

THE LOST CHILD



Introduction:

'The Lost Child' is a short story about a child, his aspiration, demands and realisation. The story is mainly focused on the importance of parents in our life. We don't try to understand the true value of parents and take them for granted. The value of parents is revealed only when they are out of sight. That is what the little boy in the story realised once he got lost in a fair. The ending is emotional as the readers keep on guessing whether the lost child finally meets his parents or not. The little boy goes to a fair with his parents. He is very happy and excited and wants everything in the fair that fascinates him. He wants sweets, toys, balloons, garland etc displayed in the shops. But his parents don't buy them for him. The child soon gets lost and separated from his parents while engrossed in enjoying the colorful fair. This causes panic in his mind and when a man, who finds him, offers him all that fascinated him the most, the child refuses to accept those. He now wants nothing but only his parents.

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SUMMARY :

It was the time of spring festival. There was great excitement in the atmosphere. The people could be seen busy going to the fair, all in a happy mood. Some walked, some rode on horses, others sat, being carried in bamboo and bullock carts. A child was also heading towards the fair along with his parents. He was very happy and excited. While his parents were going ahead with all their attention on reaching the fair, the child enjoyed the beauty of the nature with utmost curiosity. The child's joy reached its climax once he set his foot in the fair. His eyes got attracted to everything. The stalls of toys and sweets fascinated him too much. He wanted them but was well aware of his father's harsh attitude. His mother, however, tried to pacify him and divert his attention towards other things. The child was so busy in observing different things in the fair that he used to lag behind his parents every now and then. Every time he wanted something but was discouraged by his parents. As they moved forward, the child got demurred by the decorative items on the stalls. His mouth watered seeing sweets decorated with gold and silver leaves.

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SUMMARY :

"I want burfi", he slowly murmured. But he half knew as he begged that his plea would not be heeded. So without waiting for an answer, he moved on. Then he got attracted to a garland of Gulmohar but did not ask for it. Then he saw colorful balloons and was filled with an overwhelming desire to get them all. But he knew that his parents would say he was too old to play with balloons. So he walked away. The child then saw a snake-charmer. He liked the music played by the charmer and wanted to stay for a while to listen to it but again he was discouraged by his parents. Then he saw a roundabout swing and wanted to get a ride on it. This time he could not resist himself and called for his parents. On getting no reply, he turned to look at his parents. But they were not there. The panic-stricken child made frantic searches for his parents here and there but found them nowhere. Then he realised that he was lost and separated from his parents. He began to weep bitterly and tried to console him by offering many different things sold in the fair. He offered him sweets, balloons and garlands but the child refused them all.



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POINTS TO PONDER

- A little child is guided by his parents to the village fair.
- The child was attracted to many things viz. toys, dragon-flies, little insects and worms, sweets, flowers, balloons, burfi, flowers, snake-charmer etc.
- Thrilled by all these things, he lagged behind his parents.
- His parents constantly kept watch over him.
- He wanted to own them all, but he knew his parents would refuse to buy him anything. So without waiting for an answer he moved on with them.
- He was immensely attracted by a roundabout in full swing. He made a bold request for a ride on the roundabout. There was no reply. When he turned round he could not find them anywhere.





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POINTS TO PONDER

- Panic-stricken he runs here and there in search of his parents, crying in real fear, "Mother, Father." He realises that he is lost. He feels absolutely desolated.
- A kind hearted man picks him up in his arms and tries to console him.
- The person offers him all those things which he wanted earlier.
- But now the child does not want anything.
- He just sobbed, "I want my father, I want my mother."

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ASSIGNMENT : QUESTIONS TO TEST COMPREHENSION



Short Answer Questions (30-40 words)

1. What are the things the child sees on his way to the fair?
2. Why does the child lag behind?
3. In the fair he wants many things. Why does he move on without waiting for an answer?
4. Why does the lost child lose interest in the things that he had wanted earlier?
5. What do you think happens in the end? Does the child find his parents?

Long Answer Questions (100-150 words) :

1. When does the child realise that he has lost his way? How have his anxiety and insecurity been described?
2. Who saved the child in the fair? What did he/she do to soothe the child?

Imp : Read the story thoroughly and write all the difficult words from the story and their meanings in your Vocabulary Note-book as part of your preparation for UPSC (NDA)