

A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME

THE AUTHOR MISSES HIS OLD SCHOOL AND FRIENDS

The author says that his first year at school was not pleasant. He felt like a freshman. His school was twice bigger than his old school. His old friends, had gone to a different high school. So he felt lonely. He missed his old teachers also. He visited them. They advised him to take part in school activities.

HOUSE IS ON FIRE.

One Sunday afternoon the author was sitting at home. He was doing homework. It was cold. Fire went on in the fireplace. He had his cat nearby. His mother stoked the fire. Suddenly, he noticed smoke from the ceiling. It increased. They came in the front yard. But the fire had surrounded the place. It was spreading. His mother ran back into the house. The author ran to the neighbours to call the fire department.

AUTHOR AND MOTHER CAUGHT IN THE FIRE SAVED

The author's mother then ran out of the house with important documents. She ran back into the house again. She wanted to get the pictures and letters of her husband. He ran after her. But the fireman caught him. The author told him that his mother was inside. The fireman seated him wrapped in a blanket in the car. Soon another fireman brought the author's mother. He put her in the truck with an oxygen mask over her mouth. She was otherwise all right. She had only inhaled a little more smoke.

AUTHOR'S CAT SEEN NOWHERE

After five hours, the fire was finally put out. The house was completely burned down. It struck the author that he had not seen his cat. He started weeping. He cried also. The firemen did not allow him to go inside the house. They went to the author's grandparents for the night.

THE AUTHOR GETS SAD, WANTS TO DIE

The next day the author went to school. He was in his old dress with no shoes. He had no books or homework. His backpack was also gone. He felt sad. He felt

if he would be an outcast all his life. He did not want to grow up. He wanted to die. But he walked to school.

HOUSE VISITED ON WAY TO SCHOOL

The author walked through his house to school. Everything had been destroyed. Only the photo albums, documents etc, were not destroyed. His heart ached for his cat. His mother took him soon from there. They would have to find a place to live. He would have to buy clothes for school also.

THE AUTHOR KEEPS THINKING OF THE CAT

Soon the rubble was being cleared off from the place. The author would go over there. He kept thinking of his cat. He kept thinking how the cat would climb him and fall asleep into his pocket.

THE AUTHOR'S PLIGHT KNOWN TO ALL, HE MAKES FRIENDS

Soon all came to know about the author's plight. People collected around him to take him to the gymnasium. The author was surprised. Soon he knew it. The table inside had a collection of school things. These were: notebooks, clothes, jeans, tops, sweatshirts. The author grew emotional. He felt great relief as people came to meet him. They were those who had not visited him earlier. He made many friends that day.

LIFE GOOD AGAIN, LIKE THE EARLIER ONE

A month later, the author was at his house. It was being rebuilt. His two friends from school visited him. The fire was responsible to open up all the wonderful people around him. He realized that his life was getting the same again.

CAT GIVEN TO THE AUTHOR BY A WOMAN

Soon a woman came to him. She had a cat with her. She asked the author if the cat was his. The author got the cat from her at once. The cat purred happily. The author's friends were hugging him. As for the cat, it had run away from the fire. That woman got it. She telephoned as the author's telephone number was written on its collar.

SWEET FEELINGS COME AGAIN

The author sat with his friends. The cat curled up in his lap. The feelings of loss and sad event had vanished. He felt gratitude for his life and his new friends. He also felt it for the kindness of a stranger and the purr of his cat.

NCERT SOLUTIONS

Think about it

(Pages 54 & 55)

Question 1.

What does the author notice one Sunday afternoon? What is his mother's reaction? What does she do?

Answer:

The author, while doing his homework noticed the smoke pouring in through the seams of the ceiling. The room was filled with the smoke very quickly. The author and his mother ran outside to save their life. His mother ran out of the house with a small metal box full of important documents. She became so crazy that she rushed back to the house just after dropping the box.

Question 2.

Why does he break down in tears after the fire?

Answer:

The author's house was completely burned down. Five hours later when the fire was finally put out, he realised at once that his cat was nowhere. He had to face the loss of old school, his house and cat. In such a state, he cried and broke down in tears.

Question 3.

Why is the author deeply embarrassed the next day in school? Which words show his fear and insecurity?

Answer:

The author was full of remorse as he was left with nothing. He didn't have proper dress and study material. He had no backpack. He had the feeling of insecurity. All things appeared strange to him. He was shocked deeply and seemed frustrated. The words uttered by him "Was I destined to be an outcast and a geek all my life? I didn't want to grow up, change or have to handle life, if it was to going to be this way. I just wanted to curl up and die" reveal his fear and insecurity.

Question 4.

The cat and the author are very fond of each other. How has this been shown in the story? Where was the cat after the fire? Who brings it back and how?

Answer:

The author loved his cat very much. He never considered her far from him. She kept sitting beside him when he did his homework and other household work. When the author found his cat back, his happiness was beyond the limits. He grabbed her quickly and felt relieved. This proved that they were very fond of each other.

The cat ran over a mile away when the house was on fire. A stranger lady brought it back as there was a phone number written on the collar of the cat.

Question 5.

What actions of the schoolmates change the author's understanding of life and people, and comfort him emotionally? How does his loneliness vanish and how does he start participating in life?

Answer:

His schoolmates bought up school supplies, notebooks, all kinds of different clothes for the author in order to help him. It was a matter of surprise and too difficult to believe for him. He got emotional satisfaction. People who had never spoken, introduced themselves one by one. All things seemed new and created his interest in life. Now, he had all the things whatever he used to have. He started enjoying his life as usual.

Question 6.

What is the meaning of “My cat was back and so was I”? Had the author gone anywhere? Why does he say that he is also back?

Answer:

Here the author wants to point out that life without affection is useless. He was depressed after a great loss in all fields. His old school and teachers were always in his mind. The fire had reduced his house to ashes. His cat was also not with him. In such circumstances he considered himself dead and had no interest in life.

In the end as soon as the conditions took the turn he felt relieved. Now he had all the things with him. The author had not gone anywhere. It was his state of mind. He recovered from this gloomy state and started enjoying life when he got his cat back.

Talk about it

(Page 55)

Question 1.

Have any of your classmates/schoolmates had an experience like the one described in the story where they needed help? Describe how they were helped.

Answer:

Two years ago, my friend Raju visited the market to buy some household things. It was a crowded market and a shop caught fire due to short circuit. The panic-stricken people rushed here and there. My friend too was trying to leave that place. He with three people got himself locked in a nearby shop to escape from smoke. But the shop was filled with smoke within a little span of time. They felt suffocated by the fumes. They considered that their end was near. In the meantime, a team of an NGO broke open the shutter and took them out of the shop. They were hospitalised quickly. I could get my friend back because of the team and the grace of God.