

# The Mistress of Spices

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- 1 a** *Student's own answer. Possible details:* She is Indian/probably a Hindu/between 40 and 50 years old.  
**b** Mistress means here ii) a woman who is in control of a situation
- 2** *Student's own answer. Possible details:*  
**a** Food, clothes, language, religion, family relationships, climate, level of technological development, etc. are all different.  
**b** Living alongside people from many different races and cultures. Confronting racism and discrimination. Children and young people imitating their American peers in ways their parents do not like or understand. Feeling a loss of identity and culture. Facing a conflict between traditional and modern lifestyles.
- 3 a** For example, til or sesame seeds are used in bread; kesar or saffron is used with rice, which turns it into a yellow colour.  
**b** See the table below:

Number	English Name	Indian Name	Magical Powers	Food
2	ginger	adrak	gives courage and strength	used in drinks and cakes
3	asafetida	hing	prevents people from falling in love and makes them strong in battle	used to flavour stews and soups
4	lotus root	kanwal	the spice of love	cooked in sugared water to make sweets and desserts
5	black peppercorn	kalo marich	makes people tell all their secrets	used in various hot dishes
6	turmeric	haldi	the spice of love and luck	used to colour food yellow e.g. rice
7	black cumin	kalo jire	gives protection against evil	not commonly used in cooking
8	red chillies	lanka	fight evil or cause destruction	used in various hot dishes

See page 2 for Question 4

## 4

Character	Spices	Reasons	Results
Lalita	Turmeric (p21)	for love and luck and to take away old age	She finds support for battered wives in a magazine Tilo gave her and she gains in confidence. (p68)
	Fennel (p34)	to strengthen her mind	
Haroun and Hameeda	Black cumin (p22)	to protect Haroun from evil	He is attacked, but survives to fall in love with Hameeda.
	Red chillies (p62)	to cleanse the evil from the city	
	Lotus root (p73)	for their wedding night so their love will always be passionate	
Jagjit	Cinnamon (p23)	so one day he will say “no” and the kids who bully him will leave him alone	He joins a gang of older boys who protect him and teach him how to fight. (p38–9)
	Indian Madder (p39)	to make him calm and take away his anger	
Raven	Asafetida (p27)	so he will not fall in love with her (though she does not give it to him)	He falls in love with her.  He tells her secrets about how he got his name and his recurring dreams.
	Lotus root (p28)	so he will fall in love with her (though she does not give it to him)	
	Peppercorn (p45)	it makes him tell all his secrets	
Tilo	Ginger (p17)	the Old One gives it to her to give her courage before entering Shampati’s Fire and going to America	Nothing happens. She is left alone in America as a punishment. (p77)
	Ginger (p40)	she takes it to give herself courage before going out of the store for the first time to visit Geeta.	
	Makaradwaj, The King of Spices (p66)	to make herself young again for Raven	
	Sesame (p76)	to protect her on her journey	
	Turmeric (p76)	to prepare her for her journey	
	Red chilli (p76)	to call up Shampati’s Fire so that it will take her back to the island	

The Grandfather and his family	Almond and saffron (p32)	to sweeten their words and thoughts and to help them remember love, not anger	He gets a very bad stomach and convinces Ramu to visit Tilo.
	Thorn herb mixed with honey (p52)	to give him the golden tongue so that whatever he says will make people believe and obey him.	

5 *Student's own answer.*

6 *Student's own answer.*

7 See the table below for possible answers.

Number	a) Rule	b) Reason
1	She must not look in a mirror. (p71)	It is important not to be vain because a Mistress must not want anything for herself. She is there only to help others.
2	She must not leave her store and go out in the world. (p22)	Only the store and the spices are important (p18). A Mistress is not of this world, but the spiritual world. If she becomes involved in the physical world she loses her powers.
3	She must only help her own people and only them. Others must go somewhere else for help. (p24)	Perhaps a form of positive discrimination. Also there is a risk that foreigners will not respect the rules of her culture, which in this case could be dangerous.
4	She must have no desires for herself. (p26)	She will not see things clearly any more. She will become confused and the spices will no longer obey her. (p27)
5	She must love everyone equally. (p33)	She must not have any desires for herself. See 4 above.
6	She must not use the powers of the spices to help herself. (p54)	See 4 above. Also, this prevents corruption.
7	If a Mistress is called back and she refuses to come, she will be called back anyway. And then all those around her – all those she loves – will be destroyed by Shampati's Fire. (p64)	The good work a Mistress does can be turned into evil if she does not respect the real purpose and source of her powers.

8 *Student's own answer. Students might suggest setting up a community centre with activities and support services for ethnic minority groups. The centre could run various projects such as a karate club, a centre for battered wives, or support services for families and young people.*