



Grade IX

Lesson 8 : A House is not a Home

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Supplementary Reader

Soul of the Chapter

This story reflects the challenges of being a teenager, and the problems of growing up. The narrator in this story is a teenager who finds it difficult to make new friends and adjust to a new place. He feels lonely and depressed. But soon his misconceptions about people are removed.

After junior high schools, the narrator shifted to the high schools. He felt at a loss and lonely among new teachers and students. He missed his old school and old friends.

One day his house caught fire. The whole house was burnt. Nothing was left. He lost his deer cat too. The narrator went to his grandparents' house with his mother. Next day, the narrator had to go to school wearing the previous day's dress and borrowed shoes. He had lost everything in the fire. He was weird, shabby and felt embarrassed. The news of fire soon spread in the school. Everyone felt concerned for the narrator. They wanted to help him. They gave him all kinds of clothes, books and school supplies. They offered him everything he needed. Their selfless love and concern touched his heart. He made friends that day. Soon he had many friends.

The narrator still missed his pet cat. After a month when he and his friends were watching his house rebuilt, a lady came with his cat. The noble lady took great pains and found the owner. She brought happiness back to the narrator. Now the feeling of loss and tragedy had gone. He no longer wanted to die. He was grateful to life, his new friends and the kind lady. He regained interest in life.



NCERT Questions

Think About It

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

One Sunday afternoon the author noticed smoke pouring in through the realms of the ceiling. Soon there was fire in the house. His mother ran out of the house carrying a small metal box full of important documents. His mother was in a crazy state, again she ran back into the house to collect the photograph of her late husband.

2. Why does he break down in tears after the fire?

Everything was completely burnt down. Suddenly, he realised that his pet cat was missing. He searched for her everywhere. It was a big loss for him. He was already missing his old school, old friends and now it was his pet cat. All this made him break down in tears.

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

The author is deeply embarrassed the next day in school because when the fire broke out, he was still wearing the dress he had worn to church that morning but he had no shoes as he had lost them in the fire. So he had to borrow some tennis shoes from his aunt. He was totally embarrassed by everything. The clothes he was wearing looked weird, he had no books or homework, and his backpack was gone.

Words used in the lesson that show his fear and insecurity are "____outcast and geek____" "____like a zombie." "____wanted to curl up and die", "Everything felt surreal", "All the security____had all been ripped away".

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?

The cat used to play with the author every morning. She climbed up his robe and crawled into his pocket to fall asleep. After the fire accident, the cat went missing. He kept on searching for her. One day a woman brought the cat back to him. He held her 'close and cried into that beautiful orange fur.' The cat also purred happily. It shows that the lady was very kind-hearted and full of empathy for all. She took a



great pain in finding the owner of the cat (the author) and returned it to him. She was really kind and considerate.

- 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?**

One day author's classmates gave him a surprise. He found a big table set up with all kinds of stuff he needed. They had taken up a collection and bought the author school supplies. Their genuine outpouring and concern touched his heart and changed his feelings and opinion towards them. He realised how helpful they were. He made many friends and no more felt depressed. His new company gave a new lease of life to him. He started participating in the activities of life.

- 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?**

On the day of the fire accident, the cat had run away. The narrator searched for her but all in vain. After one month of tragedy, he found his cat back. Things became normal again. All the overwhelming feelings of loss seemed to diminish. He felt gratitude for everything.

The author had not gone anywhere but his joy and happiness had got burnt in the fire. With the return of his cat, everything became normal. That is why he remarks, "My cat was back and so was I." it shows the author's love for animals. He was very kind and compassionate for his cat. He was deeply attached to the cat and could not bear the loss. When he found his cat safe, he was very happy.

Solved Question Bank

Short Answer Type Questions

- 1. Why did the author feel isolated in his new school?**

After passing the junior high school, the author joined a new school. He was very popular among his old teachers and friends in the school. But in the new school, he had to restart as a fresher. He did not have any friend there. So he felt isolated in his new school.





2. Why did the author visit his old school? How did his teachers encourage him?

He could not adjust himself in the new school. He missed his old teachers and friends so much that he would go back and visits them. They encouraged him to get involved in school activities so that he could meet new people and make new friends.

3. Why did the author love his cat so much?

The author had a pet cat which was his constant companion and a source of entertainment. He was fond of her and could never think of living away from her. He had a special bond with her because he had rescued her when she was a small kitten.

4. On seeing the house on fire, what did the author do?

His house caught fire and soon the whole roof was engulfed in flames. The author was shocked but he showed his presence of mind and ran out to the neighbours to call the fire brigade.

5. Why did the mother run back into the house for the second time?

His mother wanted to collect letters and pictures of her late husband. These were very precious to her. They were the only things that she had as her husband's last memory. She did not want these precious memories to go into the flames. So she ran back into the house for the second time.

6. Why did the firemen hold the author?

The author loved his mother too much. He saw his mother running into the burning house. He was emotionally charged and tried to follow her. The firemen stopped him forcefully, otherwise he would have jumped into fire. He could have lost his life.

7. What happened to his mother who had run into the burning house?

In her efforts to collect the pictures and letters of her late husband, his mother entered the burning house and inhaled a lot of smoke. She fell unconscious. The firemen rescued her and she was put on oxygen mask. Soon she regained her senses and became all right.



8. How did the author feel when he went to his new school after the fire accident?

One day after the fire accident, the author's mother asked him to go to school. He did not have proper clothes and shoes as they all were burnt in the fire. He felt embarrassed in his weird clothes. He felt as if he was an outcast. He felt so depressed that he just wanted to curl up and die.

9. What were the only things not destroyed in the fire?

The fire had destroyed everything in the house. If something was not burnt, it was destroyed by the water and chemicals used to extinguish the fire. The only things that were saved, were the photo albums, documents and some other personal items that the mother had managed to bring out.

10. Why could the author not get money from the bank? How did they manage the funds?

Everything was lost in the fire. There was no cash, no credit cards or even any identification which could enable them to withdraw money from the bank. Everything had gone up in smoke. They borrowed some money from the grandparents.

11. How did the author get rid of his feelings of loss and tragedy?

His new friends in the new school and the kindness of the lady, who returned his cat, helped the author in getting rid of his feelings of loss and tragedy. He regained confidence. Now he wanted to live happily in his new 'home'.

12. What three things made author's house 'a home'?

The fire tragedy changed the author's life. He was so depressed that he did not want to grow up and wanted to die. But his reunion with his cat, his new friends in the school and his new house made his house 'a home' where he could live.



Next Generation School

Long Answer Type Questions

- 1. Describe the author's love for his cat. Do you also have the same feelings for your pet?**

When the narrator lost everything in the fire, he did not cry but when he realised that his cat was missing, he broke down in tears. He used to visit his old house every day hoping to find his missing cat. A month later a woman contacted him and gave him his cat. On seeing the cat, he leapt up 'and cried into that beautiful orange fur.' He was very happy. He forgot about the loss caused by the fire. He remarked, 'My cat was back and so was I'. It reveals the love for animals. Yes, I also have the same feelings for my cat. I can't live without her. Whenever she is out of sight, I become restless. I take very good care of my pet cat 'Pussy'.

- 2. How did a wonder woman bring happiness back in the life of the author? Making someone happy by our deeds is the best service to God and his creation. Do you agree?**

Making someone happy by our deeds is the best service to God and his creation. In the story, the author lost his cat that he loved the most. After the fire, he could not find his cat anywhere. He broke down and cried bitterly.

In fact, when the fire broke out, the cat was so scared that it had run away about a mile and lost its way home. A kind lady found the cat and tried to contact the author over the phone. But all the phone lines were out of order due to the fire. At last, the lady located the address of the author. She gave him his cat. The author was extremely grateful to the wonder lady who had given him a new lease of life.

- 3. Write a brief character sketch of the author. What impresses you the most?**

The author is a bright, loving, affectionate, sensitive and emotional boy. He is academically bright and popular among his old teachers and old class fellows. He actively participates in the activities. He feels lonely and lost in the new school.

After the fire tragedy, he feels isolated and depressed at the loss of his cat and house. His emotional and sensitive nature makes him cry. He loves his other too much. He displays the value of gratefulness. He is grateful to the lady who brought his cat back. He expresses his gratefulness to his class fellows who supported him in school. His love for his mother and his cat, his attachment to his old school and teachers are some values that have impressed me.



4. The author in the lesson. 'A House Is Not a Home' had lost everything in the fire. Everyone in the school felt concerned and helped him. Their selfless love and concern touched his heart and changed his misconception about people. Do you agree that selfless love, concern for someone, compassion and gratitude one should always imbibe in one's personality? Elaborate taking the examples from the story.

The author in the Lesson 'A house Is Not a Home' has lost everything in the fire. Everyone in his new school felt concerned for him. They offered all sorts of help to him. The selfless love and concern touched his heart and changed his misconception about people. He was not comfortable in his new school. He never thought that one day he would get all attention in the school. But when he got love and affection there, he changed his opinion. Selfless love and concern are the values that can win anybody. Courtesy, help and concern bring people closer. The lady who brought the cat back to the author appeared to be an angel to the author. The teacher and the students who helped him were just like the messengers of God for him. Selfless love, concern for others, compassion and gratitude are the values that make a man a perfect human being.

5. "This was not the kind of attention I was looking for." He did not want sympathy, he wanted self respect and recognition. What kind of attention did the author get in his new school?

The news of fire reached his school. Everyone was aware of his plight. All the teachers knew about his hardship. His classmates also gave him sympathetic looks. The author felt embarrassed as if somehow he himself was responsible for his plight. He remarked, "This was not the kind of attention I was looking for." Yes, the author did not want any sympathy. He had a misconception about his new school and the new teachers. But he was not right. They had selfless love and concern for him. The author realised that he was not under any obligation. It was a true human gesture for him. The story teaches various values that all of us must imbibe in our life. Consideration and concern for others, cooperation, compassion, friendship, fellow feeling and gratitude are some of them.

Next Generation School

