Vetala – the Ghost Who Set a King Riddles

Subjects: English · Ethics · Religious Education | recommended from age 12 (B1) | Video: 8:36 min



Watch the video
youtu.be/3V_M8j3jVHg

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

A · Before watching

1. Are there situations where it is right to stay silent even though you know the answer? And when do you have to speak up? Write down one example.

B · While watching

1. What is a vetala? How is it different from a European vampire?

2. What does the ascetic give the king every day, and how does the king find out what the gifts are worth?

3. What condition does the vetala set when the king lifts it onto his shoulder?

4. How does the king answer the riddle of the swapped heads, and what happens next?

5. What secret does the vetala tell the king about the ascetic, and how does the king save himself?

Useful words

corpse	Leichnam	to sacrifice	opfern
cremation ground	Verbrennungsplatz	duty	Pflicht
ascetic	Asket	honesty	Ehrlichkeit
riddle	Rätsel	to bow down	sich verbeugen

C · Put the story in order

Number the events from 1 to 8 in the order they happen in the video.

	The vetala tells of a woman who puts two heads on the wrong bodies.
	The vetala warns the king that the ascetic wants to sacrifice him.
	Every day an ascetic silently gives the king a fruit.
	At the last riddle the king has no answer and stays silent.
	A monkey bites into a fruit and a gemstone falls out.
	The king defeats the ascetic and wishes for the stories to be known everywhere.
	On a moonless night the king takes a corpse down from a tree.
	The king answers, and the corpse flies back to the tree.

D · Think and discuss

1. The king speaks every time, even though he knows the corpse will fly back. Why? Explain his belief and give your opinion: would you have spoken in his place?

2. In the end the king is saved because he honestly admits he does not know something. Explain the lesson “Wisdom doesn't mean knowing everything.” When can it take courage to say “I don't know”?

E · Riddles and answers

For each riddle, write down the king's answer and then your own, different answer with a reason.

	The king's answer	Your answer (with a reason)
Swapped heads: who is the husband?		
Three men: who should marry the girl?		
Three queens: who is the most delicate?		

F · Get creative

1. Invent your own short vetala story (about 8–10 sentences) in your exercise book. It should end with a question about justice or duty that has no easy answer. Swap stories in class and discuss your answers.