

# THE LOST CHILD BY MULK RAJ ANAND

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# INTRODUCTION

The Lost Child by Mulk Raj Anand is a story about a little child who becomes a victim of an unfortunate event.

He loses contact with his loved ones in a village fair.

The story depicts the struggle of getting lost and separated from the comfort and security of one's loved ones.

# THE FAIR

- It is the spring festival and the main attraction is the village fair. A massive crowd has gathered to partake in the festivities. There are people from different walks of life.
- They have colorful and diverse appearances; some are brightly dressed while some are ordinarily clad. The crowd is thronging out of the town and moving toward the village fair.

**The protagonist, a young boy is also there accompanied by his parents. He wanders about the pleasantries on offer and is particularly interested in the toys sitting beautifully in the fair stalls and shops.**

**He yearns to play with them but his desire is dismissed by his father. His mother offers a warm and tender reply and asks him to look at the beautiful setting instead.**

# MUSTARD FIELDS

Being heartbroken with unfulfilled desires, he looks at the massive expanse of mustard fields in front of him. He is overcome with delight and joy after taking such a beautiful sight.

The fields are decorated with yellow flowers that are dotting the landscape with pristine natural beauty. The little boy's innocence is reflected by the fact that on watching such beauty he forgets the pain of his dashed hopes of a toy.

# BUTTERFLIES

He finds amusement in Mother Nature's ample bosom. Unperturbed by the remains of his desires, he is gripped with childlike mischief. He enters the fields and rummages through the flower.

He finds purpose and gratification in chasing his new pursuit, the colourful butterflies and dragonflies. To him, they represent a greater catch than any toy at the fair.

The mother is aware of his love affair with the butterflies and asks him to not wander off far and away. The motherly care adds more beauty to the context of the beauty of the scene.

The boy returns to his parents and accompanies them on the sidewalk. However, his attention again flirts with new pursuits, little worms, and insects. He swings and chases after them.

The mother again warns him about not running off far. The parents decide to rest near a well in a grove and sit on its edge. They were provided shade by a humongous banyan tree.

It was vast in tot's spread and its branches dominated over other smaller trees like Gulmohur etc. The child, unaware of their whereabouts, loses his way this time and reached the fair instead. He is oblivious to the fact that his parents had decided to stop for some rest.

# HE IS LOST

In the midst of the fair, his attention is fixed on the sweetmeat seller who is exhorting customers to enjoy the sugary delight of his sweetmeats.

The boy begins slaving for his favorite burfi. He is aware that his desire and limits his confession to a faint whisper and moves on.

Then, he sees a flower vendor and a balloon seller. He shows a great understanding of his circumstance and does not linger too long at any of his desired allurements.

Now, he meets a snake charmer. The man has a flute and a snake. He is seized with a desire to seek the thrill of a man controlling the dangerous reptile but he remembers his unfortunate limitation.

The child reaches a roundabout. He can see it whirring round and round. There are plenty of men, women, and children having the time of their lives riding on it.

His nerve breaks at his attraction and he turns around to plead his parents to allow him to enjoy the ride once. To his utter dismay and horror, he does not find them there. He is all alone and deserted in a crowd of strangers.



# ALONE

In his fearful astonishment, he runs all over hunting for his parents. Tears trickle down his face, his turban is undone and his clothes are drenched in dust and sweat.

His desperate attempts to relocate his parents find no sympathy in a crowd of strangers which is consumed in self-indulgence, frolics, and merrymaking.

He gets tired, rests and dries his tears only to start running again. He keeps yelling for his mother and father, in the hope that they may hear his mournful cries.

# STRANGE MEETING

He reaches a temple but the huge crowd at the door knocks him off of his feet. Lying on the ground he is almost trampled over by the crowd of devotees when someone helps him to his feet.

The man is sympathetic to the boy's plight and enquires about his situation and family. The child is overcome with grief and emotions and cannot stop wailing. The only words he can muster are that explain his desire for his parents.

The sympathetic man comforts the child and tries to console him. He offers him a ride on the roundabout, to distract him as well. However, the child is grief-stricken and unable to control his tears and painful cries.

**The man tries to distract him again by taking him to the snake-charmer. The child refuses this offer as well. The man offers to buy him balloons but to no avail.**

**At last, he offers him some sweetmeats including the burfi. But even this noble attempt failed to soothe the hurt of the lost child. The child continued sobbing writhing in anguish and screaming for a glimpse and reunion with his mother and father.**