

## LITTLE GIRLS WISER THAN MEN

Leo Tolstoy

**A. Work in small groups and pairs and discuss the following :**

1. Do you celebrate festivals?
2. Which festival do you enjoy most?
3. How do you celebrate it?



It was an early Easter. Sledging was only just over; now still lay in the yards; and water ran in streams down the village street.

Two little girls from different houses happened to meet in a lane between two homesteads, where the dirty water after running through the farm-yards had formed a large puddle. One girl was very small, the other a little bigger. Their mothers had dressed them both in new frocks. The little one wore a blue frock, the other a yellow print, and both had red handkerchiefs on their heads. They had just come from church when they met, and first they showed each other their finery, and then they began to play. Soon the fancy took them to splash about in the water, and the smaller one was going to step into the puddle, shoes and all, when the elder checked her:

‘Don’t go in so, Malásha,’ said she, ‘your mother will scold you. I

will take off my shoes and stockings, and you take off yours.'

They did so, and then, picking up their skirts, began walking towards each other through the puddle. The water came up to Malásha's ankles, and she said:

'It is deep, Akoúlya, I'm afraid!'

'Come on,' replied the other. 'Don't be frightened. It won't get any deeper.'

When they got near one another, Akoúlya said:

'Mind, Malásha, don't splash. Walk carefully!'

She had hardly said this, when Malásha plumped down her foot so that the water splashed right on to Akoúlya's frock. The frock was splashed, and so were Akoúlya's eyes and nose. When she saw the stains on her frock, she was angry and ran after Malásha to strike her. Malásha was frightened, and seeing that she had got herself into trouble, she scrambled out of the puddle, and prepared to run home. Just then Akoúlya's mother happened to be passing, and seeing that her daughter's skirt was splashed, and her sleeves dirty, she said:

'You naughty, dirty girl, what have you been doing?'

'Malásha did it on purpose,' replied the girl.

At this Akoúlya's mother seized Malásha, and struck her on the back of her neck. Malásha began to howl so that she could be heard all down the street. Her mother came out.

**B.1. Answer the following questions briefly :**

1. Which festival is referred to by the writer?
2. Why was sledging over?



3. Why was water running in streams down the village street?
4. Where do two little girls meet?
5. Are they of same age?
6. Why did Akoúlya try to check Malásha?
7. What advice did Akoúlya offer?

**B1.2. Say True (T) or False (F) to the following statements:**

1. Akoúlya and Malásha take off their shoes and stockings.
2. They do not walk towards each other in the puddle.
3. Malásha assures Akoúlya that water is not deep.
4. Malásha splashes water.
5. Akoúlya ran to strike Malásha.
6. Malásha purposely splashes water.

‘What are you beating my girl for?’ said she; and began scolding her neighbour. One word led to another and they had an angry quarrel. The men came out and a crowd collected in the street, everyone shouting and no one listening. They all went on quarrelling, till one gave another a push, and the affair had very nearly come to blows, when Akoúlya’s old grandmother, stepping in among them, tried to calm them.

‘What are you thinking of, friends? Is it right to behave so? On a day like this, too! It is a time for rejoicing, and not for such folly as this.’

They would not listen to the old woman and nearly knocked her off her feet. And she would not have been able to quiet the crowd, if it had not been for Akoúlya and Malásha themselves. While the women were abusing each other, Akoúlya had wiped the mud off her frock, and



gone back to the puddle. She took a stone and began scraping away the earth in front of the puddle to make a channel through which the water could run out into the street. Presently Malásha joined her, and with a chip of wood helped her dig the channel. Just as the men were beginning to fight, the water from the little girls' channel ran streaming into the street towards the very place where the old woman was trying to pacify the men. The girls followed it; one running each side of the little stream.

'Catch it, Malásha! Catch it!' shouted Akoúlya; while Malásha could not speak for laughing.

Highly delighted, and watching the chip float along on their stream, the little girls ran straight into the group of men; and the old woman, seeing them, said to the men:

'Are you not ashamed of yourselves? To go fighting on account of these lassies, when they themselves have forgotten all about it, and are playing happily together. Dear little souls! They are wiser than you!'

The men looked at the little girls, and were ashamed, and, laughing at themselves, went back each to his own home.

'Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no way enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

**B 1.3 Complete the paragraph on the basis of the unit you have just studied :**

**They all went \_\_\_\_\_ quarrelling, till one gave another \_\_\_\_\_, and the affair had very \_\_\_\_\_**

**come to blows, when Akoúlya's old grandmother, stepping \_\_\_\_\_ among them, tried to \_\_\_\_\_ them. What are you thinking of friends? Is it right to \_\_\_\_\_ so?**

**On a day \_\_\_\_\_ this, too! It is a time \_\_\_\_\_ rejoicing and not for such folly \_\_\_\_\_ this.**



**B.3.2. Answer the questions briefly:**

1. Why did Akoúlya shout at Malásha?
2. Why did Akoúlya's mother seize Malásha?
3. What happened when Malásha's mother came out after hearing her howl?
4. Why was no one listening?
5. Did the old woman succeed in her effort?
6. What did Akoúlya do while other women were abusing each other ?
7. What did the two girls do when men started fighting?
8. Why did the old woman say to the crowd " Are you not ashamed of yourselves?"

**GLOSSARY AND NOTES**

**sledging** (n) : to ride on a sledge (an object for travelling over snow)

**streams** (n) : a narrow moving mass of liquid

**puddle** (n) : small shallow pool of liquid that has spread on the ground

**finery** (n) : wearing impressive clothes and jewellery on special occasions

**splash** (v) : to hit or disturb water in a noisy way

**scold** (v) : to speak angrily when someone does something wrong

**scrambled** (v) : to move in a hurried or undignified way

**howl** (v) : making long, loud cry expressing pain, anger or unhappiness

**chip** (n) : a small broken piece of something

**C. 1. LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Why were the two girls dressed in new clothes and were showing their finery to each other?



2. Why did they step into the puddle? What made them fight?
3. What did the old woman mean by "Is it right to behave so? On a day like this, too!"
4. Why does the writer call the two little girls "Dear little souls".
5. Explain "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no way enter into the kingdom of heaven".

## C.2. GROUP DISCUSSION

### Discuss in groups or pairs

1. Is it proper to fight on trivial issues like sitting in the first row?
2. Discipline and love for mankind make one's character strong.

## C.3. COMPOSITION

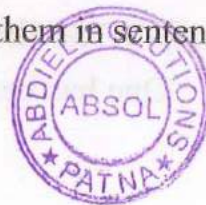
1. If you move from one culture to another culture you may find variation in custom, food habits, dress code and activities. Write a paragraph on cultural variations that you observe in the society.
2. Despite variations there are some features, which are common to the whole of mankind. Write a paragraph on those features.

## D. WORD STUDY

**E1. Phrasal verbs:** Phrasal verbs consist of two words (verb + adverb particle), which carries a single meaning and this meaning is not the sum total of the two words.

ex. give up, put out, break down are phrasal verbs.

Pick out phrasal verbs used in the lesson and use them in sentences of your own.



**E. GRAMMAR****Ex.1. One may report the words of a speaker in two different ways:**

1. May quote the actual words of speaker (direct speech).
2. Or report what a speaker said without quoting his exact words is (indirect speech).

Look at the following sentences in your lesson:

'Don't go in so, Maláshá, said she.

She said, 'Your mother will scold you.'

Since these are the speaker's exact words, they are written within inverted commas.

Now look at following sentences:

She advised Malásha not to go in that way.

She warned her that her mother would scold her.

In reporting statements, commands and requests of direct speech in indirect speech, a few changes are required. You have been told about these changes in earlier lessons. In addition to those changes you have to note how the reporting verb of commands and requests are introduced by verbs expressing command or request and also how the imperative mood is changed into the infinitive.

Now pick out sentences from the lesson written in direct speech and change them into indirect speech.

**Ex. 2. Write the extended or full form of the following:**

One has been done for you.





I'm	I am	won't	.....
don't	.....	didn't	.....
hadn't	.....	hasn't	.....
haven't	.....	shouldn't	.....
shan't	.....	aren't	.....
wouldn't	.....	weren't	.....
isn't			

**F. ACTIVITY**

1. Recall any past event related to your friend similar to this story. Report that event to your friend in indirect speech.

**G. TRANSLATION**

**Translate the passage into Hindi:**

They would not listen to the old lady, and nearly knocked her off her feet. And she would not have been able to quiet the crowd, if it had not been for Akoúlya and Malásha themselves. While the women were abusing each other, Akoúlya had wiped the mud off her frock, and gone back to the puddle. She took a stone and began scraping away the earth in front of the puddle to make a channel through which the water could run out into the street.

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