

What Happened to the Reptiles

1. In what way is Pambupatti different from any other village?

Ans: While the people in other villages clashed with one another, people of Pambupatti lived in peace. They did not fight in the name of religion or language. In this way, Pambupatti is different from any other village.

2. Why is Prem determined not to return to his village?

Ans: Prem had left his village when the people had gone mad. They set the houses on fire and killed one another. So Prem is determined not to return to his village.

3. Why did Makara dislike tortoises, snakes and lizards? Write a line about each.

Ans: Makara disliked tortoises because they were slow and stupid. They even carried their houses on their backs. He disliked snakes because they were slimy and they made funny noises. Makara hated lizards because they were undependable because they changed colour.

4. What went wrong when the tortoises, snakes and lizards left the forest?

Ans: There came a tough time. The forest got filled with foul smell of rotting fruits and fishes in the absence of tortoises. Rats multiplied in the absence of snakes and without lizards, there were millions of insects in the forests.

5. Why do you think Prem wants to tell the story of the reptiles to the people of his village? Ans: The people of Prem's village had gone mad. They fought with one another in the name of religion. The story of Pambupatti gave the message of peace and coexistence. It underlined the importance of living together. So Prem wanted to carry that message to his own village.

6. Do you agree that it is difficult not to go along with someone who is very strong and powerful? Express your views frankly and clearly.

Ans: It is true that the common people are peace loving and weak. They live in constant fear of the strong and powerful. It is human nature to go with the strong, to be on the safe side. But the people also stand up against the bully when they are driven to the wall. They take up arms and fight the enemy successfully.

7 .If you were a baby crocodile, would you tell Makara that he was wrong? What would you say to convince him?

Ans: As a baby crocodile, I have a privilege to oppose my parents boldly. I would tell the elders that this world is a common property of all living creatures. To convince my dad, Makara, that he is wrong, I will give him a couple of reasons. First, it is the duty of the strong to protect the weak, and not to harass them. Secondly, this earth is not the sole property of any one person or animal. All are inter-dependent. Together, they make this earth a place worth-living.

I. SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. What was it that made Prem leave his village?

Ans: The communal riots in his village made life unsafe in the village. The people went mad, burnt houses and killed one another. So Prem left his village for good.

2. What surprised Prem in Pambupatti village?

Ans. Prem had seen people in his village fighting in the name of religion or language. But in Pambupatti, there was no violence, not even tension. People lived in peace. They also cared for the welfare of even strangers. This was something surprising for Prem.

3. What happened to the reptiles in the forest once?

Ans: The reptiles in the forest included crocodiles, snakes, turtles and lizards.

Makara being strong and selfish, drove all other reptiles out. He got rid of turtles, snakes and lizards one by one. But this created the problem of frogs and rats and insects.

4. How did the forest become normal and peaceful again?

Ans: It was a terrible time for the crocodiles. A small crocodile pointed out what had gone wrong. They knew that Makara was not all that strong and right. They called all their reptile friends back to Pambupatti. Their arrival marked the beginning of normal and peaceful life again in the forest.

II. LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Narrate the story of the reptiles as told by Zai Whitaker in not more than 80 words.

Ans: Prem was a native of a village far from Pambupatti. Communal riots broke out and Prem left the village. He walked and got free lifts. He reached Pambupatti. There an old man told him a tale of reptiles—snakes, crocodiles, lizards and turtles. Makara, the biggest crocodile was the master of the forest. He became selfish and vain. He managed to get rid of all the cobras and other reptiles. As a result the forest was infested with rats. Awful things happened. The reptiles were welcomed back to strike a balance.

2. What is the story's underlying message or advice to the readers? Do you also support the author's view?

Ans: The story of the reptiles is a myth but it has a moral and a message. This world belongs to all sorts of creatures. Together they keep a balance. Every kind of creature serves a useful purpose. It is sad that man is trying to kill all the species and rule over the world like a dictator. This is certainly not practicable or in his own interest. Our motto should be to 'Live and Let Live'. I quite subscribe to this view.