

Chapter 17

1. Your partner and you may now be able to answer these questions.

(i) Who is the speaker in the poem? Who are the people the speaker meets? What are they doing?

(ii) What wishes does the child in the poem make? Why does the child want to be a hawker, a gardener, or a watchman?

Pick out the lines in each stanza, which tell us this.

(iii) From the way the child envies the hawker, the gardener and the watchman, we can guess that there are many things the child has to do, or must not do.

Make a list of the do's and don'ts that the child doesn't like. The first line is done for you.

The Child Must	The Child Must Not
Come home at a fixed time	Get his clothes dirty in the dust

Ans:

(i) The speaker is a little child who goes to school. On his way to the school, he met a hawker, who cried "Bangles, crystal bangles!" When he returned from school, he watched a gardener, who was digging the ground. When it got dark and his mother sent him to bed, through his window he saw the watchman walking up and down.

(ii) The child in the poem wants to be a hawker, a gardener, and a watchman. When he looks at the hawker, he wishes he could also spend his day on the road crying "Bangles, crystal bangles!" He feels that there is nothing to hurry the hawker on. There is no road he must take, no place he must go to, and no fixed time when he must come home. These are the things that he cannot do himself and therefore, he wants to be a hawker so that he could do all these things. Next, he wishes he was a gardener because a gardener does what he likes with his spade. He soils his clothes with dust. Nobody scolds him if he gets baked in the sun or gets wet. Therefore, if the little child was a gardener, nobody would stop him from digging. Finally, he sees the watchman and wants to be like the watchman so that he could walk through dark and lonely streets all night with his lantern and chase shadows. When he is put to

bed and is not allowed to roam outside, he sees the watchman swinging his lantern with his shadow at his side and he feels that the watchman never even once has to go to bed in his entire life. Therefore, he wants to be a hawker, a gardener, and a watchman so that he could do all the things they did as he could not do them being a child.

(iii)

The Child Must	The Child Must Not
Come home at a fixed time	Get his clothes dirty in the dust
Go to bed when it got dark	Get baked in the sun or get wet
Go to school every day	Walk on dark and lonely street at night