

MAIN POINTS -

- It is a poem by Vikram Seth in which he mocks a government system.
- There was a just and placid king`.
- He ordered to build an Arch across the main thoroughfare of the city as the symbol of his triumph at the entrance.
- The arch was too low and the king's crown was banged against it and fell.
- The king became angry and ordered the chief of the builder to be hanged for this disgrace.
- The chief pleaded that it was the workmen's fault.
- The king ordered all the workmen to be hanged.
- The workmen blamed the masons for the bricks which were made of the wrong size.
- The masons blamed the architect for the faulty arch.
- The architect pleaded innocence and said that the King had recommended certain amendments in the building plan.
- Things appeared to be delicate and confusing so the wisest man was found and brought to the royal court.
- The wisest man blamed the arch and the arch was brought to the scaffold to be hanged.
- Another counsellor advised that the arch which had touched the royal head cannot be hanged.
- The king judged the restless mood of the people after this drama, he declared that someone should be hanged immediately.
- The noose was set up somewhat high and each man was measured by and by.
- The king himself was hanged by a royal decree.
- The ministers thanked God and shouted "Long Live The King!" Had the king not offered himself to be hanged, the people would have revolted against him.
- It was decided that any man passing the city gate

would choose the next king.

- An idiot passed the gate first, he chose a melon as the next king of the state.
- People of this Kingdom placed a melon and crowned it as the next king.
- It mattered less to them whether their king was a man or a melon.
- They were happy with their melon king because it would not interfere in their affairs and let them live peacefully and freely.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

- What did the King order to be constructed?**
 - An arch
 - A tomb
 - Footsteps
 - A building
- How does the writer describe the King?**
 - Arrogant
 - Just and placid
 - Egocentric
 - Merciful
- Who according to the counsel was the culprit that was brought before the King?**
 - The King
 - The crown
 - The arch
 - The chief of the builders
- Who did the chief of builders blame?**
 - The public
 - The architect
 - The masons
 - The workmen
- Finally, who was tall enough to reach the noose?**
 - The chief of the builder
 - The architect
 - Someone from the crowd
 - The King
- What order did the King give after the incident?**
 - He ordered workmen to be hanged
 - He ordered to hang the chief of builders
 - He ordered to summon the architect
 - He ordered to gather all people

7. **What is the most important to the public of the state?**
 - a. Their peace and liberty
 - b. How the state is ruled
 - c. Their wealth
 - d. Their involvement in state decisions
8. **Who was to choose the next King?**
 - a. The next person to pass the City Gate
 - b. The Ministers
 - c. The public
 - d. The heir of the deceased King
9. **Why did the idiot reply the way he did?**
 - a. Because he liked melons
 - b. Because he rode horses
 - c. Because he knew how to use sword
 - d. Because he grew melons
10. **"This is a disgrace." What was a disgrace?**
 - a. Poorly built arch
 - b. Unenthusiastic crowd
 - c. Crown being struck
 - d. None of the above
11. **What sort of principles seem to thrive in the state?**
 - a. Democratic
 - b. Laissez faire
 - c. Authoritative
 - d. Communistic
12. **What impression do you form of the crowd of the state?**
 - a. They were of no good
 - b. They were supportive of their King
 - c. They were indifferent who was throned
 - d. Both a and c
13. **According to the architect, who made the amendments?**
 - a. The king
 - b. The chief of the builders
 - c. He himself
 - d. The masons
14. **What happened when the King rode down the thoroughfare?**
 - a. The crowd cheered
 - b. No one was impressed
 - c. The King's crown fell
 - d. Not mentioned
15. **What was the purpose of the construction ordered by the King?**
 - a. To continue a legacy
 - b. To solidify the King's rule
 - c. To improve viewers morally
 - d. To carry out a ritual
16. **Why did the King's crown fall?**
 - a. Because the arch was built too low
 - b. Because he lost his balance
 - c. Because the crown was heavy
 - d. Because he was attacked
17. **Listening about his own hanging, who did the King call for?**
 - a. The oldest man in the country
 - b. The wisest man in the country
 - c. The wisest minister in his administration
 - d. All the people
18. **Why was it shameful to hang the arch?**
 - a. Because it was innocent
 - b. Because it was non-living
 - c. Because it was newly built
 - d. Because it had touched the King's head
19. **How was the public demand fulfilled?**
 - a. By voting
 - b. By the King's discretion
 - c. By measuring height one by one
 - d. By the councillors' decision
20. **Who was chosen as the new King?**
 - a. A minister
 - b. A horse
 - c. A melon
 - d. A sword
21. **After all the considerations and discussions, the crowd was getting _____.**
 - a. restless
 - b. amused
 - c. horrified
 - d. bored
22. **The sense of justice of the king is totally _____.**
 - a. rational
 - b. irrational
 - c. average
 - d. logical
23. **The king was very _____.**
 - a. tall
 - b. short
 - c. thin
 - d. fat
24. **The oldest man was taken to be the _____.**
 - a. wisest
 - b. cruelest
 - c. ugliest

d. none of these

25. Who was finally hanged in the poem?

- a. the king b. architect
- c. wise man d. the arch

26. The _____ blamed the king for making certain amendments in the plan.

- a. architect b. workmen
- c. queen d. ministers

27. The ministers led the melon to the _____.

- a. Garbage b. kitchen
- c. throne d. none

ANSWER KEY

1-a, 2-b, 3-c, 4-d, 5-d, 6-b, 7-a, 8-a, 9-a, 10-c, 11-b, 12-d, 13-a, 14-c, 15-c, 16-a, 17-b, 18-d, 19-c, 20-c, 21-a, 22-b, 23-a, 24-a, 25-a, 26-a, 27-c

VERY SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. How was the King in the poem?

Ans. The King in the poem was just and peaceful.

2. What did the King want to build?

Ans. The King wanted to build an arch that would stand triumphantly on the main thoroughfare.

3. Why did the king become angry?

Ans. The arch built was too low, it banged against the crown and it fell from the king's head.

4. Whom did the king order to hang first?

Ans. The chief of the builders was ordered to be hanged first.

5. Who blamed the masons for the bricks of wrong size?

Ans. The workmen blamed the Masons for the bricks of wrong size.

6. The king declared that someone must be hanged immediately. Why did he do so?

Ans. The people were getting restless and needed some solid and real action.

7. " The _____ was set up somewhat high "and each man was measured by and by.

Ans. Noose

8. Who was the only tall man to fit the nose?

Ans. The King

9. Finally, who was hanged by the royal decree?

Ans. The King

10. Who was crowned as the next king of the city?

Ans. The melon was crowned as the next king of the city.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Why did the king proclaim an arch to be constructed?

Ans. The king proclaimed an arch to be constructed at the entrance of the city. The arch would be a symbol of his time like a victory monument. He wanted the arch to be constructed across the major thoroughfare of the city.

2. The king, in this poem, was just and placid. Why did he become angry?

Ans. The king was described as Just and placid in the poem But He quickly lost his temper when his crown tumbled down. As a just judge, he ordered that the guilty person or thing be hanged. But he was a complete moron. He was whimsical and easily influenced. He took his sense of justice too far. He had thus invited his own execution.

3. How did the chief of builders, the workmen and the masons save their lives?

Ans. The chief of builders assigned the blame to the workers. To save their lives, the workers blamed the brick makers and masons. The architect was blamed by the masons for the low arch.

4. How did circumstances lead to the execution of the king himself?

Ans. On the advice of the wise man, the king had the arch executed. However, the arch was defended by a counsellor. The people, on the other hand, were agitated. They demanded action and the death penalty. So a noose was rigged to hang someone. Only the king was tall enough to fit through the noose. As a result, the king himself had to be hanged by royal decree.

5. What custom was enforced to get a new ruler?

Ans. The state custom of selecting a new ruler was very amusing. The first person to pass through the city gates would be choose the ruler of the state. The passing idiot liked melons. Soon after his suggestion, a melon was installed on the throne.

6. Read the lines and Answer the following:

To the proceedings. Being just
(And placider now) he said, 'I must
Have all the workmen hanged instead.'
The workmen looked surprised, and said,
'O King, you do not realise
The bricks were made of the wrong size.'
'Summon the masons!' said the King.
The masons stood there quivering.
'It was the architect...', they said,
The architect was summoned.

a. What was the problem with the bricks?

Ans. They were made small

b. What does the word 'Quivering' mean?

Ans. The act of shaking due to fear.

c. What does the word 'Summon' mean?

Ans. Call someone officially

d. To whom did the masons pass the blame?

Ans. To the Architect

7. Describe the humour and irony of the poem.

Ans. The very title of the poem is humorous: a melon is crowned as a king, how absurd and ridiculous. The king was just and the placid is quite ironic. He got angry on small things and his sense of justice could be seen when he was to hang anyone whether it might be an arch.

8. Read the lines below and Answer the questions;

Well, architect,' said His Majesty.
Under the arch he lost his crown.
The arch was built too low. A frown
Appeared upon his placid face.
The King said, 'This is a disgrace.
The chief of builders will be hanged.
The rope and gallows were arranged.
The chief of builders was led out.
He passed the King. He gave a shout,

'O King, it was the workmen's fault'

'Oh!' said the King, and called a halt

a. What happened when the king was going to edify the spectators?

Ans. His head collided with an arch and his crown fell down.

b. Whom did the king order to punish initially?

Ans. Chief of the Builders.

c. What does the word 'Gallows' mean?

Ans. Wooden frame used in the past for killing people by hanging.

9. What custom was enforced to get a new ruler?

Ans. The state custom of selecting a new ruler was very amusing. The first person to pass through the city gates would choose the next ruler of the state. The passing idiot liked melons. Soon after his suggestion, a melon was crowned on the throne.

10. Why was the crowd restless?

Ans. The crowd had been watching the whole drama for long. They expected something exciting to happen but nothing happened. The hanging was averted on one reason for the other. The crowd felt restless and agitated. They wanted justice and real action. The king then ordered, someone should be hanged immediately.

11. How did ministers justify the hanging of their king?

Ans. The minister heaved a sigh of relief. At last someone was found to be hanged no matter that the man was their king. Had the king not offered himself for hanging immediately, the people would have revolted against him. So the king saved himself from the disorder and disgrace. They shouted "Long Live The King"!

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. How did the 'just and placid king' get executed?

Ans. The arch, commissioned by the king, was built low that knocked off the king's crown as he was crossing below the arch. He sentenced the chief of builders to death for causing him dishonour, who passed on the blame to the workers. The workmen blamed the masons and the masons, in turn, blamed the architect. The architect reminded the king that he had made certain changes in the

plans himself when they were shown to him.

The king was infuriated to hear that. Being righteous and tolerant, he called for the wisest man in the country, for counsel, who advised the king to hang the arch as it was the real offender who had thrown the crown off. A councillor objected to this ruling and declared it a disgrace to hang something that touched the honourable head of the king.

The crowd, gathered for the hanging, became restless. The king apprehended their mood and ruled for someone to be hanged immediately. The noose, hung high, fitted the king alone and he was hung as per the royal decree.

next man to pass the city gate would choose their next king. As it happened the next man to pass was an idiot. He said that a melon should be king. He said so because he was very fond of melons. The ministers crowned a melon on the throne. Thereafter the city was known as Melon City.

2. Narrate 'The Tale of Melon City' in your own words.

Ans. 'The Tale of Melon City' is a humorous poem. The city is called Melon City because its ruler is a melon. Once a fair and gentle king ruled over a state. He proclaimed an arch built across the thoroughfare. As he passed under the low arch it struck his head and his crown tumbled down. He thought it a disgrace and ordered the chief of builders to be hanged. The chief lay the blame on the workmen. The workmen were surprised. They said that the bricks were made of the wrong size. So the masons were found guilty. The masons shifted the blame on the architect. The architect put the blame finally on the king as he had made amendments in the plan.

The king summoned a wise man in the counsel. He held the arch guilty and ordered it to be hanged. A councillor objected to it as it had touched the Royal head. The people became restless. They wanted to see someone's hanging. Only the king's head could fit the noose. So he was hanged. It was now announced that the first man who passed the City Gate would choose the king. An idiot came. He suggested 'A melon'. So the melon was crowned the king. He was taken to the throne.

3. How did the city come to be named Melon City? Describe the events that led to its naming.

Ans. The king of a city ordered an arch to be made which was found to be too low. When the king rode under this arch, he lost his crown due to its low height.

The king ordered the chief builder to be hanged but the latter pointed out that it was someone else's fault. This blame game went on till it was found that the king himself had to be hanged by his own order. The city was without a king after the king's execution. The ministers decided that the