

Assignment 1

Name _____

Read the following folk tale. As you read, think about what lesson the story is trying to teach. Answer the questions.

All for a Pansa (folk tale from India)

In a small village in a valley there lived a merchant who was not happy with his only son. The boy seemed stupid, boring, and lazy. His mother loved him very much, and was always making excuses for him.

When the boy got old enough to get married, his mother begged his father to find a wife for him. The merchant, however, was ashamed of his son and had decided that he would not be allowed to get married. This was the one thing his mother had been looking forward to for years, though, and she argued with her husband. She tried and tried to make her son seem smart and clever, and pestered her husband until he got annoyed.

"Look," he finally said to her. "I've heard you praise him over and over, but I've never seen any truth in what you say. Mothers are blind to their son's faults. However, I'll give the little fool one last chance to prove himself worthy of getting married. Call him in here, and give him this one small coin, this pansa. Tell him to go to the bazaar, and with this one pansa he is to buy one item. That one item must do all of the following things: it must be something to eat, it must be something to drink, it must be something to chew on, it must be something to plant in the garden, and it must be some food for the cow. If he can pass this test, I will find him a wife."

The mother called the boy in, gave him those instructions, gave him the coin, and he left.

As he walked to the bazaar, he thought about what he had to do, and got worried. "What one thing can be bought with one pansa that will do all of those things?" he asked himself. "Surely this is an impossible test. I'll never be able to do it, and I'll never get married."

At that moment, the daughter of the ironsmith came up. Noticing his unhappy expression, she asked him what was wrong. He explained his dilemma to her.

"I know what you can do," she said. "Go to the bazaar and buy a watermelon with your pansa. It will do all the things your father said it must, and he will be happy with you."

The boy thanked her for the excellent idea, and followed her suggestion.

When his mother saw how clever his solution to the test was, she was very pleased. "Look," she said to her husband. "Look how clever our son has been in completing the task you gave him!"

"Actually, Mother," said the boy, "it was not my idea. The daughter of the ironsmith told me what to buy."

The father was impressed by the boy's honesty, and that he had managed to find a solution, even if it wasn't his own idea. They invited the family of the ironsmith to their house for dinner. All the parents were pleased to see love bloom between the two young people, who eventually got married. The boy became a hard-working young husband, and they all lived happily ever after.

1. What "life lesson" is this folk tale trying to teach?

2. Identify an important event that happened in the story, and explain why it is important in the story.

Event: _____

Importance: _____
