

The Lost Child - Mulk Raj Anand

Answers to NCERT Questions

THINK ABOUT IT

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 toys, a host of dragon flies and as he walks along with his parents, he is showered with the petals of fragrant flowers. He is now distracted by doves, and he goes skipping around the banyan tree in search of them. He being a small child lags behind as he is attracted to everything he lays his curious eyes on.

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

Ans: At the fair, the little boy murmured softly that he wanted burfi from the sweetmeat seller, flowers from the flower seller, balloons from the balloon seller, and to listen to the music of the snake charmer. He moves on without waiting for an answer because he knew that his parents would find an excuse for not fulfilling any of his demands. The only demand he voiced loudly was that he wanted to go on the roundabout.

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

Ans: The little boy realised that he had lost his way, when his request for a ride on the roundabout was met with a silence. When he turned around to look at his parents, he realised that they were not to be seen anywhere. His reaction was a full, deep cry that rose from within his dry throat, his body convulsed and he began crying with fear and anxiety. Wailing loudly, he runs around wildly, shouting out for his parents in absolute desperation.

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

Ans: The boy was suddenly noticed by a man in the crowd who lifted him in his arms and tried to console him. In his attempt at calming down the child, he offers him everything the child had been wanting his parents to buy him. He has only one reply to the gentleman and that was, "I want my mother, I want my father. The little child loses interest in everything around him because he yearns to be with his family, who he had left behind somewhere in the crowded fair as he absent-mindedly capers around enjoying and wanting the various things on display.

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

Ans: The author has always empathised with the weak, troubled, suppressed and down trodden. In this lesson, the little child, who loses his parents as he innocently saunters into the fair, is desperate, anxious, and inconsolable. A good samaritan picks up the boy and tries his best to pacify him and offers him toys, sweets, flowers and balloons to stop the outburst and wailing. The author has introduced this character, who was different from all the other indifferent and unconcerned people in the crowd, with the intention of a happy ending. He would have definitely gone out of his way to unite the child with his parents. On the other hand, the parents also would have made intense efforts to secure their child, and the threesome would have been united.

Additional Questions

Short Answer Questions (30-40 words: 2 Marks each)

1. How does the author introduce the lesson?

Ans: The author introduces the lesson with the spring season when rural India celebrates the occasion with fun, fair and festivities. The story begins with a picture of colourfully dressed people who are walking, riding or being carried along the road. The atmosphere is full of joy and laughter.

2. How has the child been introduced?

Ans: The child has been shown to be displaying all the characteristics of any child of his age. He is happy and eager to go to the fair, jumping along aimlessly, and wishing to possess everything he laid his eyes on. However, he does not voice his desires loudly because he is aware of the strictness of his thrifty parents. A naughty, lively, obedient and affectionate character.

3. His mother, melted by the free spirit of the day was tender and giving him her finger to hold, said, "look child, what is before you! Explain.

Ans: The tender heart of the mother melts when her son is upset for having been refused a toy by his father. To pacify him, divert his attention, and to enjoy the day whole-heartedly, she tells her son to look at the beautiful mustard fields that were in full bloom.

4. What were the excuses that the child envisage that his parents would make?

Ans: The child made his requests for various things in murmurs because he knew that if he asked for sweets, he would be called greedy. Flowers would be termed cheap, he would be considered too old to play with balloons, and listening to the music of the snake charmer was forbidden as it was 'coarse'.

5. What difference do you notice in the child's behaviour before and after he gets lost?

Ans: In the initial stages of the story, we see a happy little child, enjoying the scenes and sights all around him. He desires to own some of the things he sees, but gets easily distracted by his mother who encourages her son to enjoy the beauties of nature. He is very afraid of his father. However, after he gets lost, he is seen to be in a state of panic, and does not get pacified by any of the things he was enticed with by his saviour. All that he wanted now, was to be in the secure hands of his dear parents.

Self- Assessment Test

Short Answer Questions

1. Did the child make a deliberate mistake?
 2. Do you think that the little boy displayed adamant or arrogant behaviour?
 3. Describe the emotional turmoil experienced by the little boy.
 4. Why did the child go away from the snake charmer?
 5. Describe the mood of the child, when he passed from the mustard field.
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Long Answer Questions

1. Write an article on the need to provide security for children in such situations as shown in the story. You are Simson/Simple.
2. Make a diary entry as the man who saved the child.
3. Write a character sketch of the little boy's father and mother.