**Lost Spring**

**Characters**

* Saheb-e-Alam: A rag picker
* Mukesh: Son of a bangle maker

**Introduction**

The story, “Lost Spring” describes the pitiable condition of poor children who have been forced to miss the joy of childhood due to the socio-economic condition that prevails in this man-made world. These children are denied the opportunity of schooling and forced into labour early in life. Anees Jung gives voice to eliminate child labour by educating the children and to enforce the laws against child labour by the governments strictly. The call is to end child exploitation and let the children enjoy the days of the spring that bring joy under their feet.

**Summary**

**I – Sometimes I find a rupee in the garbage.** The first part tells the writer’s impressions about the life of the poor rag pickers. The rag pickers have migrated from Dhaka and found a settlement in Seemapuri. Their fields and homes had been swept away by storms. They had come to the big city to find a living. They are poor. The writer watches Saheb every morning scrounging for “gold” in her neighbourhood. Garbage is a means of survival for the elders and for the children it is something wrapped in wonder. The children come across a coin or two from it. These people have desires and ambitions, but they do not know the way to achieve them. There are quite a few things that are unreachable to them, namely shoes, tennis and the like. Later Saheb joins a tea stall where he could earn 800 Rupees and all the meals. The job has taken away his freedom.

II – I **want to drive a car.**

The second part deals with the life of Mukesh, who belongs to the family of Bangle-makers. Firozabad is best known for its glass-blowing industry. Nearly 20,000 children are engaged in this business and the law that forbids child labour is not known here. The living condition and the working environment is a woeful tale. Life in dingy cells and working close to hot furnaces make these children blind when they step into the adulthood. Weighed down by the debt, they can neither think nor find a way to come of out of this trap. The politicians, middlemen, policemen and bureaucrats will all obstruct their way of progress. The women in the household consider it as their fate and just follow the tradition. Mukesh is different from the rest of the folk there. He dreams to become a motor mechanic. The garage is far away from his house but he shall walk. comes across Mukesh in Firozabad.

**Gist of the lesson:**

**Sometimes I find a rupee in garbage**

* The author examines and analyses the impoverished conditions and traditions that condemn children to a life of exploitation these children are denied an education and forced into hardships early in their lives.
* The writer encounters Saheb – a rag picker whose parents have left behind the life of poverty in Dhaka to earn a living in Delhi.
* His family like many other families of rag pickers lives in Seemapuri. They do not have other identification other than a ration card.
* The children do not go to school and they are excited at the prospect of finding a coin or even a ten rupee note for rummaging in the garbage.
* It is the only way of earning.
* The writer is pained to see Saheb, a rag picker whose name means the ruler of earth, Lose the spark of childhood and roams barefooted with his friends.
* From morning to noon the author encounters him in a tea stall and is paid Rs. 800 He sadly realizes that he is no longer his own master and this loss of identity weighs heavily on his tender shoulders.

**I want to drive a car**

* The author then tells about another victim, Mukesh who wants to be a motor mechanic.
* He has always worked in the glass making industry.
* They are exposed to various health hazards like losing their eyesight as they work in abysmal conditions, in dark and dingy cells.
* Mukesh’s father is blind as were his father and grandfather before him.
* So burdened are the bangle makers of Firozabad that they have lost their ability to dream unlike Mukesh who dreams of driving a car.