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The Lost Child

A. Warmer

Have you ever been to a fair? Did you go alone or with someone? Were you separated from the persons you went with? How did you feel at that time?

It was the festival of spring. A colourfully dressed crowd of men, women and children were all going to the village fair. Some



walked, some rode on horses, others went on bullock carts. One little boy ran, brimming over with life and laughter, to keep pace with his parents. "Come, child, come," called his parents, as he lagged behind, attracted by the toys in the shops at the fair. He hurried towards his parents, his feet obedient to their calls, his eyes still on the toys. He could not control his desires, even though he knew well the old, cold, stare of refusal in their eyes. "I want that toy," he begged.

His father looked at him angrily while his mother was tender, and giving him her finger to catch, said: "Look, child, what is before you." The faint disgust of the child's unfulfilled desire disappeared when the pleasure of what was before him filled his eager eyes.

The child could see many footpaths full of people. He felt at once afraid of, and attracted by the confusion of the world he was entering. At the corner of the entrance there was a sweetmeat-seller, calling out: "Gulab





jamun, rasgulla, burfi, jalebi". The child stared and his mouth watered for the burfi that was his favourite sweet. "I want that burfi," he slowly murmured. But he half knew that his request would not be heeded. So without waiting for an answer, he moved on.

A man stood holding a pole with yellow, red, green and purple balloons flying from it. The child was carried away by the rainbow glory of their colours, and he wanted to have them all. But he knew his parents would say he was too old to play with them. So he walked on further.

A juggler stood playing a flute to a snake, which coiled itself

in a basket. The snake raised its head in a graceful bend like the neck of a swan. But he knew his parents had forbidden him to hear the coarse music of the jugglers. So he proceeded further.

There was a roundabout in full swing. Men, women and children were laughing and shrieking madly as they went round and round in it. The child watched them, his lips parted in the amazement, and a pink blush of a smile came on his face. This time the child made a bold request: "I want to go on the roundabout, please, father, mother!"

There was no reply. He turned to look for his parents. They were not there ahead of him. He turned to look on either side. They were not there. He looked behind. There was no sign of them.

A full deep cry rose within his dry throat, and with a sudden jerk of his body he ran from where he stood, crying in fear: "Mother, father!" Tears rolled down from his eyes, hot and fierce. He ran to one side first, then to the other, not knowing where to go. "Mother, father!" he cried again and again. Every little inch of space in the



fairground was crowded with people. The child might have been crushed underfoot, had he not cried in a loud voice, "Father, mother!"

A man heard his cry, and bending down with great difficulty, lifted him up the arms. "How did you get here, child? Whose baby are you?"

The child wept more and cried, "I want my mother, I want my father."

The man tried to comfort him by taking him to the roundabout. "Will you have a ride on the horse?" he gently asked. The child's throat tore into a thousand sobs.

"Listen to that nice music, child," he pleaded when they reached the juggler. But the child shut his ears with his fingers.

"Would you like a balloon?" he asked lovingly. But the child just sobbed. "What sweets would you like, child?" the man asked.

The child turned his face away from the sweet-shop and only sobbed, "I want my mother, I want my father."

Mulk Raj Anand

Glossary and notes

brimming (adj)	to be full of, भरा हुआ होना
pace (n)	the speed at which some one walks, चलने की गति
lagged (v)	moved slower than other people/ fell behind, पिछड़ गया
desire (n)	to have a strong wish to do or have something, अभिलाषा, इच्छा

pleasure (n)	happiness, आनंद, हर्ष, खुशी
begged (v)	asked beseechingly, गिड़गिड़ाते हुए मांगा
tender (adj)	gentle and loving, ममतापूर्ण
faint (adj)	that cannot be clearly seen, अस्पष्ट, धुंधला
disgust (n)	a strong feeling of dislike, चिढ़
eager (adj)	very interested and excited about what is going to happen, इच्छुक, उत्सुक
glory (n)	fame, praise or honour that is given to some one because they have achieved something important, प्रशंसा, प्रसिद्धि
juggler (n)	a person who juggles (to throw a set of three balls into the air and catch and throw them again quickly, one at a time) बाजीगर
coarse(adj)	rough, rude and offensive, घटिया
fierce (adj)	angry and aggressive, showing strong feelings or a lot of activity, उत्तेजित, भयानक
sobbed (v)	cried noisily, taking sudden, sharp breaths, सिसकना

B. Let's comprehend

B.1. Think and Tell

B.1.1 Answer the following questions orally:

- What were the means that people used, to go to the fair?
- What sweetmeats were being sold in the fair ?
- Name the things that attracted the child.
- Why was the child so frightened when he did not find his parents ?

B.2. Think and Write**B.2.1. Write true or false in the space provided next to each sentence:**

- (a) The child came to the fair with his uncle. _____
- (b) The child was happy when he entered the fair.

- (c) The child did not want to buy the balloons.

- (d) There were very few people in the fair.

- (e) The child's parents had told him to listen to the flute. _____
- (f) The juggler was selling sweets. _____
- (g) There were camels in the fair. _____
- (h) The child's favourite sweet was gulab jamun.

B.2.2. Tick (✓) the correct option for each of the following:**1. Why did the boy start crying?**

- (a) because his parents were not buying him the things he wanted.
- (b) because a man had picked him up.
- (c) because he lost his parents.
- (d) because a snake had bit him.

2. Which of these things the man did not offer to the child?

- (a) a camel ride
- (b) balloons
- (c) sweets
- (d) a roundabout ride

3. Which of the following, according to you, the child may have felt when he was lost in the fair?

- (a) that balloons fly in the air
- (b) that you should not talk to strangers
- (c) that having your parents around is more important than toys and sweets
- (d) that you should not stare at the roundabout swing

B.2.3 Answer each of the following questions in not more than 50 words:

1. When was the fair held?
2. How were the people going to the market?
3. What was the difference between the father's and mother's reaction when the child asked for a toy?
4. There were times when the child wanted to stop and buy some things, but he did not do so. Why?
5. Do you think that the child would have found his parents? Give reasons for your answer.

B.2.4. Rewrite the following sentences in the order in which they appear in the story:

- a. The child wanted to ride on the roundabout.
- b. The child entered the fair with his parents.
- c. The child started crying.
- d. A man lifted the child in his arms.
- e. The child was admiring the sweets in the sweetshop.
- f. The child found that he was not with his parents.
- g. The snake was coiling himself in his basket.
- h. The child asked for the toy.

C. Word study

C.1. Compound words

The word 'fairground' is a combination of words 'fair' and 'ground'. The compound word refers to 'the ground where the fair was being held'.

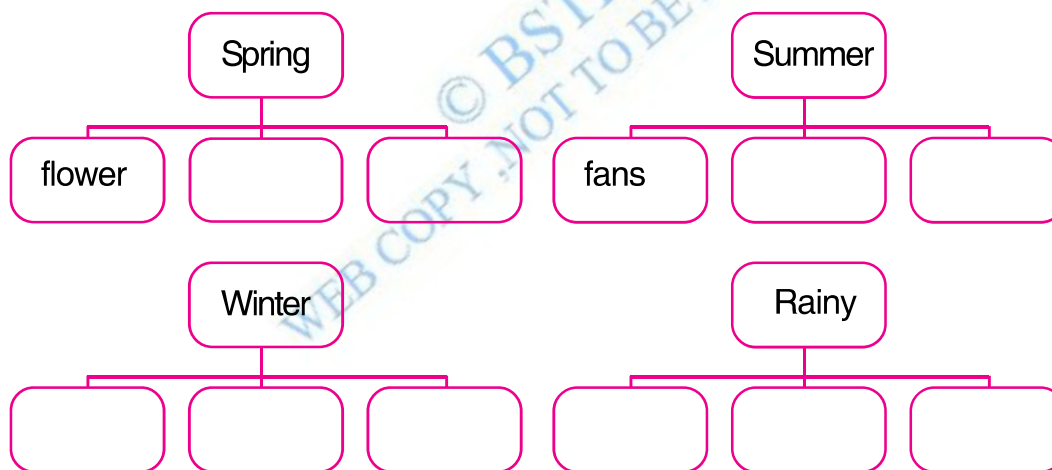
Can you guess what the following words refer to?

1. footpath: _____

2. bullockcart: _____
3. bookshelf: _____
4. roommate: _____
5. classmate: _____
6. blackboard: _____

C.2. Seasons

'Flower' is associated with spring season. Similarly 'fan' is associated with summer season. Fill in the blanks with the names of others things that are associated with the seasons given below:



D. Grammar

Read these sentences :

- (a) "Will you have a ride on the horse ?" he gently asked.
- (b) "Would you like the balloons ?" he asked gently.

The part of the sentences put within inverted commas show that they are actually spoken by the narrators/

speakers. So they are in direct speech. They can be changed into indirect speech as follows :

- (a) He gently asked the child if he would have a ride on the horse.
- (b) He gently asked the child if he would like the balloons.

Note the changes made in the indirect speech as given above.

Now, change the following sentences from direct speech into indirect speech.

- (a) He said to me, "Would you like to see the Taj ?"
- (b) Hera said to Sona "Can you play with me ?"
- (c) The teacher said to the students, "Do you like travelling?"
- (d) The child said to his mother, "Will you give me a glass of water ?"
- (e) He said to his friend, "Have you ever eaten burfi?"

E. Let's Talk

E.1. Let's talk to the shopkeeper

Work in pairs and role play. One of you become a shopkeeper of a shop of your liking. Another can be the customer coming to the shop. Have a conversation about something you want to buy or enquire about with the shopkeeper. One conversation has been given as an example for you.

Shopkeeper : What can I get you?

Child : A kite.

- Shopkeeper** : Which one?
- Child** : Jaipuri
- Shopkeeper** : Here it is.
- Child** : But it is torn from this side.
- Shopkeeper** : Oh! I' ll replace it. Try this.
- Child** : Thanks! This is great.
How much is it?
- Shopkeeper** : Two rupees only.
- Child** : Here it is. Thank you.

F. Composition

F.1. Your trip to the fair

Write in about 4-5 sentences your experience at a fair.

G. Translation :

Translate the following into Hindi :

There was no reply.

He turned to look for his parents.

They were not there behind him.

He turned to look on either side.

They were not there.

He once again looked behind.

There was no sign of them.

H. Activity

Work in pairs and make a list of things you can buy in a fair.

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