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Class 12 Flamingo – Chapter 2: Lost Spring

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Summary

Lost Spring highlights the plight of poor children in India, who are deprived of education and forced into child labor. The chapter is divided into two anecdotes:

Part 1: "Sometimes I find a rupee in the garbage"

- Anees Jung narrates the life of Saheb, a young ragpicker who migrated from Dhaka, Bangladesh to Seemapuri, a slum in Delhi.
- His family came in search of a better life after floods destroyed their fields.
- Saheb and other children scavenge garbage dumps, hoping to find something valuable.
- Though he wishes to go to school, there is no school in the neighborhood.
- Later, he works at a tea stall, earning ₹800 and meals, but he feels less happy as he has lost his freedom.

Part 2: "I want to drive a car"

- This part focuses on the bangle makers of Firozabad.
- Anees Jung meets Mukesh, a boy who dreams of becoming a motor mechanic.
- The children in Firozabad are forced to work in hazardous glass-bangle factories, inheriting the family profession.
- They live in poverty, filth, and debt, exploited by middlemen and politicians.
- Despite child labor being illegal, the vicious cycle of poverty and social stigma keeps them trapped.

Central Theme:

The chapter exposes the harsh realities of child labor, poverty, and lost childhood in India. It reflects how dreams of poor children are crushed by socio-economic conditions.

Important Questions and Answers

Short Answer Questions (30-40 words)

Q: Who is Saheb and what is his occupation?

A: Saheb is a young ragpicker from Seemapuri who migrated from Dhaka. He scours garbage dumps to find useful items, sometimes coins or food, to support his family.

Q: Why did Saheb's family leave Dhaka?

A: Saheb's family left Dhaka because floods destroyed their fields and they could no longer sustain themselves. They came to Delhi seeking livelihood and survival.

Q: What does garbage mean to children in Seemapuri?

A: For the children of Seemapuri, garbage is like a treasure chest. It is their only source of income and sometimes provides small joys like finding a coin or useful item.

Q: What is the plight of bangle makers in Firozabad?

A: The bangle makers live in poverty and filth, working in unhygienic conditions. They are exploited by middlemen, trapped in debt, and forced to continue the family tradition of bangle-making.

Q: Why is Mukesh different from the other children of Firozabad?

A: Mukesh is different because he dares to dream. Unlike other children who accept their fate, he wants to break the cycle of poverty and become a motor mechanic.

Long Answer Questions (120-150 words)

Q: Describe the life and conditions of ragpickers in Seemapuri as portrayed in 'Lost Spring'.

A: The ragpickers of Seemapuri live in miserable conditions on the outskirts of Delhi. Their houses are made of mud, with no sewage, sanitation, or running water. Most families migrated from Bangladesh after losing their land to floods. Ragpicking is their only source of income, and garbage is considered a treasure for survival. Children like Saheb wander barefoot, collecting whatever they can sell. Their lives are uncertain and full of hardships, deprived of education and basic amenities. Despite their dreams, poverty forces them to continue this dehumanizing work.

Q: How does Anees Jung portray the exploitation of children in the glass-bangle industry of Firozabad?

A: Anees Jung presents a grim picture of child labor in Firozabad's bangle industry. Entire families, including children, are engaged in making bangles in dark, unhygienic rooms with furnaces, which affect their eyesight and health. The children inherit this occupation and are

trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty, debt, and exploitation by middlemen and corrupt officials. Social customs and the fear of authority prevent them from seeking justice. Though child labor is illegal, the children's dreams are crushed as they are forced to continue the family tradition. Mukesh, however, stands out by aspiring to become a motor mechanic, symbolizing hope amidst despair.

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