

..... 14. A Lesson for All

Characters



Humans



Newspaper boy



Milkman



Hawker



School-bus driver



Dr Sawant



Mrs Patel - a housewife



Mr Desai - a businessman



Mayor of the town



Mrs Joshi - a housewife



Nidhi and Madhu - Mrs Joshi's daughters (school-going girls)

Animals



Rabbit



Deer



Peacock



Squirrel



Bear



Birds



Tortoise

A city street, early in the morning

(The street is littered with plastic bags, cartons, tins, cans, broken glass, old tyres, waste paper balls, bags and other garbage. Enter Mr Desai.)

Mr Desai : (looking out into the distance) Why hasn't the newspaper been delivered on time today? It's nine o'clock. Almost time to leave for my office. (looks out again) Let me ask the Patels if they have received their copy.

(Goes into the Wings and returns with Mrs Patel.)

Mrs Patel : No Mr Desai, the newspaper boy hasn't delivered

the papers as yet. Nor has our milkman turned up! Mr Patel is so grumpy. He is waiting for his morning cup of tea.

Mr Desai : Very strange! And look! The state the street is in, is simply shocking.

Mrs Patel : My word! What's this? Where did all this litter and garbage come from?

(Enter Mrs Joshi with her daughters.)

Mr Desai : I returned rather late from the office last night and the street was bare then. How did all this rubbish gather here overnight?

(Suddenly, Madhu falls and injures her foot - gives out a cry of pain.)

Madhu : Oooh! Ouch!
My foot! It hurts!



Mrs Joshi : Oh dear!
Madhu, are you alright? Oh, no, her foot is bleeding so much! Somebody help, please!

Mrs Patel : Nidhi, run and fetch Dr Mrs Sawant. Request her to come quickly. Your sister has cut herself on a broken glass bottle.

Mr Desai : I'll get some ice at once.

Mrs Joshi : (almost in tears) My poor child! How did all this broken glass happen to be here?

Mrs Patel : Look around. It's not just broken glass, but....

Mrs Joshi : Dear me! What nonsense this is! Unbelievable! Where has all this rubbish come from?

(Dr Sawant enters with Nidhi. She has a doctor's kit.)

Dr Sawant : Let me see the wound.

Mr Desai : Here's some ice to stop the bleeding.

Dr Sawant : What presence of mind! Good! (Applies ice on the wound.) There now! It has stopped bleeding. It's a deep cut. I'll dress the wound and she will be fine.

Mrs Joshi : Thank you, Doctor. So kind of you to come at once. But I am going to complain to the Mayor. Have you seen the rubbish and the litter on the road?

Dr Sawant : Oh, it's a mystery. All this garbage was not there yesterday. And now.... just look!

(Enter newspaper boy, milkman, hawker, etc.)

Mrs Patel : The Mayor must not have seen ... Look, the newspaper boy! He is limping. And the milkman at last! (To the milkman) Why, where's your bicycle and why are you so late?

Milkman : The tyres were punctured. I had to come walking all the way with this heavy milk can.

Newspaper boy : And I tripped over an old tyre and sprained my foot. It was quite dark early this morning. I did not expect an old tyre right in the middle of the road.

Mr Desai : I see! Something must be done.

(Bus driver enters carefully avoiding the litter.)



Bus driver : Mrs Joshi, Mrs Joshi, I'm sorry. I can't drive the school bus today. On every road and street there is nothing but litter. It looks like an obstacle race course.

Mrs Joshi : I know! I'm going to send for the Mayor at once. He must see this. Our children are not safe with all these dangerous broken objects around.

Hawker : No one is safe. Let's request the Mayor to come and see for himself.

Mr Desai : I'll fetch him. (*Exit*)

(Enters again with the Mayor and his retinue.)

Mayor : (*Annoyed*) Unbelievable! Shocking! How do you expect people to walk through all this rubbish? Why don't you all dispose of the garbage properly?

Mrs Patel : But we do, Mr Mayor. We give our garbage to the garbage collector.

Mrs Joshi : Yes, we don't litter our streets like this.

Mr Desai : Or we take it to the dumping ground near the river-

side - away from here. The rains then wash it away.

Mrs Patel : Or the winds blow it away.

Mayor : Then how did it come back into the town overnight?

Bus driver : That's the problem! Nobody knows how it got here. It's a mystery.

Newspaper boy : It looks like someone has done it purposely to spoil our town.

Mrs Joshi : And endanger our children.

Milkman : And hinder our daily work.

Mayor : We will not tolerate this! I must look into this. I will not spare anyone. Who has done this? Who is responsible for this mess?

(Enter animals who have been hiding - deer, rabbit, birds, squirrel, bear, etc. Each one comes out from its cover turn by turn, saying)

Animals : We are responsible!

We have brought in all the litter.

We have spread the garbage all over the town.

Deer : Yes! We confess we did so.

Mayor : What? You! How dare you?

Mrs Joshi : What right do you have to spoil our town and make it unsafe to move around?

Bear : (*comes forward*) We have only brought back to you what belongs to you. Tell me, what right do *you* have to dump all this in the forests? The forest is our dwelling place.

Birds : Our trees are dying and vanishing because of you. Where can we roost or build nests?

Squirrel : And where can we live?

Rabbit : You are worried about Madhu being injured because of sharp broken glass - Don't our young ones get injured too?

Deer : Yes! And we have no doctor to dress their wounds. Our young ones simply die.

Madhu/Nidhi : Oh, no! How shocking! Terrible!

Tortoise : All the fish in the rivers and lakes die because of the waste dumped in water. How we suffer because of the chemicals and poisons!

Bear : And so many animals who drink the polluted water fall ill and die.

Dr Sawant : Yes. It is unfortunately true.

Peacock : So we called a meeting and decided to return all your dangerous stuff back to you. We don't need it.

Bear : Anyway, we were not as cruel as you are! We have only returned the garbage. We have not poured chemicals and poisons onto your settlements.

Mayor : I see. You animals and birds do have a point. You are right.

Mr Desai : You have opened our eyes. We should not dump rubbish in the forests or rivers or lakes.

Mrs Patel : But where can we dispose of it?

Mayor : If you all agree to sort out the litter, I will arrange for it to be collected separately. Then, some of it can go for processing and some, for recycling.

Mrs Joshi : Good idea! Let's do just that.

Mayor : Let us save our mother earth from further harm. (*To the animals*) Thank you, dear animals for teaching us a lesson so effectively. We assure you, we will not pollute or spoil your homes. I shall even warn those who go there for picnics.

Some animals : Thank you, Mr Mayor! Thank you. (*They return.*)

Mayor : Self-help is the best help. Let's clear this up. (*All including the Mayor start picking up the litter.*)

- Curtain -



Things to do :

1. Answer the following questions.

- (1) What difficulties do the people in the play face in the morning ?
- (2) What more difficulties would they have to face, if the roads are not cleared ?
- (3) What are the complaints of the animals ?

2. List the characters in the play.

- * Human characters * Birds and animals

3. Activities

- (1) Enact the play.
- (2) Write slogans for the cleanliness drive in your area.
- (3) Write a short note / story based on the ill effects of pollution.

4. Language Study (See pages 84-88.)

- (1) Find two examples of each of the following from the lesson.
 - * A Statement * A Question * A Command * An Exclamation

5. Group Work

- (1) Form groups of four or five.

Try to find the answers to the following questions through observation and by talking to your teachers, parents and others. Discuss your answers in the group.

- * How is waste generated ?
- * How is it removed or cleared ?
- * How can we help in the task of clearing or removing garbage ?

- (2) In what way can we help to reduce or minimize waste generation ?

Discuss the issue in groups of 4 or 5 and note down all good suggestions.

Resolve to follow them yourself. Some have been given below for your reference.

- * Don't waste food.
- * Take as much as you want but finish everything that's on your plate.
- * Don't throw away broken or half-used things. Repair them and use them.
- * Avoid things which can be used only once.
For example : thermocol (polysterene) cups, plastic glasses, etc.
- * Reuse !
- * Recycle !