comprehension Check)

Question 1. Why did the neighbours kill the dog?

Answer: The neighbours killed the dog in frustration and anger. They were expecting the dog to help them find a treasure the way the dog helped the old couple in finding one. But, the dog took them to a place where there was a foul smelling dead kitten.

Question 2. Mark the right item.

- i. The old farmer and his wife loved the dog
 - a. because it helped them in their day-to-day work.
 - b. as if it was their own baby.
 - c. as they were kind to all living beings
- ii. When the old couple became rich, they
 - a. gave the dog better food.
 - b. invited their greedy neighbours to a feast.
 - c. lived comfortably and were generous towards their poor neighbours.
- iii. The greedy couple borrowed the mill and the mortar to make
 - a. rice pastry and bean sauce.
 - b. magic ash to win rewards.
 - c. a pile of gold.

Answer:

- b. as if it was their own baby.
- c. lived comfortably and were generous towards their poor neighbours.
- c. a pile of gold.

Questions (Page No. 63-64) (Working with the Text)

Answer the following questions.

Question 1. The old farmer is a kind person. What evidence of his kindness do you find in the first two paragraphs?

Answer: The old farmer is a kind person. We find the evidence of kindness at various instances in the story. For example, the first paragraph says that the old couple treated the dog as if it were their own child. They used to feed him pieces of fish with their own chopsticks. They used to offer him boiled rice.

The second paragraph says that the old man often turned up a sod on purpose to give food to the birds.

Question 2. What did the dog do to lead the farmer to the hidden gold?

Answer: To lead the farmer to the hidden gold, the dog came running to the farmer and kept its paws against his legs. It continuously kept directing towards a place behind him. The old man at first thought that the dog was just playing, but when it kept running and whining, the old man followed it to the place.

Question 3.

- a. How did the spirit of the dog help the farmer first?
- b. How did it help him next?

Answer:

- a. The spirit of the dog appeared in the farmer's dream and instructed him to cut off the pine tree. It also said that the old farmer should make a mortar and hand-mill with that. When the farmer followed the instructions of the spirit of the dog, he received heaps of gold. That is how the spirit of the dog helped him first.

- b. The second time the spirit of the dog appeared in the farmer's dream, it told the old man to collect the ashes of the mortar and the mill from the wicked neighbors and sprinkle it on the dead trees. It said that if the farmer did so, the trees would blossom again. When the farmer followed his instructions and sprinkled the ashes on the cherry tree in front of the daimio, it blossomed and the old man was rewarded with high-valued gifts.

Question 4. Why did the daimio reward the farmer but punish his neighbour for the same act?

Answer: The daimio rewarded the farmer but punished his neighbor for the same act. This is because when the old farmer sprinkled the ash on the withered cherry tree in front of the daimio, it blossomed. This made the daimio pleased with the farmer's act of welcoming him.

But, when the neighbour sprinkled the ashes on the tree in front of the daimio, nothing blossomed. Instead, the same ash fell on the daimio and its fine particles entered his and his wife's eyes. This spoiled the whole program and irritated the daimio. That is why the neighbour was punished severely.

Questions (Page No. 64-67) (Working with language)

Question 1. Read the following conversation.

RAVI: What are you doing?

MRIDU: I'm reading a book.

RAVI: Who wrote it?

MRIDU: Ruskin Bond.

RAVI: Where did you find it?

MRIDU: In the library.

Notice that 'what', 'who', 'where', are question words.

Questions that require information begin with question words.

Some other question words are 'when', 'why', 'where', 'which' and 'how'.

Remember that

- What asks about actions, things, etc.
- Who asks about people.
- Which asks about people or things.
- Where asks about place.
- When asks about time.
- Why asks about reason or purpose.
- How asks about means, manner or degree.
- Whose asks about possessions.

Read the following paragraph and frame questions on the italicized phrases.

Anil is in school. I am in school too. Anil is sitting in the left row. He is reading a book. Anil's friend is sitting in the second row. He is sharpening his pencil. The teacher is writing on the blackboard. Children are writing in their copybooks. Some children are looking out of the window.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

g. _____

Answer:

- a. Where is Anil?
- b. Which row is Anil sitting in?
- c. What is he doing?
- d. Which row is Anil's friend sitting in?
- e. What is his friend doing?
- f. Who is writing on the blackboard?
- g. What are the children doing?

Question 2: Write appropriate question words in the blank spaces in the following dialogue.

NEHA: _____ did you get this book?

SHEELA: Yesterday morning.

NEHA: _____ is your sister crying?

SHEELA: Because she has lost her doll.

NEHA: _____ room is this, yours or hers?

SHEELA: It's ours.

NEHA: _____ do you go to school?

SHEELA: We walk to school. It is nearby.

Answer:

NEHA: **When** did you get this book?

SHEELA: Yesterday morning.

NEHA: **Why** is your sister crying?

SHEELA: Because she has lost her doll.

NEHA: **Whose** room is this, yours or hers?

SHEELA: It's ours.

NEHA: **How** do you go to school?

SHEELA: We walk to school. It is nearby.

Question 3: Fill in the blanks with the words given below.

how, what, when, where, which

- a. My friend lost his chemistry book. Now he doesn't know _____ to do and _____ to look for it.
- b. There are so many toys in the shops. Neena can't decide _____ one to buy.
- c. You don't know the way to my school. Ask the policeman _____ to get there.
- d. You should decide soon _____ to start building your house.
- e. Do you know _____ to ride a bicycle? I don't remember _____ and _____ I learnt it.
- f. "You should know _____ to talk and _____ to keep your mouth shut," the teacher advised Anil.

Answer:

- a. My friend lost his chemistry book. Now he doesn't know what to do and where to look for it.
- b. There are so many toys in the shops. Neena can't decide which one to buy.
- c. You don't know the way to my school. Ask the policeman how to get there.
- d. You should decide soon when to start building your house.
- e. Do you know how to ride a bicycle? I don't remember when and where I learnt it.
- f. "You should know when to talk and where to keep your mouth shut," the teacher advised Anil.

Question 4: Add im- or in- to each of the following words and use them in place of the italicized words in the sentences given below.

patient, proper, possible, sensitive, competent

- a. The project appears very difficult at first sight but it can be completed if we work very hard.
- b. He lacks competence. That's why he can't keep any job for more than a year.
- c. "Don't lose patience. Your letter will come one day," the postman told me.
- d. That's not a proper remark to make under the circumstances.
- e. He appears to be without sensitivity. In fact, he is very emotional.

Answer:

- a. The project appears impossible at first sight but it can be completed if we work very hard.
- b. He is incompetent. That's why he can't keep any job for more than a year.
- c. "Don't be impatient. Your letter will come one day," the postman told me.
- d. That's an improper remark to make under the circumstances.

e. He appears to be insensitive. In fact, he is very emotional.

Question 5. Read the following sentences.

It was a cold morning and stars still glowed in the sky.

An old man was walking along the road.

The words in italics are articles. 'A' and 'an' are indefinite articles and 'the' is the definite article. 'A' is used before a singular countable noun. 'An' is used before a word that begins with a vowel.

- a boy • an actor
- a mango • an apple
- a university • an hour

Use 'a', 'an' or 'the' in the blanks:

There was once _____ play which became very successful. _____ famous actor was acting in it. In _____ play his role was that of _____ aristocrat who had been imprisoned in _____ castle for twenty years. In _____ last act of _____ play someone would come on _____ stage with _____ letter which he would hand over to _____ prisoner. Even though _____ aristocrat was not expected to read _____ letter at each performance, he always insisted that _____ letter be written out from beginning to end.

Answer:

There was once **a** play which became very successful. **A** famous actor was acting in it. In **the** play his role was that of **an** aristocrat who had been imprisoned in a castle for twenty years. In **the** last act of **the** play someone would come on **the** stage with **a** letter which he would hand over to **the** prisoner. Even though **the** aristocrat was not expected to read **the** letter at each performance, he always insisted that **the** letter be written out from beginning to end.

Question 6. Encircle (underlined here) the correct article.

Nina was looking for (a / the) job. After many interviews she got (a / the) job she was looking for.

A : Would you like (a/an/the) apple or (a/an/the) banana?

B : I'd like (a/an/the) apple, please.

A : Take (a/an/the) red one in (a/an/the) fruit bowl.

You may take (a/an/the) orange also, if you like.

B : Which one?

A : (A/An/The) one beside (a/an/the) banana.

Answer:

A : Would you like (a/an/the) apple or (a/an/the) banana?

B : I'd like (a/an/the) apple, please.

A : Take (a/an/the) red one in (a/an/the) fruit bowl.

You may take (a/an/the) orange also, if you like.

B : Which one?

A : (A/An/The) one beside (a/an/the) banana.

Questions (Page No. 67-68) (Speaking and Writing)

Question 1. Do you remember an anecdote or a story about a greedy or jealous person and the unhappy result of his/her action? Narrate the story to others in your class.

Here is one for you to read.

Seeing an old man planting a fig tree, the king asked why he was doing this. The man replied that he might live to eat the fruit, and, even if he did not, his son would enjoy the figs.

“Well,” said the king, “if you do live to eat the fruit of this tree, please let me know.” The man promised to do so, and sure enough, before too long, the tree grew and bore fruit.

Packing some fine figs in a basket, the old man set out for the palace to meet the king.

The king accepted the gift and gave orders that the old man’s basket be filled with gold.

Now, next door to the old man, there lived a greedy old man jealous of his neighbour’s good fortune. He also packed some figs in a basket and took them to the palace in the hope of getting gold.

The king, on learning the man’s motive, ordered him to stand in the compound and had him pelted with figs.

The old man returned home and told his wife the sad story. She consoled him by saying, “You should be thankful that our neighbour did not grow coconuts.”

Answer: Do it yourself.

Question 2. Put each of the following in the correct order. Then use them appropriately to fill the blanks in the paragraph that follows. Use correct punctuation marks.

- English and Hindi/both/in/he writes
- and only/a few short stories/many books in English/ in Hindi
- is/my Hindi/than my English/much better

Ravi Kant is a writer, and _____. Of course, he is much happier writing in English than in Hindi. He has written _____. I find his books a little hard to understand. _____.

Answer:

Ravi Kant is a writer, and **he writes both in English and Hindi**. Of course, he is much happier writing in English than in Hindi. He has written **many books in English and only a few short stories in Hindi**. I find his books a little hard to understand. **My Hindi is much better than my English**.

Question 3. Are you fond of reading stories? Did you read one last month? If not, read one or two and then write a paragraph about the story. Use the following hints.

- title of the story
- name of author
- how many characters
- which one you liked
- some details of the story
- main point(s) as you understand it

Tell your friends why they should also read it.

Answer: Do it yourself.

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