

- Introduction to The Tale of Melon City
- Summary of The Tale of Melon City

## Introduction to The Tale of Melon City

**The Tale of Melon City** is a humorous poem that satirizes the governance of a state ruled by a foolish king. The poem mocks the absurdity of a system where customs dominate, the ruler is a despot, and the people remain indifferent and docile. The king, who is brainless like a melon, claims to be just and peace-loving, but his actions reveal the opposite. The poem highlights the pitfalls of such governance and the people's lack of concern for their ruler as long as peace is maintained.

### Key Elements

- **Theme:** Satire on governance and leadership
- **Tone:** Humorous and ironic
- **Setting:** A fictional city ruled by a melon-like king

### Textual Evidence

The poem describes the king as "brainless melon King" and shows how the people are indifferent to his rule.

### Practice Set

- *Level 1:* What kind of king is described in the poem?
- *Level 2:* How does the poem use humor to criticize the king?
- *Level 3:* Explain the significance of the people's attitude towards their ruler in the poem.

## Answer Key

- The king is foolish and claims to be just and peace-loving.
- The poem uses irony and exaggeration to highlight the king's foolishness.
- The people's indifference shows their acceptance of poor leadership as long as peace is maintained.

## Quick Reference

- Humorous satire on leadership
- Critique of despotism and apathy
- Focus on customs and peace over justice

## Glossary

- **Satire:** Use of humor to criticize
- **Despot:** A ruler with absolute power
- **Docile:** Easily managed or submissive

## Summary of The Tale of Melon City

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The poem narrates the story of a king who orders a triumphal arch to be built across the main road of his kingdom. When the king rides under the arch, his crown hits it and falls off, causing him to feel disgraced. In anger, he orders the chief builder to be hanged. The blame shifts from the builders to the architect, who then points out that the king himself approved the plan. Confused, the king consults the wisest man, who suggests hanging the arch itself. However, a councillor argues that hanging the arch would be shameful since it touched the king's head respectfully. The crowd grows restless, demanding a hanging. The

king measures the people for the noose, but only he fits it, so he is hanged by his own order. The ministers then proclaim that the next person to pass the city gate will be king. An idiot passes by and names a melon as king, which the ministers accept. The people justify having a melon as king by saying it was the king's own choice and they care only for their peace and liberty, establishing a principle of non-interference.

## Key Elements

- **Plot:** The king's crown hits the arch, leading to a series of blame and punishment culminating in the king's own hanging.
- **Characters:** The king, builders, architect, wisest man, councillor, ministers, idiot, and the melon.
- **Themes:** Absurdity of blind authority, shifting blame, and public apathy.

## Textual Evidence

"The king ordered the chief of the builders to be hanged."

"The wisest man suggested that the arch itself must be hanged."

"The king was hanged as per his own orders."

"An idiot passed by the gate and said 'A melon' should be king."

## Practice Set

- *Level 1:* What caused the king's crown to fall?
- *Level 2:* How did the blame shift among the people involved in building the arch?
- *Level 3:* Discuss the significance of the king being hanged by his own order.

## Answer Key

- The king's crown hit the triumphal arch and fell off.
- The builders blamed defective bricks, the builders blamed the architect, and the architect blamed the king's approval.

- The king's hanging symbolizes the consequences of unjust leadership and blind authority.

## Quick Reference

- King orders arch construction
- Crown hits arch, blame shifts
- King consults wisest man
- King hanged by own order
- Melon chosen as new king

## Glossary

- **Triumphal arch:** A monumental arch built to celebrate victory
- **Architect:** Person who designs buildings
- **Councillor:** A member of the king's advisory council