

CBSE Class 9 English Language and Literature
NCERT Solutions
Beehive Poem 05
A Legend of the Northland

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I. 1. Which country or countries do you think “the Northland” refers to?

Ans: “The Northland” could refer to any extremely cold country on the Earth's North Polar region, such as Greenland, the northern regions of Russia, Canada, Norway etc.

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

Ans: Saint Peter asked the old lady for one of her baked cakes as he was about to faint due to fasting. The lady tried to bake a small cake for the Saint.

3. How did he punish her?

Ans: He punished the lady by changing her into a woodpecker. Saint Peter put a curse on the woman, telling her she was too selfish to live in a human form, having food, shelter and warm fire. He added that in the future, she would have to build as the birds do and get scanty food by boring all day in the hard, dry wood.

4. How does the woodpecker get her food?

Ans: The woodpecker gets her food by boring holes into trees. Woodpeckers drill and drum on trees and extract insects with their long sticky tongues from deep within a hole of a tree.

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?

Ans: No, the old lady would not have been so ungenerous if she had known who Saint Peter really was. Instead, she would have tried to please him with her cakes for the fulfilment of her greedy desires.

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

Ans: No, this is not a true story; it is a legend. I feel that the part where the old lady is

changed into a woodpecker is the most important because the poet tries to imply here that every action has a consequence, and the out-come of selfish actions is difficult to bear.

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

Ans: A 'legend' is an old traditional and popular semi-true story demonstrating human values. It is considered to be historical with mythical qualities. This poem is called a 'legend' because the poet himself says that he doesn't believe this tale to be true. The story is about Saint Peter. It conveys the lesson of sharing and caring for people and moreover it also has the presence of a supernatural element at the end of the tale.

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

Ans: Once Saint Peter stopped by an old lady's cottage because he was feeling tired and hungry after the day's fasting. The lady was baking cakes on the hearth. Since he was feeling weak with fasting, he asked her for a cake from her store of cakes. The selfish lady tried to bake small cakes but each time they seemed too big for her to give away. Finally, she baked one that was as thin as a wafer. Unable to part with it too, she put it on a shelf and did not give any cake to the Saint. Saint Peter was very angry with her behaviour and said she was too selfish to live as a human and have food, shelter and a fire to keep her warm. He punished her by changing her into a woodpecker that would have to build a nest to live in, bore for food in the trunks of trees. Her clothes were burned and she was left with her scarlet cap on her head as she flew out through the chimney. Even today, she lives in the woods boring and boring for food. Every country school boys have seen her..

II. 1. 1. Let's look at the words at the end of the second and fourth lines, viz., 'snows' and 'clothes', true' and 'you', 'below' and 'know'. We find that 'snows' rhymes with 'clothes', 'true' rhymes with 'you' and 'below' rhymes with 'know'. Find more such rhyming words.

Ans: The rhyming words are:

'Few' and 'through'

'Earth' and 'hearth'

'Done' and 'one'

'Lay' and 'away'

'One' and 'done'

'Flat' and 'that'

'Myself' and 'shelf'

'Faint' and 'saint'

'Form' and 'warm'

'Food' and 'wood'

'Word' and 'bird'

'Same' and 'flame'

'Wood' and 'food'

2. Go to the local library or talk to older persons in your locality and find legends in your own language. Tell the class about these legends.

Ans: Echo was a nymph who talked too much. She was very fond of having the last word.

One day she spoke rudely to the great Juno, who said that for this offence Echo should never use her voice again, unless to repeat what she had just heard, but since she was so very fond of last words, she might repeat the last words of others.

This was almost as bad as if Juno had changed her into a parrot. Echo was very much ashamed, and hid herself in the forest.

Narcissus, a young man who had hair as yellow as gold and eyes as blue as the sky, - a very rare thing in Greece, where most people were very dark, - used to hunt in the forest where Echo was hiding. As she was peeping out shyly from some cave or from behind a great tree, Echo often saw Narcissus, and she admired him very much.

One day Narcissus separated from his friends, and hearing something rustle among the leaves, he called out, "Who's here?"

"Here," answered Echo.

"Here I am. Come!" said Narcissus.

"I am come," said Echo; and, as she spoke, she came out from among the trees.

When Narcissus saw a stranger, instead of one of his friends as he had expected, he looked surprised and walked away quickly.

After this, Echo never came out and allowed herself to be seen again, and in time she faded away till she became only a voice.

This voice was heard for many, many years in forests and among mountains, particularly in caves. In their solitary walks, hunters often heard it. Sometimes it mocked the barking of their dogs; sometimes it repeated their own last words. It always had a weird and mournful sound, and seemed to make lonely places more lonely still.