

The Lost Child

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Chapter Overview

In the story 'The lost child', the author highlights a child's love for his parents. It is a story about a young child who gets attracted by things around him, on the way to the fair. In the fair, he wants many things. He knows that his parents would refuse and so he moves ahead. When he gets separated from his parents, all those things do not tempt him.

Summary

Child Goes to Spring Fair with his Parents

It was the festival of spring. Everyone was going to the spring fair. The child was going to the fair with his parents. The child was very happy and excited. He was attracted by many things around him especially, the toys.

The child was also attracted by the purple dragon flies, a black bee and butterfly fluttering over the mustard flowers. He wanted to catch one of them but his mother called him. He was also attracted by small insects and worms along the footpath. He also collected the petals in the grove. He also heard the cooing of doves and ran round the banyan tree.

Entry into the Fair

The parents and the child entered the fair passing through the mustard fields. In the fair, the child heard the sweetmeatseller selling sweets like gulab jamuns, rasgulla, burfi, jalebi, etc.

The child was attracted towards burfi that was his favourite sweet and wanted it. But he knew that if he asked for it, his parents would call him greedy. So without waiting for their answer, he moved on. Then, the child was attracted towards the garlands of gulmohar and he also wanted a garland. But, this time also, he knew that his parents would call it cheap and would refuse to buy so he moved on.

Further, the child saw a balloon seller and desired to buy all the colourful balloons. But, he knew that his parents would call him too old to play with them, so, he walked away.

The Child is Lost

As the child walked, he saw a snake charmer. He was playing a flute to the snake. He went towards it but then remembered that his parents had told him not to hear such music. So, he moved away.

Then he saw a roundabout. He requested his parents to ride the roundabout. However, there was no reply. The child looked back around to search for his parents, but couldn't find them. He, then realised that he was separated from his parents and was lost.

The Child was in Trouble

As the child realised that he was lost, he started crying. He was filled with panic and called out for his parents. He looked around in all directions with the hope of finding them. However, he could not see them. His clothes were now muddy and his yellow turban was untied. He ran quickly to a shrine which was crowded by the people.

The Kind Man helps the Child

There was a huge rush of people near the temple. The child struggled to search his parents in the crowd but he was pushed back by the crowd.

A man picked up the child in his arms when he heard his cry in the crowd. He asked the child about his parents and how he reached there. But the child only said that he wanted his mother and father. The man took the child to roundabout. He asked him to have a ride but the child continued crying for his parents.

The man offered many things to the child to divert his attention. The man took him to the place where snake-charmer was playing the flute and asked the child to listen to the music. The man also took him near the balloons and offered him a balloon.

He also took him to the flower seller and offered the child a garland to put round his neck. He further took the child to the sweet shop and offered him sweets. But the child had no fascination for all these things. He only wanted his parents and cried for them.

WORD MEANINGS

The given page nos. correspond to the pages in the prescribed textbook.

Word	Meaning
lingering on	to stay at a place longer than necessary because of reluctance to leave
receding	moving away
red-eyed	with eyes red with anger
tyrant's way	strict and harsh manner
melted	to become softer or less strong (in feeling)
free spirit	happy mood
melting gold	the colour of gold
gaudy	bright
intercepting	interfering with
still its wings	stop flying

Word	Meaning
teeming out	coming out in large numbers
wild capers	uncontrolled running
thongs	large number of people
converging	coming together
whirlpool	centre of attraction
half knew	thought that he knew
hawked	tried to sell by calling out
stole into	passed into
gentle rippling	soft rushing sound
roundabout	merry-go-round with animals and seats to ride on

Word	Meaning
flushed	excited
convulsed	to shake violently
hither and thither	this way and that
rage of running	running due to panic
filmy eyes	film of tears on the eyes
flashing, murderous	full of anger
trampled underfoot	walked over
stooping	bending
steered clear	moved away
soothe	pacify/calm down
double-pitched strain	a forceful cry

NCERT FOLDER

(Here we have covered questions given in the NCERT textbook along with their answers.)

Think About It (Page 6)

1 What are the things the child sees on his way to the fair? Why does he lag behind?

Ans. On his way to the fair, the child sees many things like toys, the flowering golden mustard fields, the purple dragon flies, a black bee, butterfly, small insects and worms. Along the way, the child also hears the cooing of doves.

The child always lags behind his parents because of his attraction towards the beauty of nature and the things he saw on his way.

2 In the fair child wants many things. What are they? Why does he move on without waiting for an answer?

Ans. As the child enters the fair, he desires to possess many things. These things include *burfi* at the sweetmeat seller, the garland of gulmohar and colourful balloons. He also wanted to ride the roundabout. He moved on without waiting for an answer because he knew that his request would be refused every time.

3 When does the child realise that he has lost his way? How have his anxiety and insecurity been described?

Ans. When the child asked his parents to get a ride on the roundabout, he got no reply. So, the child turned around and looked in all the directions to see his parents.

But they were not present. It was then that the child realised that he was lost and had separated from his parents.

The anxiety and insecurity is described by the way the child reacted to the situation. The child as soon as realised that he was lost, started crying. He ran here and there to look for his parents. He even entered the huge crowd of people gathered near the shrine.

Even when the man tried to console him, he refused to accept anything and called for his mother and father.

4 Why does the lost child lose interest in the things that he had wanted earlier?

Ans. The lost child loses interest in the things that he wanted earlier because he was panic-stricken on being separated from his parents. All the things that attracted him in the fair no longer fascinated to him and the only thing he wanted was his parents.

5 What do you think happens in the end? Does the child find his parents?

Ans. The end is not mentioned in the story. It can be assumed that in the end, the parents, who continuously kept checking that their child was with them, may have suddenly realised that he was missing and came looking for the lost child. The kind and understanding man who tried to console the little boy by offering him various things at the fair may have also asked him for some description of his parents and helped him find them.

It can thus be said that the child might have found his parents.