

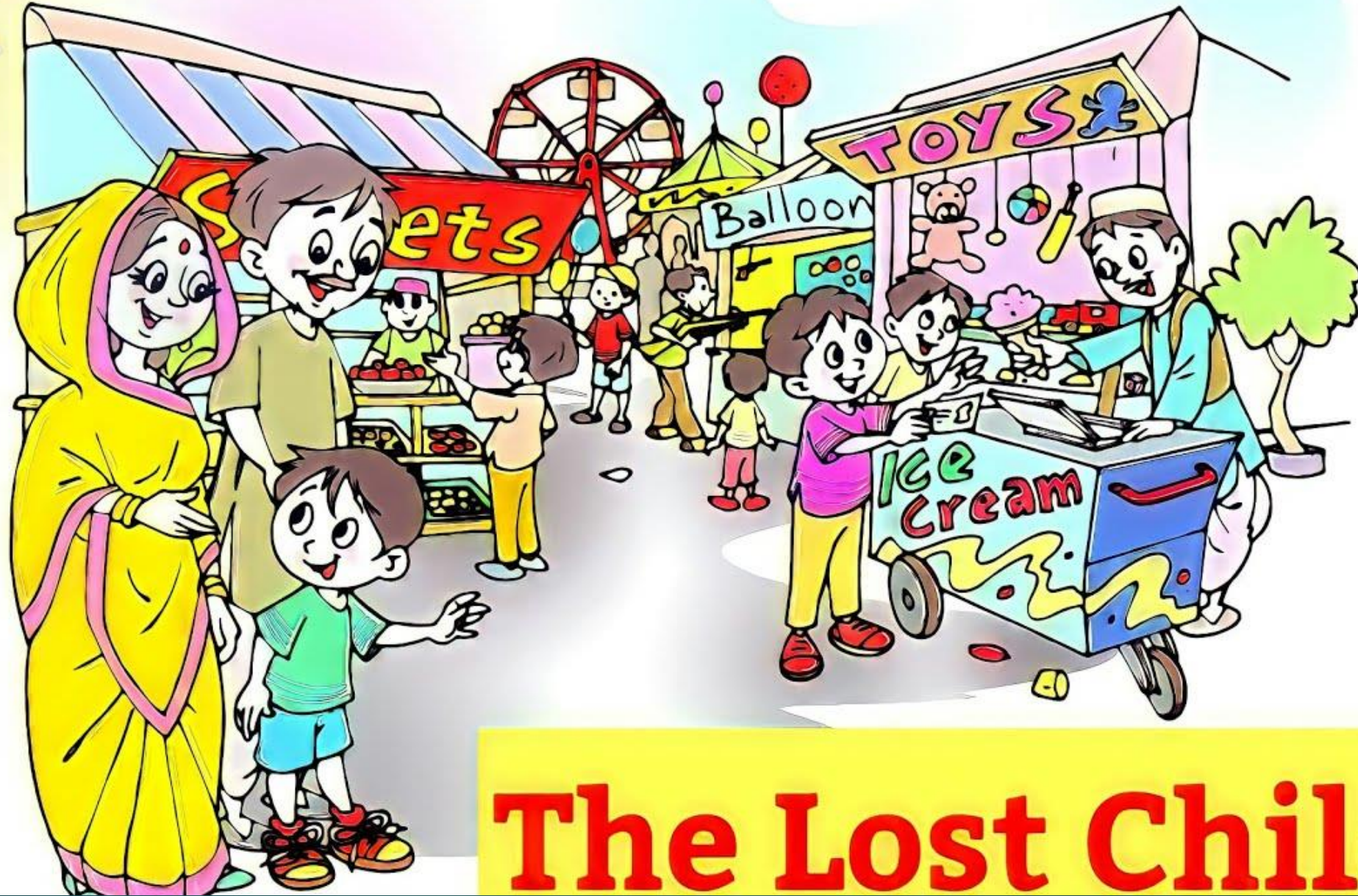


**Dr. H. N. SINHA COLLEGE OF ARTS AND
COMMERCE COLLEGE, PATUR.**

**Faculty of Commerce and Management
B.COM. I SEMESTER I
Subject : Compulsory English**

THE LOST CHILD

-MULK RAJ ANAND



The Lost Child

Mulk Raj Anand

- ▶ Mulk raj Anand was born in Peshawar.
- ▶ He was celebrated novelist and short story writer.
- ▶ His novels – ‘Untouchable’ and ‘Coolie’ have won recognition in the literary world.
- ▶ His creative career covered a span of more than seventy-five years.
- ▶ ‘The Lost child’ displays a child’s ardent affection for his parents whom he regards more valuable than all the attractive acquisition of the earth.
- ▶ It is the most touching tale of Indian writing in English.



- ▶ It was the festival of spring. From the wintry shades of narrow lanes and alleys emerged a gaily clad humanity. Some walked, some rode on horses, others sat, being carried in bamboo and bullock carts. One little boy ran between his father's legs, brimming over with life and laughter.



“Come, child, come,” called his parents, as he lagged behind, fascinated by the toys in the shops that lined the way. He hurried towards his parents, his feet obedient to their call, his eyes still lingering on the receding toys. As he came to where they had stopped to wait for him, he could not suppress the desire of his heart, even though he well knew the old, cold stare of refusal in their eyes.

“I want that toy,” he pleaded.

His father looked at him red-eyed, in his familiar tyrant’s way. His mother, melted by the free spirit of the day was tender and, giving him her finger to hold, said, “Look, child, what is before you!”



It was a flowering mustard-field, pale like melting gold as it swept across miles and miles of even land.

A group of dragon-flies were bustling about on their gaudy purple wings, intercepting the flight of a lone black bee or butterfly in search of sweetness from the flowers.

The child followed them in the air with his gaze, till one of them would still its wings and rest, and he would try to catch it. Then his mother gave a cautionary call: "Come, child, come, come on to the footpath."



- ▶ As they neared the village the child could see many other footpaths full of throngs, converging to the whirlpool of the fair, and felt at once repelled and fascinated by the confusion of the world he was entering.
- ▶ A sweetmeat seller hawked, “*gulab-jaman, rasagulla, burfi, jalebi,*” at the corner of the entrance . The child stared opened and his mouth watered for the *burfi* that was his favourite sweet. “I want that *burfi,*” he slowly murmured.
- ▶ But he half knew as he begged that his plea would not be heeded because his parents would say he was greedy. So without waiting for an answer he moved on.



▶ A flower-seller hawked, “A garland of *gulmohur*, a garland of *gulmohur*!”

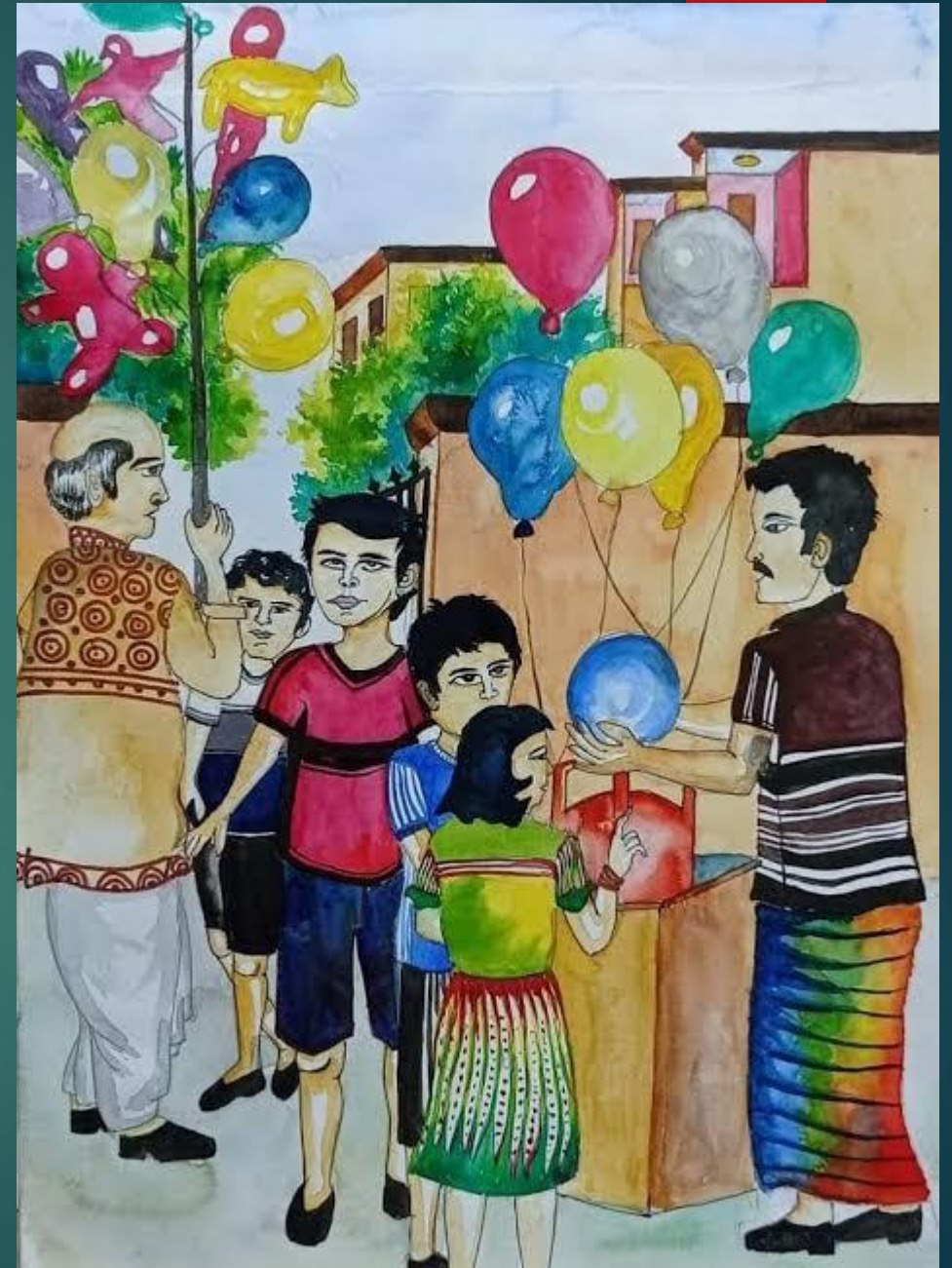
He half murmured, “I want that garland.”

But he well knew his parents would refuse to buy him those flowers because they would say that they were cheap. 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.

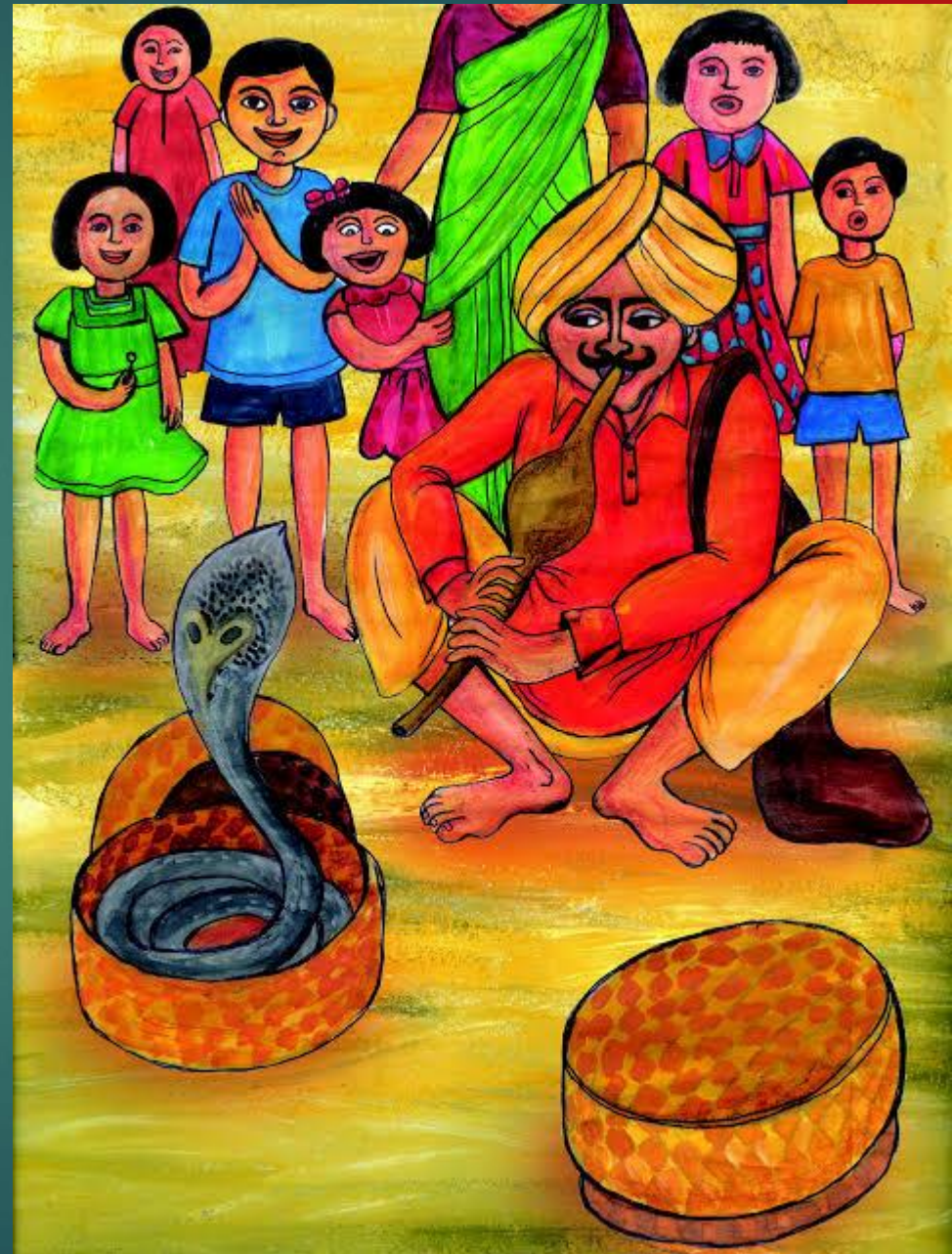
But he well knew his parents would never buy him the balloons because they would say he was too old to play with such toys. So he walked on farther.



The child went towards the snake-charmer.

But, knowing his parents had forbidden him to hear such coarse music as the snake-charmer played, he proceeded farther.

- ▶ There was a roundabout in full swing. The child watched them intently and then he made a bold request: “I want to go on the roundabout, please, Father, Mother.”



▶ There was no reply. He turned to look at 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 real fear, “Mother, Father.”

Tears rolled down from his eyes, hot and fierce; his flushed face was convulsed with fear. Panic-stricken, he ran to one side first, then to the other, hither and thither in all directions, knowing not where to go. “Mother, Father,” he wailed.

- ▶ He ran quickly again, this time to a shrine to which people seemed to be crowding.

A man in the surging crowd heard his cry and, stooping with great difficulty, lifted him up in his arms.

The child wept more bitterly than ever now and only cried, “I want my mother, I want my father!”

- ▶ The man tried to soothe him by taking him to the roundabout. “Will you have a ride on the horse?” The child’s throat tore into a thousand shrill sobs and he only shouted, “I want my mother, I want my father!”



- ▶ The man headed towards the place where the snake-charmer still played on the flute to the swaying cobra. “Listen to that nice music, child!” he pleaded.
- ▶ The man took him near the balloons, thinking the bright colours of the balloons would distract the child’s attention and quieten him.
- ▶ The man, still trying to make the child happy, bore him to the gate where the flower-seller sat. “Look! Can you smell those nice flowers, child!
- ▶ Thinking to humour his disconsolate charge by a gift of sweets, the man took him to the counter of the sweet shop. “What sweets would you like, child?” he asked. The child turned his face from the sweet shop and only sobbed, “I want my mother, I want my father!”



THANK YOU