

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 8: A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME



A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME

~Summary~

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Teenager Joins A New School

The teenager joins a new high school. He finds it strange and awkward as his closest friends are in a different school. He misses his old friends and teachers and goes to meet his old teachers regularly.

Teenager's House Catches Fire

One day, while the teenager is doing his home work, his house catches fire. He and his mother run outside the house. He goes to his neighbours to call the fire brigade while his mother rushes inside to get some important documents and the pictures of his father. He is terrified on seeing his mother go inside the burning house and in the process of saving his mother, forgets about his pet cat.

They Shift to His Grandparent's House

After five hours, the firemen are successful in extinguishing the fire. The teenager suddenly realises that his pet cat is missing. He searches it everywhere but is unable to find it. He cries for the loss of his cat. He and his mother shift to his grandparents' home as their house has been completely destroyed by the fire.

Teenager Goes to School

The next day, the teenager goes to school. His clothes look weird and he does not have any books or school bag as everything was destroyed in the fire. He feels strange going like this to the school and wants to die as his old school, his friends, his house and his pet cat have been taken away from him.

Teenager Revisits the House

After school, the teenager revisits his house and finds that the damage due to the fire is huge. His heart misses his cat and he is unable to find it. He visits the house every now and then in the hope of finding his cat. But, it seems to be nowhere.

Schoolmates Help the Teenager

The news about the destruction of his house spreads in his new school. Everybody in the school becomes aware of his condition. His schoolmates help him by giving him school supplies, notebooks and clothes. The students introduce themselves to him and invite him to come to their home. This incident helps him open up to them and thus he makes a few friends.

The Teenager Finds His Cat

One day, while he is watching the rebuilding of his house, a lady comes and asks him, if the cat she is carrying, was his. He is overjoyed when he sees that she is carrying his pet cat. He takes it from her arms and holds her close to him and cries. He feels grateful for his life, his new friends, the kindness of a stranger and his beloved cat.

Conclusion of A House Is Not a Home

The chapter – A House Is Not a Home explains that one must be ready to face the challenges of life with courage and not get bogged down by the ups and downs of life. People encounter several challenges in life on a day-to-day basis, but they must stand firm and face all hurdles courageously.

NCERT SOLUTIONS

Questions (Page No. 54-55)

(Think about it)

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

Answer: One Sunday afternoon, the author smelled something strange, and then he noticed smoke pouring in through the seams of the ceiling. The smoke began to fill the room quickly. The author and his mother ran out of the house.

The author ran to the neighbours to call the fire department, while his mother ran back into the house. She then ran out of the house carrying a small metal box full of important documents. She dropped the case on the lawn and ran back into the house to bring the pictures of the author's dead father, which was the only thing that she had to remember him by.

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

Answer: After five hours when the fire was finally out, the author realized that his cat was nowhere to be found. He broke into tears when he got reminded of the new school he had to join, the fire in his house and his cat who might have died in the fire. He had suffered big losses.

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

Answer: The next day in school, the author is embarrassed because the clothes he was wearing looked weird, he had no books or homework, and his backpack was gone. He felt insecure and frustrated.

The words that show his fear and insecurity are: "I didn't want to grow up, change or have to handle life if it was going to be this way. I just wanted to curl up and die."

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 bond between the cat and the author has been shown in multiple instances in the story. For example, the author tells, "She was never far from me. I had rescued her when she was a kitten, and somehow she knew that I was the one responsible for giving her 'the good life'."

When the author realized that his cat was missing, he says, "Then all at once it hit me— the new school, the fire, my cat— I broke down in tears and cried and cried. I was suffering loss, big time."

The cat had been so freaked by the fire that she ran over a mile away. Her collar had our phone number on it, but the author's phone had been destroyed and disconnected. A stranger woman took her in and worked hard to find out whose cat it was. She brought the cat back to the author.

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: The author's schoolmates showed genuine concern towards him. On the second day of his new school, people were insisting that he hurry up and go to the gym. The author reached the gym. There was a big table set up with all kinds of stuff on it, just for me. They had taken up a collection and bought me school supplies, notebooks, all kinds of different clothes— jeans, tops, sweat suits. People who had never spoken to him before were coming up to him to introduce themselves. He got all kinds of invitations to their houses. This incident changed the author's understanding of life and people.

That is the day when he made friends at school. That's how his loneliness vanished and he started participating in life.

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: The author had not gone anywhere. He says the given statement because he was finally able to get things sorted in his life.

He had faced big losses. He missed his friends and teachers of the old school, his home was burnt into ashes and his cat was missing.

Gradually, he made new friends in the new school and saw his house getting rebuilt. When a stranger woman gave him his cat back, he says, "My cat was back and so was I". He means that now his life was complete again- friends, house and his cat- he now had all that he had lost.