Name _____ Date _____

Tenali Raman and the Thieves

Folktale · 3rd–5th grade

Tenali Raman was a poet and jester in the court of King Krishnadevaraya, famous across South India for his clever tricks.

One summer, there was no rain, and Tenali's garden was dying. Watering it meant pulling buckets up from his deep well, hour after hour, and his back ached just thinking about it.

One evening, Tenali noticed two shadows hiding behind the bushes near his house. Thieves! He smiled to himself and called loudly to his wife, "Wife, there are so many robbers about these days. Let's hide our gold and jewels in a safe place."

"Where?" asked his wife, who understood his plan at once.

"In the well," Tenali said loudly. He and his wife filled a heavy trunk with stones, carried it outside and dropped it into the well with a great splash. Then they went inside and blew out the lamps.

The thieves rubbed their hands together. As soon as the house was dark, they began drawing water from the well, bucket after bucket, to reach the treasure. They poured each bucket onto the ground, which happened to be Tenali's thirsty garden. All night they worked.

Just before dawn, the exhausted thieves finally pulled up the trunk and opened it. Stones! At that moment, Tenali leaned out of the window. "Thank you, friends! My garden hasn't had such a good watering in months!" The thieves ran off, and Tenali's garden bloomed all summer.

Questions

1. What was Tenali Raman's problem?

2. Why did Tenali speak loudly to his wife?

3. What was really in the trunk?

4. Where did the thieves pour the water?

5. What can you infer about Tenali's wife?

6. What is the lesson?

7. How did Tenali solve two problems at once?

8. How do you think the thieves felt at dawn?

The lesson in my own words

Answer Key

1. His garden needed water.
2. So the thieves would hear.
3. Stones.
4. Onto Tenali's garden.
5. She was clever too and helped with the plan.
6. A clever mind can turn a problem into a solution.
7. Answers will vary.
8. Answers will vary.

Lesson: A clever mind can turn a problem into a solution.