

ENGLISH LITERATURE

THE BOON OF WORDS

EXERCISES

I. Word meanings

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| 1. Got on everyone's nerves | irritated everyone |
| 2. Irreverent | disrespectful |
| 3. Come to a sticky end | get into great trouble |
| 4. Take him in hand | deal strictly with him |
| 5. Reprimands | scolding |
| 6. Turn over a new leaf | change for the better |
| 7. Joss | incense |
| 8. Temerity | boldness that also seemed rude |
| 9. Puny mortal | small human being |
| 10. Mollified | less angry |

II. Complete these sentences to summarize the story.

1. Raman was a very clever but irreverent boy.
2. The villagers were upset with him because he made fun of them.
3. His mother took him in hand.
4. After his studies he did not know what job he could take up.
5. His teacher sent him to a nearby temple.
6. There Raman prayed for many hours.
7. The goddess revealed herself to him in all her glory.
8. Suddenly, Raman burst out laughing.
9. The goddess got angry and she raised all her thousand heads.
10. Raman was very happy with her curse because she had given him an interesting occupation.
11. The goddess was so amazed that she blessed him with fame.

III. Answer the followings

1. *His teacher was very pleased with him.* Why was Raman's teacher pleased with him when everyone else was unhappy?

Ans. Raman's teacher was very pleased with him because he was quite good at his lessons. When his mind was occupied, Raman forgot to play pranks like before.

2. *How will I face my mother? Why would it be difficult for Raman to face his mother?*

Ans. Raman would find it difficult to face his mother because he still did not know what to do for a living. She had sent Raman to the teacher and asked him not to come back till he learnt enough to earn his living. Raman's teacher taught him all he could and asked him to go out into the world and seek his fortune.

3. *Suddenly, a thought struck Raman and he burst into laughter. What was the thought? How did the goddess react to his thought?*

Ans. Raman wondered what the goddess did when she had a cold, because humans found it difficult with just one nose and two hands whereas the goddess had a thousand heads. The goddess was furious and cursed Raman to be a vikatakavi.

4. *The goddess was amazed at Raman's wit that made him see a joke even in a curse. What was the joke? How did this joke affect his fortune?*

Ans. Raman found being a vikatakavi an interesting occupation and said that it was a palindrome which read the same left to right and right to left. The goddess was amazed at Raman's wit and sense of humour. She was a little mollified and blessed him. She told him that he would become a jester at the court of the king and make a name for himself. Eventually, Raman did become the court jester to King Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagar and become very famous as Tenali Raman for his jokes and witty answers.

5. *What did the elders of the village tell Raman's mother?*

Ans. The elders of the village told Raman's mother that her son would come to a sticky end if she did not take him in hand. They warned her that if he went on making a mockery of everything, he would be sent away from the village.

6. *Why did the holy man help Raman?*

Ans. The holy man was a teacher, and Raman was a clever boy who was also quite good at his lessons.

7. *Write a brief character sketch of Raman.*

Ans. Raman was a clever boy. He was also a prankster. He had a brilliant mind and a great sense of humour. He was a bold and confident young man. He was able to see a joke even in a curse.