



INDIAN SCHOOL MUSCAT

SENIOR SECTION

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

CLASS IX



A LEGEND OF THE NORTHLAND - By- Phoebe Cary

DATE:

SUMMARY

'A legend of the Northland' is a ballad. A ballad is a poem narrating a story in short stanzas. Ballad is such kind of poem which tells a story in short stanzas and in the poem all the stanzas comprise four lines. In total, there are 16 stanzas in this poem and these stanzas will tell us a story. Ballads are a part of folk culture or popular culture and are passed on orally from one generation to the next. (Folk culture is a story of any area and is known as ballad). Folk culture comprises of traditional stories which are passed on from one generation to next generation.

This story is of the Northland area, the area which is near the North Pole. This exact place is not specified but 'Northland' means the area in the northernmost part of the earth i.e., near the North Pole. 'Legend' means a historical story, one which is very old and has been passed on from generation to generation.

This is a simple poem with a moral. It teaches us that we should not be greedy. We must help the poor and hungry people. One day St. Peter was hungry after the day's fasting. He saw a woman making cakes. He asked her for one. The woman was very greedy. She made a Very small and thin cake for St. Peter. But she did not want to part with even this cake. St. Peter became angry. He cursed the woman to be changed into a bird.' She became a woodpecker and flew out of the chimney. She still lives in the wood and keeps boring the trees for food.

Literary Devices in the poem

1. **Rhyme Scheme:** abcb

2. **Alliteration:** is the repetition of a consonant sound in two or more close words.

Stanza - that, they, them through - 'th' sound is repeating, look, like - 'l' sound is repeating, funny, furry - 'f' sound is repeating, yet, you - 'y' sound is repeating, learn, lesson - 'l' sound is repeating etc..

3. **Repetition:** Any word or sentence is repeated to lay emphasis on it.

Stanza 1 - 'away' word is repeated

Stanza 9 - 'rolled' word is repeated

Stanza 13, 16 - 'boring' word is repeated

4. **Enjambment:** Running lines of poetry from one to the next without using any kind of punctuation to indicate a stop

Stanza 1 - line 3 and 4

Stanza 2 - Line 1 and 2; line 3 and 4

Stanza 3 - Line 3 and 4

Stanza 4 - Line 1 and 2; 3 and 4

Stanza 10 - Line 1, 2 and 3

Stanza 11 - Line 1 and 2

5. **Simile:** Comparison using 'as' or 'like'

Stanza 2 – 'the children look like bear's cubs'. Children compared to bear's cubs

Stanza 9 – 'baked it thin as a wafer'. Cake is compared to a wafer.

Stanza 15 – 'clothes were burned black as a coal'. The colour of the burned clothes is compared to that of coal.

I. Read the extracts below and answer the questions that follow:

1. Away, away in the Northland,
Where the hours of the day are few,
And the nights are so long in winter
That they cannot sleep them through
Where they harness the swift reindeer
To the sledges, 'when it snows;
And the children look like bear's cubs
In their funny, furry clothes:

- (i) Which country does this legend belong to?
- (ii) How were the days and nights there?
- (iii) How did the people drive their sledges when it snowed?
- (iv) How did the children look in their furry clothes?
- (v) What is the name of the poet of these lines?

2. She had a scarlet cap on her head,
And that was left the same;
But all the rest of her clothes were burned
Black as a coal in the flame.
And every country schoolboy
Has seen her in the wood,
Where she lives in the trees till this very day,
Boring and boring for food.

- (i) What has every schoolboy seen?
- (ii) What does the woodpecker do all day?
- (iii) Where does she live now?

II. Answer the following questions in 30-40 words

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

Ans. A legend is a popular story from the past which is believed to be true but cannot be verified. It contains a moral which is narrated to the children to teach them moral values.

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

Ans. It is not a true story. The point of the story where the woman is turned into a woodpecker bird is the most important. This is so because the punishment teaches everyone the lesson to be generous.

3. What did Saint Peter ask the old lady for? What was the lady's reaction?

Ans. Saint Peter asked the lady to give him a cake as he was hungry. The lady did not give him a cake out of the ones that she had baked, instead she baked a smaller one for him

4. How did St. Peter punish the old lady?

Ans. He punished the selfish lady by turning her into a woodpecker bird that had to bore into the dry wood all day to get some food and shelter.

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. If the old lady knew who Saint Peter was, then she would not have been ungenerous. On the other hand, she would have served him well for the fulfilment of her greedy desires.

III. Answer the following questions in 120-150 words.

1. Which values does the legend of Saint Peter and the little woman teach?

Ans:-The legend of Saint Peter and the little woman teaches the values of love, mercy, pity, charity, kindness, and sharing. The tale is based on the moral lesson that human beings must rise above selfishness and agreed to help people in need. They should be ready to share their blessings and joys with others. God is never happy with people whose interests are confined to themselves. It is inhuman to find somebody in need and not provide the required help. The story reveals that those who lack love and empathy and are not charitable will be punished by God or His messengers. If the little woman had shared food with Saint Peter, she would have enjoyed a happy life. But her greed and selfishness resulted in her doom. She was deprived of all human comforts and was converted into a woodpecker who had to lead a life of hardship. (148 words)