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Class-XII

English

Flamingo

Chapter-2



Lost Spring

Stories of Stolen Childhood

Part - 4



Anees Jung

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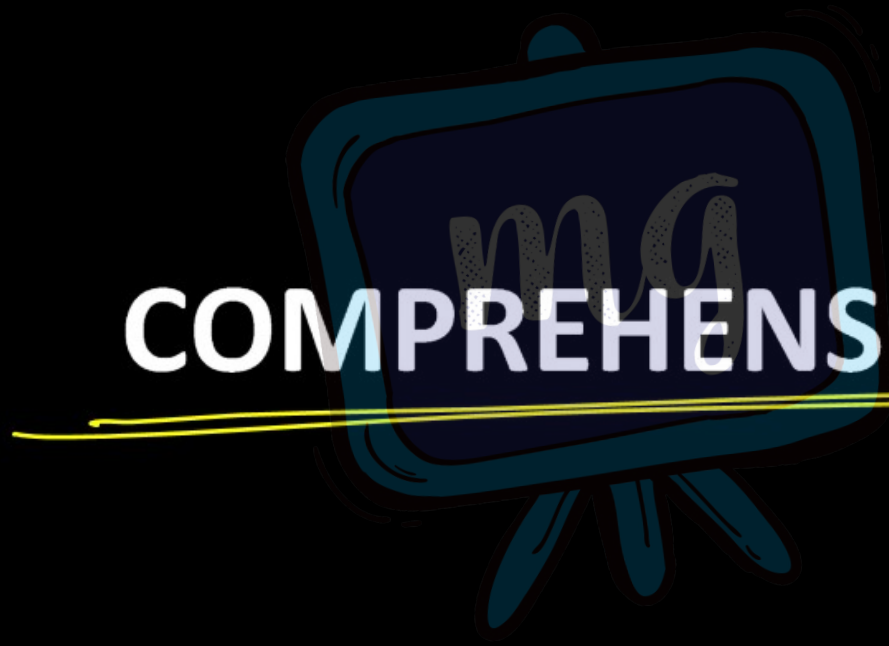

COMPREHENSION

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Q.1 What is Saheb looking for in the garbage dumps? where is he and where has he come from?

Answer. Saheb is looking for gold in the garbage dumps. For him gold is some broken but useful things, a coin or sometimes 10 rupee note. He lives in Seemapuri on the outskirt of Delhi. He has come from Dhaka (Bangladesh) in 1971 with his family.

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Q.2 What explanation does the author offer for the children not wearing footwear?

Answer. The author's explanation for the children not wearing footwear is that it is not lack of money but a tradition in their families to stay barefoot. However the author wonders if this is only an excuse to explain perpetual state of poverty.

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Q.3 Is Saheb happy working at the tea-stall? Explain.

Answer. No, Saheb is not happy working at the tea stall. His face has lost the carefree look. The steel canister seems heavier (more responsibility) than the plastic bag he would carry. The bag was his. The canister belongs to the man who owns the tea shop. He is no longer his own master.

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Q.4 What makes the city of Firozabad famous?

Answer. The city of Firozabad is famous for its glass bangles. It is the centre of India's glass blowing industry.

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Q.5 Mention the hazards of working in the glass bangles industry.

Answer. In glass bangles industry people have to work near glass furnaces with high temperature in the dark hutments. Their eyes are more adjusted to dark than to the light outside. The dust from polishing the glass of bangles is also harmful to eyes. They often end up losing the eyesight.

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Q.6 How is Mukesh's attitude to his situation different from that of his family?

Answer. Mukesh's family follows the family lineage of making bangles without daring to change and initiate. For them it is their destiny. But Mukesh wants to do something different. He has the desire to find a way to come out from the never ending spiral of poverty. He has a dream and firmly he wants to work to make it true.

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Q.7 What could be some of the reasons for the migration of people from villages to cities?

Answer. People migrate from village to cities in search of livelihood and a better life for the survival. Big cities provide education, employment and food. They have more opportunities to offer.

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Q.8 Would you agree that promises made to poor children are rarely kept? Why do you think this happens in the incidents narrated in the text?

Answer. Yes, I agree that promises made to poor children are rarely kept. In the story the writer jokingly offers Saheb to join the school that she would open. In fact she does not meant to open a school.

Many such hollow promises are made to poor children and then not fulfilled due to lack of sincerity.

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Q.9 What forces conspire to keep the workers in the bangle industry of Firozabad in poverty?

Answer. Many forces conspire to keep the workers in the bangle industry of Firozabad in poverty. These include the sahukars, the middleman, the policeman, the keepers of law, the bureaucrats and the politicians.

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Together they have imposed the baggage on the child that he cannot put down, and the spiral of poverty keeps moving endlessly.

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Q.10 What is the meaning of Saheb's full name? Does he know it? How does he conduct himself?

Answer. His full name is "Saheb-e-Alam". It means the lord of the universe. He does not know it. If he knew it, he would hardly believe it. He roams the streets barefoot with other rag-pickers. This army of barefoot boys appears in the morning and disappears at noon.

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Q.11 How does Saheb's life change when he starts working at the tea-stall?

Answer. Saheb now has a regular income. He is paid 800 rupees and all his meals. Thus, food is no problem. But his face has lost the carefree look. The steel canister in his hand now seems a burden. He is no longer his own master. He may have to work for longer hours. The helplessness of doing things at his own will make him sad.

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Q.12 Why do the bangle-makers not organise themselves into a cooperative?

Answer. Most of the young bangle-makers have fallen into the traps of the middlemen. They are also afraid of the police. They know that the police will haul them up, beat them and drag to jail for doing something illegal. There is no leader among them to help them see things differently. Their fathers are equally tired.

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They can do nothing except carrying on their inherited business.



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Q.13 Which two distinct worlds does the author notice among the bangle-making industry?

Answer. The families of the bangle-makers belong to one of these worlds. These workers are caught in the web of poverty. They are also burdened by the stigma of the caste in which they are born. They know no other work. The other world is the vicious circle of the moneylenders, the

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middlemen, the policemen, the keepers of the law, the bureaucrats and the politicians.



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Q.14 How is Mukesh different from the other bangle makers of Firozabad?

Answer. Mukesh is quite different from other bangle makers of Firozabad because he has the courage to take initiative and break from the traditional family occupation. He has strong will power also. He insists on being his own master by becoming a motor mechanic.

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Q.15 Why should child labour be eliminated and how?

Answer. Child labour should be eliminated because the children employed at tender age as domestic servants, dish-washers at road-side dhabas etc. Their childhood is stolen. Burdened by the responsibility of work, they become adults too soon. Most of them are undernourished, ill-fed, uneducated and poor.

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Child labour can be eliminated only through joint efforts on the part of government agencies, co-operative societies and political leaders.