**A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME**

**By– Zan Gaudios**

**Introduction of the story**

This story reflects the challenges of being a teenager and the problems of growing up. In our life sometimes such changes take place that our life becomes intolerable for us and sometimes we (teenagers) want to end this life. But again we find the things change which makes us enjoy life fully. In this story, the same things happen with the author. He finds himself in such an awkward situation when he joins a high school. After some days his house catches fire and he finds that his life has ended. But when his schoolmates show their concern for him, his whole vision for the life changes and he again starts taking interest in life.

**Introduction (2)**:

Being a teenager can be challenging at times because growing up has its own set of problems. These problems need to be tackled with patience and faith – two qualities that teenagers need to inculcate gradually. Opening up to the wonderful world around and thanking God for the little blessings make the difficult task of growing up a wonderful journey.

**Theme / Central Idea of the Lesson. Analysis of A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME**

**THEME**

The story is based on the theme of adjustment issues encountered by teenagers. Routine problems of life appear grievous and difficult to children in their growing years. They fail to acknowledge the little blessings offered by life and focus on the small missing things. It takes some time, but love and support from people around them rebuild their faith in the goodness of life. Zan felt so pressurized by the changes in his life that he thought of death, the extreme way to escape. However, genuine outpouring of concern from his schoolmates made him realize that his fear and insecurities were unfounded. He connected back with life with the help of his new friends.

**Theme (2)**

When a student goes to a new school, some problems crop up. He needs time to adjust to the new situation. Further, when a boy faces a situation where his house is burned down it leads him to feel depressed and rejected. He feels the loss of his home badly. The boy is deeply saddened by the loss of his pet cat. But later, things change for better and normalcy returns in his life. Often, people come forward to help us in the time of our grief.

**TITLE**

The word ‘house’ denotes a structure made of concrete material while the word ‘home’ connotes a place where love and concern bind the people inhabiting a space. “A House is Not a Home” is an appropriate title because Zan did not lose his home when he lost his house. Zan took to heart the burning down of his house and the things like his backpack, his shoes and other belongings. When he received love, support and concern from everyone around him, he realised that the emotion which was present in his house had grown even stronger after the fire tragedy. He had lost the house but the home was still there, stronger than before. Hence, the title aptly conveys the main idea that material losses can be recovered but they cannot cause the loss of genuine emotions.

**Moral/ Message of the lesson – A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME**

**MESSAGE**

The story conveys the message that camaraderie and bonhomie are two strong factors that help build genuine relationships. Zan felt awkward, isolated and embarrassed by the changes that marked his early teenage. But when new people approached him with open arms and extended a hand of friendship, he was overwhelmed. All his worries, fears, and insecurities faded away. Helping others in need and being grateful while getting help, are the two values one should acquire. The teenagers, especially, should volunteer to make newcomers feel at home. Another message conveyed by this story is that one should not grieve over material loss. As long as one has emotional support, one can overcome any loss.

 All of us love our home. The happiness and warmth it provides make us happy. But when a serious incident happens it throws everything out of order, and we feel very sad. This lesson gives out the message that a happy home is essential for us.

 Further, it gives the message that people come forward to help us in times of difficulty. They help us to put back our life in order. The boy in this story gets help from his schoolmates who provide him with everything. Further, a lady who lives nearby helps him to get back his cat, which he loves very much. So, we should retain our faith in others. We should also be courageous to face the difficulties we face in life.

**Justification of the Title**

Only if happiness, warmth and comfort are present in a house we can call it home. The house of the narrator, a teenage boy,  get burned down and the family moves into another accommodation. There is a great sense of loss to the boy. He also loses his pet cat which he loved so much. So the boy feels the loss of his home. But things change and he becomes happy again. He gets back his lost things and also his lovely cat. He again gets back his home. So the title is justified.

**Character Sketch**

**The narrator (Zan):**The narrator is a schoolboy who moves from Junior school to High School. Initially, he finds some problems in adjusting to life in the new school. Unfortunately, his house gets burned down in a fire and he is in deep trouble. But his schoolmates help him out by providing everything to him. A neighbour also greatly increases his joy by helping him to find his lost cat. So the narrator manages to become happy again after facing a lot of troubles. The affection he got from many people touched him. He was able to get rid of his insecurity and open up to others. A new chapter opened in his life.

**Value Points**

* The narrator feels isolated in his new school. Now he is studying in a high school.
* His old school teachers and friends are dear to him. They always encouraged him to participate in school activities and make new friends.
* Once his house catches fire. He, together with his mother run out to the neighbours because they have to inform the fire department.
* His mother rushes to the home to save the metal box, pictures, documents and letters by his father.
* The firemen save his mother. The narrator hugs his mother because he has a great love for her.
* As the narrator loses everything in the fire, they have to go to the grandparent’s house so that they could spend the night.
* Next day, the author went to his school wearing weird clothes, borrowed shoes and with no backpack.
* The narrator was surprised by his schoolmates. They gave him school supplies, notebooks, and all kind of different clothes.
* The narrator was touched by their concern and made many friends.
* A woman who got the pet cat of the narrator somehow managed to find him and gave his cat back to him.
* The narrator overcame the feeling of loss and pessimism and regained a new life.

**Main Characters of the Story**

**Zan** **Gaudioso**

 Zan is a teenager who is struggling with the changes in his life. He feels awkward, strange, isolated and embarrassed like any other teenager. Little matters gain massive proportion for him. However, he is very alert as he notices the fire as soon as it begins and he rushes out to call the firefighters.

He is also very attached to his mother. He tries to follow her when she goes back into the burning house to recover his father’s photos and letters. He knows that his action is illogical but he loves her too much to worry even about his own safety. He runs over and hugs her when the fireman rescues her. The thought of losing her blurs the times when he hated her or argued with her. He obeys her even when he finds it difficult. He goes to school the next day after the fire Just because his mother asks him to. He feels weird in Sunday church clothes and borrowed tennis shoes but does not throw any tantrums for not going to school.

 Zan’s insecurities and embarrassment are also like those of any teenager who is conscious about appearance. However, he is a sensitive boy who keeps hoping to find his cat even in the rubble of his house.

Zan is a little reluctant in taking the initiative but is otherwise a friendly boy. He welcomes the hand of friendship extended to him and happily accepts new friends He has values of gratitude and thankfulness for the little gifts bestowed upon by God. Overall, Zan is like an adorable teenager who needs a little love and concern to get back his smile.

**Zan’s Mother**

Zan’s mother is a brave woman who faces life with grit. Her husband died when her only son was very young, still, she took upon herself the responsibility to raise him singlehandedly. She heroically retrieves the photos and letters of her husband when fire engulfs their house. Her attempt to save the only memories of her late husband arouses admiration from her son as well the readers.

She is a responsible parent who can be firm if need be. She knows that going back to school would normalize things for Zan. Therefore, she compels him to go to school and even Zan does not resist this decision because he knows that she is his well-wisher.

The manner in which she quickly starts the process of resettling by renting an apartment shows that she does not get deterred by challenges. Overall, she is an admirable woman of love, compassion, self-respect and grit.