

## The Snake and the Mirror Beehive

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Think about the Text

I. Discuss in pairs and answer each question below in a short paragraph (30 – 40 words).

1. “The sound was 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 lived in a room which was full of rats. He heard the sounds of the rats. There was a regular traffic of rats to and from the beam. He heard the sound thrice. The sound stopped suddenly as rats had seen a snake.

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

Answer

The doctor took two "important" and "earth-shaking" while he was looking into the mirror First, he decided to shave daily and grow a thin moustache. Second, always to keep an attractive smile on his face.

3. “I looked into the mirror and smiled,” says the doctor. A little later he says, “I forgot my danger and smiled feebly at myself.” What is the doctor’s opinion about himself when: (i) he first smiles, and (ii) he

smiles again? In what way do his thoughts change in between, and why?

Answer

(i) When the doctor first smiles, he has an inflated opinion of himself, admiring his looks and profession.

(ii) In the second instance, the doctor smiles at his foolishness and helplessness.

His thoughts change after his encounter with the snake—from being a proud doctor he moves on to accept his stupidity.

II.

This story about a frightening incident is narrated in a humorous way.

What makes it humorous? (Think of the contrasts it presents between dreams and reality. Some of them are listed below.) 1. (i)

The kind of person the doctor is (money, possessions)

(ii) The kind of person he wants to be (appearance, ambition)

2.(i) The person he wants to marry

(ii) The person he actually marries

3.(i) His thoughts when he looks into the mirror (ii) His thoughts when the snake is coiled around his arm Write short paragraphs on each of these to get your answer.

Answer

1. (i) The doctor is a poor person. He has hardly any money. he lives in an unelectrified house. It is small rented room with plenty of rats living in it. He has just started his medical practice. So he is not a man of possessions or money.

(ii) The Person wants to be rich. he also would like to have good appearance. That's why he decides to grow a thin moustache.

2. (i) The doctor wants to marry a woman doctor with good medical practice and a lot of money. She would be fat as not to run after him and catch him.

(ii) He marries a thin reedy woman who has a gift of sprinter.

3. (i) His thoughts are full of joy and satisfaction. He decides to grow thin moustache and keep smiling always. He finds his smile attractive

(ii) He turned to stone. He sat like stone image in the flesh. However, his mind was very active. He felt the great presence of creator. He decides to write the words 'O God' outside his little heart.

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### Thinking about Language

I.

1. Here are some sentences from the text. Say which of them tell you, that the author: (a) was afraid of the snake, (b) was proud of his appearance, (c) had a sense of humour, (d) was no longer afraid of the snake.

1. I was turned to stone.

2. I was no mere image cut in granite.

3. The arm was beginning to be drained of strength.

4. I tried in my imagination to write in bright letters outside my little heart the words, 'O God'.

5. I didn't tremble. I didn't cry out.

6. I looked into the mirror and smiled. It was an attractive smile.
7. I was suddenly a man of flesh and blood.
8. I was after all a bachelor, and a doctor too on top of it!
9. The fellow had such a sense of cleanliness...! The rascal could have taken it and used it after washing it with soap and water.
10. Was it trying to make an important decision about growing a moustache or using eye shadow and mascara or wearing a vermilion spot on its forehead?

Answer

	(a) was afraid of the snake	(b) was proud of his appearance	(c) had a sense of humour	(d) was no longer afraid of the snake
1.	I was turned to stone.			
2.				I was no mere image cut in granite.
3.	The arm was beginning to be drained of strength.			
4.	I tried in my imagination to write in bright letters outside my little heart the words, 'O God'.		I tried in my imagination to write in bright letters outside my little heart the words, 'O God'.	

5.	I didn't tremble. I didn't cry out.			
6.		I looked into the mirror and smiled. It was an attractive smile.		
7.				I was suddenly a man of flesh and blood.
8.		I was after all a bachelor, and a doctor too on top of it!		

9.			<p>The fellow had such a sense of cleanliness...! The rascal could have taken it and used it after washing it with soap and water.</p>	
10.			<p>Was it trying to make an important decision about growing a moustache or using eye shadow and mascara or wearing a vermilion spot on its forehead.</p>	

II.

Expressions used to show fear

Can you find the expressions in the story that tell you that the author was frightened? Read the story and complete the following sentences.

1. I was turned

\_\_\_\_\_.

2. I sat there holding

\_\_\_\_\_.

3. In the light of the lamp I sat there like

\_\_\_\_\_.

Answer

1. I was turned to stone.

2. I sat there holding my breath.

3. In the light of the lamp I sat there like a stone image in the flesh.

III.

Match the meanings with the words/expressions in italics, and write the appropriate meaning next to the sentence. The first one has been done for you.

1. I knew a man was following me, I was *scared out of my wits*. (very frightened)

2. I *got a fright* when I realised how close I was to the cliff edge.

3. He *nearly jumped out of his skin* when he saw the bull coming towards him.

4. You really *gave me a fright* when you crept up behind me like that.

5. Wait until I tell his story — it will *make your hair stand on end*.
6. *Paralysed with fear*, the boy faced his abductors.
7. The boy hid behind the door, *not moving a muscle*.

## Answer

1. I knew a man was following me, I was *scared out of my wits*. (very frightened)
2. I *got a fright* when I realised how close I was to the cliff edge. (frightened by something that happens suddenly)
3. He *nearly jumped out of his skin* when he saw the bull coming towards him. (very frightened)
4. You really *gave me a fright* when you crept up behind me like that. (frightened by something that happens suddenly)
5. Wait until I tell his story — it will *make your hair stand on end*. (makes another feel frightened)
6. *Paralysed with fear*, the boy faced his abductors. (too scared to move)
7. The boy hid behind the door, *not moving a muscle*. (too scared to move)

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IV.

Report these questions using *if/whether* or *why/when/where/how/which/what*.

Remember the italicised verbs change into the past tense.

1. Meena asked her friend, “*Do you think your teacher will come today?*”
2. David asked his colleague, “*Where will you go this summer?*”
3. He asked the little boy, “*Why are you studying English?*”
4. She asked me, “*When are we going to leave?*”
5. Pran asked me, “*Have you finished reading the newspaper?*”
6. Seema asked her, “*How long have you lived here?*”
7. Sheila asked the children “*Are you ready to do the work?*”

### Answer

1. Meena asked her friend if she thought her teacher would come that day.
2. David asked his colleague where he would go that summer.
3. He asked the little boy why he was studying English.
4. She asked me when we were going to leave.
5. Pran asked me if I had finished reading the newspaper.
6. Seema asked her how long she had lived there.
7. Sheila asked the children if they were ready to do the work

## A legend of Northland Beehive English

By Phoebe Cary

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### Thinking about the Poem

I.

1. Which country or countries do you think “the Northland” refers to?
2. What did Saint Peter ask the old lady for? What was the lady’s reaction?
3. How did he punish her?
4. How does the woodpecker get her 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?
6. Is this a true story? Which part of this poem do you feel is the most important?
7. What is a legend? Why is this poem called a legend?
8. Write the story of ‘A Legend of the Northland’ in about ten sentences.

### Answer

1. “The Northland” could refer to any extremely cold country in the Earth's north polar region, such as Greenland, the northern regions of Russia, Canada, Norway etc.

2. Saint Peter asked the old lady for one of her baked cakes to satisfy his hunger. The lady tried to bake a small cake for the saint.

3. He punished the lady by changing her into a woodpecker that built “as birds do” and gathered scanty food by boring in the “hard, dry wood” all day long.

4. The woodpecker gets her food by boring holes into trees.

5. 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. No, this not a true story; it is a legend.

I feel that the point in the story where the old lady is changed into a woodpecker is the most important. This is because the punishment meted out to the lady teaches us the value of generosity and charity.

7. A 'legend' is a popular story from the past which is believed by many but one cannot prove whether it is true or not. It usually contains a message or a moral and is narrated to children.

The poet himself says that he doesn't believe this tale to be true. This poem is called a 'legend' because it preaches generosity towards fellow beings.

8. Once Saint Peter stopped by an old lady's cottage because he was feeling hungry and weak after the day's fasting. The lady was baking

cakes on the hearth. Since he was 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 still lives in the woods and is seen by all the country school boys.

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'.

Answer

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 these legends.

### **Answer**

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 became 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 quickly away.

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.