

CHANDALIKA

Characters

MOTHER

PRAKRITI, her daughter

Ananda

SCENE-I

UNIT-A

MOTHER: Prakriti! Prakriti! Where has she gone? What ails the girl, I wonder? She's never to be found in the house.

PRAKRITI: Here, mother, here I am.

MOTHER: Where?

PRAKRITI: Here, by the well.

MOTHER: Whatever will you do next? Past noon, and a blistering sun, and the earth too hot for the feet! The morning's water was drawn long ago, and the other girls in the village have all taken their pots home. Why, the very crows on the *amlaki* branches are gasping for heat. Yet you see and roast in the *Vaisakh* sun for no reason at all! There's a story in the *Purana* about how Uma left home and did penance in the burning sun—is that what you are about?

PRAKRITI: Yes, mother, that's it—I'm doing penance.

MOTHER: Good heavens! And for whom?

PRAKRITI: For someone whose call has come to me.

MOTHER: What call is that?

PRAKRITI: 'Give me water'. He set the words echoing in my heart.

MOTHER: Heavens defend us! He said to you 'Give me water'? Who was it? Someone of our own caste?

PRAKRITI: That's what he said—that he belonged to our kind.

MOTHER: You didn't hide your caste? Did you tell him that you are a *Chandalini*?

PRAKRITI: I told him, yes—he said it wasn't true. If the black clouds of *Sravana* are dubbed Chandal, he said, what of it? It doesn't change their nature, or destroy the virtue of their water. Don't humiliate yourself, he said; self-humiliation is a sin, worse than self-murder.

MOTHER: What words are these from you? Have you remembered some tale of a former birth?

PRAKRITI: No, this is a tale of my new birth.

MOTHER: You make me laugh. New birth, indeed! Since when, pray?

PRAKRITI: It was the other day. The palace gong had just struck noon and it was blazing hot. I was washing that calf at the well—the one whose mother died. Then a Buddhist monk came stood before me, in his yellow robes, and said, 'Give me water'. My heart leaped with wonder. I started up trembling and bowed before his feet, without touching them. His form was radiant as with the light of dawn. I said, 'I am a Chandalini, and the well-water is unclean'. He said, 'As I am human being, so also are you, and all water is clean and holy that cools our heat and satisfies our thirst'. For the first time in my life I heard such words, for the first time I poured water into his cupped hands—the hands of a man the very dust of whose feet I would never have dared to touch.

MOTHER: O, you stupid girl, how could you be so reckless? There will be a price to pay for this madness! Don't you know what caste you were born in?

PRAKRITI: Only once did he cup his hands, to take the water from mine. Such little water, yet the water grew to a fathomless, boundless sea. In it flowed all the seven seas in one, and my caste was drowned, and my birth was clean.

MOTHER: Why, even the way you speak is changed. He has laid your tongue under a spell. Do you understand yourself what you are saying?

PRAKRITI: Was there no other water, Mother, in all Sravasti city? Why did he come to this well of all wells? I may truly call it my new birth! He came to give me the honour of quenching Man's thirst. That was the mighty act of merit which he sought. Nowhere else could he have found the water which could fulfil his holy vow—no, not in any sacred stream. He said that Janki bathed in such water as this, at the beginning of her forest exile, and that Guhak, the Chandal drew it for her. My heart has been dancing ever since, and night and day I hear those solemn tones—'Give me water, give me water'.

MOTHER: I don't know what to make of it, child; I don't like it. I don't understand the magic of their spells. Today I don't recognize your speech; tomorrow, perhaps, I shall not even recognize your face. Their spell can make a changeling of the very soul itself.

PRAKRITI. All these days you have never really known me, Mother. He who has recognized me will reveal me. And so I wait and watch. The midday gong booms from the palace, the girls take up their water-pots and go home, the kite soars alone into the far sky, and I bring my pitcher and sit here at the well by the wayside.

MOTHER: For whom do you wait?

PRAKRITI: For the wayfarer.

MOTHER: What wayfarer will come to you, you crazy girl?

PRAKRITI: That one wayfarer, Mother, the one and only. In him are all who fare along the ways of all the world. Day after day goes by, yet he does not come. Though he spoke no word, his word was given—why does he not keep his word? For my heart is become like a waterless waste, where the heat-haze quivers all day long and the hot wind fans like flame. Its water cannot be given for no one comes to seek it.

MOTHER: I can make nothing of your talk today; it's as though you were intoxicated. Tell me plainly what do you want?

PRAKRITI: I want him. All unlooked-for he came, and taught this marvellous truth, that even my service will count with the God who guides the world. O words of great wonder! That I may serve, I, a flower sprung from a poison-plant! Let him raise that truth, that flower from the dust, and take it to his bosom.

MOTHER: Be warned, Prakriti, these men's words are meant only to be heard, not to be practised. The filth into which an evil fate has cast you is a wall of mud that no spade in the world can break through. You are unclean, beware of tainting the outside world with your unclean presence. See that you keep to your own place, narrow as it is. To stray anywhere beyond its limits is to trespass.

UNIT-B

PRAKRITI (*sings*):

Blessed am I, says the flower, who belongs to the earth, for
I serve you, my god, in this my lowly home
Make me forget that I am born of dust
For my spirit is free from it
When you bend your eyes upon me my petals tremble in joy;
Give me a touch of your feet and make me heavenly,
For the earth must offer its worship through me.

MOTHER: Child, I'm beginning to understand something of what you say. You are a woman; by serving you must worship, and by serving you must rule. Women alone can in a moment overstep the bounds of caste; when once the curtains of destiny are drawn aside, they all stand revealed in their queenliness. You had a good chance, you know, when the king's son was deer-hunting and came to this very well of yours. You remember, don't you?

PRAKRITI: Yes, I remember.

MOTHER: Why didn't you go to the king's house? He had forgotten everything in your beauty.

PRAKRITI: Yes, he had forgotten everything—forgotten that I was a human being. He had gone out hunting beasts; he saw nothing but the beast whom he wanted to bind in chains of gold.

MOTHER: At least he noticed your beauty, if only as game to be hunted. As for a Bhikshu, does he see the woman in you?

PRAKRITI: You won't understand, Mother, you won't! I feel that in all these days he is the first who ever really recognized me. That is a marvellous thing. I want him, Mother, I want him beyond all measure. I want to take this life of mine and lay it like a basket of flowers at his feet. It will not defile them. Let everyone marvel at my daring! I shall glory in claiming 'I am your handmaid', I shall declare—for otherwise I must lie bound for ever at the whole world's feet, a slave!

MOTHER: Why do you get so excited, child? You were born a slave. It's the writ of Destiny, who can undo it?

PRAKRITI: Fie, fie, Mother, I tell you again, don't delude yourself with this self-humiliation—it is false, and a sin. Plenty of slaves are born of royal blood, but I am no slave; plenty of chandals are born of Brahmin families, but I am no chandal.

MOTHER: I don't know how to answer you, child. Very good. I'll go to him myself, and cling to his feet. 'You accept food from every home,' I'll say, 'Come to our house too, and accept from our hands at least a bowl of water.'

PRAKRITI: No, no, I'll not call him in that way, from outside. I'll send my call into his soul, for him to hear. I am longing to give myself; it is like a pain at my heart. Who is going to accept the gift? Who will join with me in give-and-take? Will he not mingle his longings with mine, as the Ganges mingles with the backwaters of the Jumna? For music springs up of itself, and he who came unbidden has left behind him a word of hope. What is the use of one pitcher of water when the earth is cracked with drought? Will not the clouds come of themselves to fill the whole sky, the rain seek the soil by its own weight?

MOTHER: What is the use of such talk? If the clouds come, they come; if they don't they don't; if the crops wither, it's no concern of theirs! What more can we do than sit and watch the sky?

PRAKRITI: That won't do for me: I won't simply sit and watch. You know how to work spells; let those spells be the clasp of my arm, let them drag him here.

MOTHER: What are you saying, wretched girl? Is there no limit to your recklessness? It would be playing with fire! Are these Bhikshus like ordinary folk? How am I to work spells on them? I shudder even to think of it.

PRAKRITI: You would have worked them boldly enough on the king's son.

MOTHER: I'm not afraid of the king; he might have had me impaled, perhaps. But these men—they do nothing.

PRAKRITI: I fear nothing any longer, except to sink back again, to forget myself again, to enter again the house of darkness. That would be worse than death! Bring him here, you must! I speak so boldly, of such great matter— isn't that in itself a wonder? Who worked the wonder but he? Shall there not be further wonders? Shall he not come to my side, and sit with me on the corner of my cloth?

MOTHER: Suppose I can bring him, are you ready to pay the price? Nothing will be left to you.

PRAKRITI: No, nothing will be left. The burden and heritage of birth after birth— nothing will remain. Only let me bring it all to an end, then I shall live indeed. That's why I need him. Nothing will be left of me. I have waited for age after age, and now in this birth my life shall be fulfilled. My mind is saying it over and over again— fulfilled! It was for this that I heard those wonderful words, 'Give me water'. Today I know that even I can give. Everyone else had hidden the truth from me. I sit and watch for his coming today to give, to give, to give everything I have.

MOTHER: Have you no respect for religion?

PRAKRITI: How can I say? I respect him, who respects me. A religion that insults is a false religion. Everyone united to make me conform to a creed that blinds and gags. But since that day something forbids me to conform any longer. I'm afraid of nothing now. Chant your spells, bring the Bhikshu to the side of the Chandalini. I myself shall do him honour—no one else can honour him so well.

MOTHER: Aren't you afraid of bringing a curse upon yourself?

PRAKRITI: There has been a curse upon me all my life. Poison kills poison, they say—so one curse another; not another word, Mother, not another word. Begin your spells. I cannot bear any more delay.

UNIT-C

MOTHER: Very well then. What is his name?

PRAKRITI: His name is Ananda.

MOTHER: Ananda? The disciple of the Lord Buddha?

PRAKRITI: Yes, it is he.

MOTHER : O my heart's treasure, you are the apple of my eye—but it's a great wrong. I'm putting my hand to at your bidding!

PRAKRITI: What wrong? I will bring to my side the one who brings all near. What crime is there in that?

MOTHER: They draw men by the strength of their virtue. We drag them with spells, as beasts are dragged in a noose. We only churn up the mud.

PRAKRITI: So much the better. Without churning, how can the well be cleansed?

MOTHER (*apostrophizing Ananda*)'. O thou exalted one, thy power to forgive is greater by far than my power to offend. I am about to do thee dishonour, yet, I bow before thee: accept my obeisance, Lord.

PRAKRITI: What are you afraid of, Mother? Yours are the lips I use but it's I who chant the spells. If my longing can draw him here and if that is a crime, then I will commit the crime. I care nothing for a code which holds only punishment, and no comfort.

MOTHER: You are immensely daring, Prakriti.

PRAKRITI: You call me daring? Think of the might of his daring! How simply he spoke the words which no one had ever dared to say to me before! 'Give me little water'. Such little words, yet as mighty as flame—they rolled away the black stone whose weight so long had stopped the fountains of my heart, and the joy bubbled forth. Your fear is an illusion, for you did not see him. All morning he had begged alms in Sravasti city; when his task was done he came across the common, past burning-ground, along the river bank, with the hot sun on his head—and for what? To say that one word, 'Give me water', even to a girl like me. O, it's too wonderful! Whence did such grace, such love, come down upon a wretch unworthy beyond all others? What can I fear now? 'Give me water'— yes, the water which has filled all my days, to overflowing, which I must need give or die. 'Give me water'; in a moment I knew that I had water, inexhaustible water; to whom should I tell my joy? And so call him night and day. If he does not hear, fear not; chant your spell, he will be able to bear it.

MOTHER: Look, Prakriti, some men in yellow robes are going by the road across the common.

PRAKRITI: So they are; all monks of the *sangha*, I see, don't you hear them chanting?

(The chant is heard in the distance.)

To the most pure Buddha, mighty ocean of mercy,
Seer of knowledge absolute, pure, supreme,
Of the world's sin and suffering the Destroyer—
Solemnly to the Buddha I bow in homage.

PRAKRITI: O Mother, see, he is going, there ahead of them all. He never turned his head or looked towards this well. He could so easily have said 'Give me water' once more before he went. I thought he would never be able to cast me aside—me, his own handiwork, his new creation. *(She flings herself down and beats her head on the ground)*

This dust, this dust is your place! O wretched woman, who raised you to bloom for a moment in the light? Fallen in the end into this same dust, you must mingle for all time with this same dust, trampled underfoot by all who travel the road.

MOTHER: Child, dear child, forget it all. They have broken your momentary dream and they are going away—let them go, let them go. When a thing is not meant to last, the quicker it goes the better.

PRAKRITI: Day after day this cry of desire, moment by moment this burden of shame; this prisoned bird in my breast, that beats its wings unto death—do you call it a dream? A dream, is it, that sinks its sharp teeth into the fibres of my heart, and will not loosen its grip? And they, who have no ties, no joy or sorrow, no earthly burden, who float along like the clouds in autumn—are only they awake, are only they real?

MOTHER: O Prakriti, I cannot bear to see you suffer so. Come, get up. I will chant the spells. I will bring him. All along the dusty road I will bring him. 'I want nothing', he says in his pride. I'll break that pride and make him come, running and crying, 'I want, I want'.

PRAKRITI: Mother, yours is an ancient spell, as old as life itself. Their mantras are raw things of yesterday. These men can never be a match for you—the knot of their mantras will be loosened under the stress of your spells. He is bound to be defeated.

MOTHER: Where are they going?

PRAKRITI: Going? They are going nowhere. During the rains they remain four months in penance and fasting, and then they are off again, how should I know where? That's what they call being awake.

MOTHER: Then why are you talking of spells, you crazy thing? He is going so far—how am I to bring him back?

PRAKRITI: No matter where he goes, you must bring him back. Distance is nothing for your spells. He showed no pity to me. I shall show none to him. Chant your spells, your cruellest spells: and wind them about his mind till every coil bites deep. Wherever he goes, he shall never escape me.

MOTHER: You need not fear, it is not beyond our powers. I will give you this magic mirror; you shall take it in your hand and dance. His shadow will fall on the glass, and in it you will see what happens to him and how near he has come.

PRAKRITI: See there the clouds, the storm clouds, gathered in the west. The spell will work, Mother, it will work. His dry meditations will scatter like withered leaves, his lamp will go out, his path will be lost in darkness. As a bird at dead of night falls fluttering into the dark courtyard, its nest broken in the storm, even so shall he be whirled helpless to our doors. The thunder throbs in my heart, my mind is filled with the lightning flash, the waves form high in an ocean whose shore I cannot see.

MOTHER: Think well even now, lest sudden terror spring upon you with the work half done. Can you endure to the end? When the spell has reached its height, it would cost me my life to undo it. Remember that this fire will not die down till all that will burn is burnt to ashes.

PRAKRITI: For whom are you afraid? Is he a common man? Nothing will hurt him? Let him come, let him tread the path of fire to the very end. Before me I see in vision the night of doom, the storm of union, the bliss of the breaking of worlds.

SCENE-II

UNIT-D

(Fifteen days have passed)

PRAKRITI: O, my heart will break. I will not look in the mirror. I cannot bear it. Such agony, so furious a storm. Must the king of forest crash to the dust at last, his cloud-kissing glory broken?

MOTHER: Even now, child, if you say so, I will try to undo the spell. Let the cords of my life be torn apart and my life-blood spent, if only that great soul can be saved.

PRAKRITI: That is best, Mother. Let the spells stop, I'll have no more...no, no, don't! Go on—the end of the path is so near! Make him come right to my bosom! After that I will blot out all his suffering, emptying my whole world at his feet. At dead of night the wayfarer will come and I will kindle the lamps for him in the flames of my burning heart. Deep within are springs of nectar, where he shall bathe and anoint his weary, hot

and wounded limbs. Once again he shall say 'Give me water'—water from the ocean of my heart. Yes, that day will come—go on with the spell.

(Song)

In my own sorrow
Will I quit thy sorrow;
Thy heart will I bathe
In the deep waters of my pain's immensity.
My world will I give to the flames,
And my blackened shame shall be cleansed.
My mortal pain will I offer as gift at thy feet.

MOTHER: I never knew it would take so long. My spells have no more power, child; there is no breath left in my body.

PRAKRITI: Don't be afraid, Mother, hold out a little longer only, only a little. It will not be long now.

MOTHER: The month of *Ashad* is here, and their four months' fast is at hand.

PRAKRITI: They are gone to Vaisali, to the monastery there.

MOTHER: How pitiless you are! That is so far away.

PRAKRITI: Not very far; seven days' journey. Fifteen days have already passed. His seat of meditation has been shaken at last. He is coming, he is coming! All that once lay so far away, so many million miles away, beyond the very sun and moon, immeasurably beyond the reach of my arms—it is coming, nearer and nearer! He is coming, and my heart is rocked as by an earthquake.

MOTHER: I have worked the spell through all its stages—such force might have brought down Indra of the thunderbolt himself. And yet he does not come. It is a fight to the death indeed. What did you see in the mirror?

PRAKRITI: At first I saw a mist covering the whole sky, deathly pale like the weary gods after their struggle with demons. Through rifts in the mist there glimmered fire. After that the mist gathered itself up into red and angry clusters, like swollen, festering sores. That day passed. The next day I looked, and all the background was a deep black cloud, with lightning playing across it. Before it he was standing, all his limbs fenced with flame. My blood ran cold, and I rushed to tell you to stop your spells at once but I found you in deep trance, sitting like a log, breathing harshly, and unconscious. It seemed as though a fierce fire burned in you, and your fire was a flaming serpent that hissed and struck in deadly duel at the fire that wrapped him round. I came back and took up the mirror; the light was gone—only torment, unfathomable torment was in his face.

MOTHER: Yet that did not kill you? The fire of his suffering burnt into my soul, till I thought I could bear no more.

PRAKRITI!: It seemed that the tortured form I saw was not his only, but mine too; it belonged to us both. In those awful fires the gold and copper had been melted and fused.

MOTHER: And you felt no fear?

PRAKRITI: Something far greater than fear. I beheld the God of Creation, more terrible by far than the God of Destruction, lashing the flames to work His purposes, while they writhed and roared in anger. What lay at his feet in the casket of the seven elements—Life or Death? My mind swelled with a joy hard to name—joy in the tremendous detachment of new creation, free of care or fear, of pity or sorrow. Creation breaking, burning and melting among the sparks of the elemental fires. I could not keep still. My soul and body danced and danced together, as the painted flames dance in the fire.

MOTHER: And how did your Bhikshu appear?

PRAKRITI: His eyes were fixed motionless upon the distance, like stars in the evening twilight. I longed to escape from myself far into boundless space.

MOTHER: When you danced before the mirror, he saw you?

PRAKRITI: Fie upon it, how I am shamed! Again and again his eyes grew red, as though he were about to curse. Again and again he trampled down the glowing fires of anger, and at last his anger turned upon himself, quivering, like a spear, and pierced his own breast.

MOTHER: And you bore all this?

PRAKRITI: I was amazed. I, this I, this daughter of yours, this nobody from nowhere—his suffering and mine are one today! What holy fire of creation could have wrought such a union? Who could dream of so great a thing?

MOTHER: When shall this turmoil be stilled?

PRAKRITI!: When my suffering is stilled. How can he attain his *Mukti* until I attain mine?

MOTHER: When did you last look into your mirror?

PRAKRITI: Yesterday evening. He had passed through the lion gate of Vaisali some days before, at the dead of night—seemingly in secret, unknown to the monks. After that I had sometimes seen him ferried across rivers or on difficult mountain passes. I had seen the evening fall, and him alone on the wide commons, or on the dark forest

paths at dead of night. As the days went by, he fell more deeply under the spell and became heedless of everything, all the conflict with his own soul at an end. His face was mazed, his body slack, his eyes fixed in unseeing stare, as though for him there were neither true nor false, good nor evil—only a blind and thoughtless compulsion, with no meaning in it.

MOTHER: Can you guess how far he has come today?

PRAKRITI: I saw him yesterday at Patal village on the river Upali. The river was turbulent with new rains; there was an old peepul tree by the ghat, fireflies shining in its branches, and under it a lichened altar. As he reached it he gave a sudden start and stood still. It was a place he had known for a long time. I have heard that one day the Lord Buddha preached there to King Suprabhas. He sat down and covered his eyes with his hands—I felt that his dream-spell might break at any moment. I flung away the mirror, for I was afraid of what I might see. The whole day has passed since then, and torn between hope and fear I have sat on, not daring to know. Now it is dark again; on the road goes the watchman calling the hour, it must be an hour past midnight. O Mother, the time is short, so short; don't let this night be wasted; put the whole of your strength into the spell.

MOTHER: Child, I can do no more, the spell is weakening, I am failing body and soul.

PRAKRITI: It mustn't weaken now—don't give up now! Maybe he has turned his face away, maybe the chain we bound on him is stretched to the uttermost, and will not hold. What if he escapes now, away from this birth of mine, and I can never reach him again? Then it will be my turn to dream, to return to the illusion of a Chandala birth. I will never endure that mockery again. I beseech you, Mother, put out your whole strength once only; set in motion your spell of the primeval earth, and shake the complacent heaven of the virtuous.

MOTHER: Have you made ready as I told you?

PRAKRITI: Yes, yesterday was the second night of the waxing moon. I bathed in the river Gambhira, plunging below the water. Here in the courtyard I drew a circle, with rice and pomegranate blossoms, vermilion and the seven jewels. I planted the flags of yellow cloth, I placed sandal-paste and garlands on a brass tray, I lit the lamps. After my bath I put on a cloth, green like the tender rice shoots and a scarf like the champa flower. I sat with my face to the East. All night long I have contemplated his image. On my left arm I have tied the bracelet of thread—sixteen strands of golden yellow bound in sixteen knots.

MOTHER: Then dance round the circle in your dance of invocation, while I work my spells before the altar.

(PRAKRITI dances and sings)

Now, Prakriti, take your mirror and look. See, a dark shadow has fallen over the altar. My heart is bursting and I can do no more. Look into the mirror—how long will it be now?

PRAKRITI: No, I will not look again, I will listen—listen in my inmost being. If he reveals himself I shall see him before me. Bear up a little longer, Mother, he will surely, surely reveal himself. Hark! to the sudden storm, the storm of his coming! The earth quivers beneath his tread, and my heart throbs.

MOTHER: It brings a curse for you, unhappy girl. As for me, it means surely death—the fibres of my being are shattered.

PRAKRITI: No curse, it brings no curse, it brings the gift of my new birth. The thunderbolt hammers open the Lion gates of Death; the door breaks, the walls crumble, the falsehood of this birth of mine is shattered. Tremors of fear shake my mind, but rhythms of joy enrapture my soul. My All-destroyer, my All-in-all, you have come! I will enthrone you on the summit of all my dishonour, and build your royal seat of my shame, my fear and my joy.

MOTHER: My time is near, I can do no more. Look in the mirror at once.

PRAKRITI: Mother, I'm afraid. His journey is almost at an end, and what then? What then for him? Only myself, my wretched self? Nothing else? Only this to repay the long and cruel pain? Nothing but me? Only this at the end of the weary, difficult road?—only me?

MOTHER: Have pity, cruel girl, I can bear no more. Look in the mirror, quick!

PRAKRITI(*looks in the mirror and flings it away*): O Mother, stop! Undo the spell now—at once—undo it! What have you done? What have you done? O wicked, wicked deed! Better have died. What a sight to see! Where is the light and radiance, the shining purity, the heavenly glow? How worn, how faded; has he come to my door! Bearing his self defeat as a heavy burden, he comes with drooping head...Away with all this, away with it! (*she kicks the paraphernalia of magic to pieces*) Prakriti, Prakriti, if in truth you are no Chandalini, offer no insult to the heroic. Victory, Victory, Victory to him.

(*Enter ANANDA*)

O Lord, you have come to give me deliverance, therefore have you known this torment. Forgive me, forgive me. Let your feet spurn afar the endless reproach of my birth. I have dragged you down to earth. How else could you raise me to your heaven? O pure one, the dust has soiled your feet, but they have not been soiled in vain. The veil of my illusion shall fall upon them, and wipe away the dust. Victory, Victory to thee, O Lord!

MOTHER: Victory to thee, O Lord. My sins and my life lie together at thy feet, and my days end here, in the heaven of thy forgiveness.

ANANDA (chanting):

To the most pure Buddha, mighty ocean of mercy,
Seer of knowledge absolute, pure, supreme,
Of the world's sin and suffering the Destroyer—
Solemnly to the Buddha I bow in homage.

About the Play

Deeply rooted in the Indian ethos, *Chandalika* emphasizes Tagore's favourite theme that the value of a human being resides in a loving heart and not in the caste, creed or religion professed by him. The play is based on a popular Buddhist legend about Ananda, the Buddha's famous disciple. One hot day he asked an 'untouchable' girl, Chandalika for some water. Astonished by this unprecedented request, the girl was consumed by adoration and desire for the monk. With the help of magical power which her mother wielded, the girl forced Ananda to come to her door. But the grace of Buddha, The Enlightened One, saved the monk from sin as also 'Chandalika'. The play is a deeply-felt study of spiritual and moral conflict.

The author Rabindranath Tagore, popularly known as Gurudev was awarded the Nobel prize for literature for his collection of poems 'Gitanjali' in 1913.

GLOSSARY

Blisters	:	small swellings on the skin filled with liquid (caused by burning, friction)
<i>Amlaki</i>	:	'amla'
<i>Vaisakh</i>	:	name of a month in the Indian calendar
Uma	:	Parvati, Lord Siva's consort
penance	:	punishment of suffering which one imposes upon oneself
Chandalini	:	a Harijan girl, an untouchable
Sravana	:	name of another month in the Indian Calendar, the
month falls		in the rainy season
humiliate of	:	cause to feel ashamed, lower the dignity or self respect
Janki	:	Sita, daughter of King Janaka
Changeling	:	child secretly substituted for another
intoxicated	:	greatly excited, beyond self-control
taint	:	make infected, defile
trespass	:	(here) do wrong, sin
<i>Bhikshu</i>	:	mendicant, holy man
defile	:	make impure, taint
fie	:	for shame
delude	:	deceive

longing	:	earnest desire
spell	:	words used as a magic charm
clasp	:	firm hold
impale	:	pierce through, pin down with some sharp pointed
weapon		

Activity 1: COMPREHENSION

A. Tick the correct alternative

- Who is Chandalika in the play titled *Chandalika*?
 - Mother
 - Prakriti
 - Prakriti's Sister
 - Nothing is clear
- What does the word 'Chandalika' mean?
 - an untouchable female
 - an untouchable male
 - an untouchable object
 - an objectionable act
- The play 'Chandalika' emphasizes that the value of a human being-
 - resides in a loving heart.
 - resides in caste, creed and religion.
 - resides in one's deeds.
 - resides in worshipping the God.

B. Answer to the following questions should not exceed 10-15 words each:

- Who drew the water with which Janaki bathed in the exile?
- Who was the girl Prakriti waiting for?
- Who, says the girl Prakriti, has done the wonder?
- Which, according to the girl Prakriti, is a false religion?
- How do the spiritual people, according to the Mother, draw towards themselves?
- How, according to the mother, does a common man draw the spiritual people towards him?
- Name the Buddhist Monk mentioned in the play.

C. Answer to the following questions should not exceed 30-40 words each:

- Why does the girl Prakriti say that she is reborn?
- What did the Buddhist monk say when Prakriti said that she was a Chandalini and therefore the well water is unclean?
- What was the marvellous truth that the Buddhist monk revealed to the girl Prakriti?
- How and why does the mother warn the girl Prakriti?
- What, says the mother, is the writ of destiny of a Chandali?
- What, according to the girl Prakriti, is self-humiliation?

7. Why does the girl Prakriti say that no one can do her the honour so well as he (Buddhist monk) can?
8. How shall the life of the girl Prakriti be fulfilled?

D. Answer to the following questions should not exceed 60-80 words each :

1. What does the girl Prakriti see in the mirror?
2. How does the girl Prakriti become aware that the monk's journey is at the end?
3. Why does the mother call the girl Prakriti quite daring? and why does the girl Prakriti say that the monk is much more daring than her?

E. Say whether the following are True or False. Write T for True and F for False in the bracket :

1. Buddha's famous disciple Anand has been mentioned in the play *Chandalika*.
[]
2. The girl Chandalika is consumed by passion and adoration for the monk.
[]
3. The play *Chandalika* is deeply rooted in the Indian ethos.
[]
4. The play *Chandalika* is a study of moral and spiritual conflict.
[]
5. The mother and the girl cast a spell on the monk to compel him to come.
[]

Activity 2: VOCABULARY

1. The word 'wayfarer' used in the play means a person who travels from one place to another usually on foot. The word is formed with the stems 'way' and 'farer'. A number of new words can be formed by adding a stem/root to the word 'way'. Some of them are given below. Match the meaning of these words with the phrases given in column B

Column A

Way-mark

Way-out (noun)

Way-out (adjective)

Way-point

Way-side

Way-station

Way-ward

Column B

difficult to control

a place to eat or rest during a journey

the area of the side of a road

a place where you stop during a journey

unusual or strange

a door used for leaving

a sign on the route to show the way

2. “He who has recognized me will ‘reveal’ me.” The verb ‘recognized’ in the sentence means ‘to know’ (more appropriately known). The following words are formed with the root ‘recognize’. Look up their meanings in the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary.

recognizance, recognizable, recognition

Activity 3: GRAMMAR

Transformation of Sentences

Transformation of sentences is the changing of 'the form' of sentences without changing their meaning. The given sentences are remodelled on the basis of the directed new structures. The process often demands a change in the word order in accordance with the new structures without changing their meanings.

A. Study the following examples of transformation

1. Vishal is more intelligent than Supriya. (Comparative degree)
Supriya is not so intelligent as Vishal. (Positive degree)
2. Ravi is the wisest boy in the class. (Superlative degree)
No other boy in the class is so wise as Ravi. (Positive)
3. Mumbai is the biggest city in India. (Superlative)
Mumbai is bigger than any other city in India. (Comparative)
Or, No other city in India is as big as Mumbai. (Positive)
4. Sometimes he is late. (Affirmative)
He is not always late. (Negative)
5. I will always remember your kind cooperation. (Affirmative)
I will never forget your kind cooperation. (Negative)
6. He is too proud to listen to others. (Affirmative)
He is so proud that he won't listen to others. (Negative)
7. As soon as we had finished it began to rain. (Affirmative)
No sooner had we finished than it began to rain. (Negative)
8. Who does not know about Padmini's Johar? (Interrogative)
Everyone knows about Padmini's Johar. (Assertive)
9. What though we miss the bus? (Interrogative)
It does not matter if we miss the bus. (Assertive)
10. Why waste time in waiting for the rains? (Interrogative)
It is foolish to waste time in waiting for the rains. (Assertive)
11. Everyone wants to be a millionaire. (Assertive)

Who does not want to be a millionaire ? (Interrogative)

12. What a beautiful park it is ! (Exclamatory)

It is a very beautiful park. (Assertive)

13. How hot the day is! (Exclamatory)

It is a very hot day. (Assertive)

14. How he snores! (Exclamatory)

He snores loudly.(Assertive)

B. Some more examples of transformation

1. Hearing a gun-shot, he turned round. (Simple sentence)

He heard a gun-shot and turned round. (Compound Sentence)

2. Inspite of her hard work, she failed the examination. (Simple)

She worked hard but failed the examination. (Compound)

3. Owing to fever he could not come. (Simple)

He had fever, so he could not come. (Compound)

4. Besides stealing the money, he murdered the owner. (Simple)

He not only stole the money but also murdered the owner. (Compound)

5. You must make haste to catch the train. (Simple)

You must make haste, or you won't catch the train. (Compound)

6. The boy was very hungry, so he ate-up all the food. (Compound)

Being very hungry, the boy ate up all the food. (Simple)

7. It was raining hard, so the cricket match was called off. (Compound)

The cricket match was called off due to rain. (Simple)

8. The show was cancelled and this disappointed the crowd. (Compound)

To the disappointment of the crowd the show was cancelled. (Simple)

9. I must finish my day's work, or I can't leave the office. (Compound)

I must finish my day's work to leave the office. (Simple)

10. It is too cold to go out. (Simple)

It is so cold that we can't go out. (Complex)

11. We were happy to hear the good news. (Simple)

We were happy when we heard the good news. (Complex)

12. The train arrived on time inspite of thick fog. (Simple)

The train arrived on time though there was thick fog. (Complex)

13. He admitted that he had stolen the bag. (Complex)
He admitted stealing the bag. (Simple)
14. He proved that he was innocent. (Complex)
He proved his innocence. (Simple)
15. She did it when he was absent. (Complex)
She did it in his absence. (Simple)
16. He missed the train because he was late. (Complex)
Being late, he missed the train. (Simple)
17. Irrigate the fields and the crops will grow fast. (Compound)
If you irrigate the fields, the crops will grow fast. (Complex)
18. Wear your woollens, or you will catch cold. (Compound)
Unless you wear your woollens, you will catch cold. (Complex)
19. It is not raining, yet she is carrying an umbrella. (Compound)
Though it is not raining, she is carrying an umbrella. (Complex)
20. If you work hard, you will win the prize. (Complex)
Work hard and you will win the prize. (Compound)
21. We sow (so) that we may reap. (Complex)
We wish to reap, therefore, we sow. (Compound)
22. I have found the key that I had lost. (Complex)
I had lost the key but I have found it now. (Compound)

Exercise

B. Convert the following sentences as directed:

1. Besides scolding the child, she also beat him. (Simple to Compound)
2. With all his wealth, he is unhappy. (Simple to Compound)
3. She raised her gun and shot the bird. (Compound to Simple)
4. Vipul had high fever yet he attended the class. (Compound to Simple)
5. I believe him to be a worthy man. (Simple to Complex using 'that clause')
6. We went out inspite of bad weather. (Simple to Complex using 'though')
7. When he saw the snake, he ran away. (Complex to Simple, begin with 'seeing')
8. I saw a tiger which was wounded. (Complex to Simple using participle phrase)
9. He received the message and left at once. (Compound to Complex using 'as soon as')

10. We heard a cry and looked round. (Compound to Complex begin with 'when')
11. Though they saw the danger, they did not stop work. (Complex to Compound using 'and yet')
12. If he rings the bell, the students will come out of their classes. (Complex to compound - using 'and')

Activity 4: SPEECH ACTIVITY

The Indian scriptures ban the practice of untouchability. Organize a symposium on the following – ‘**Untouchability Prohibits the Social and Economic Growth of a Nation**’ Divide the class into groups and ask every group leader to make a presentation based on the ideas of his/her group members.

Activity 5: COMPOSITION

The great leaders such as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and M.K. Gandhi launched a crusade to eradicate untouchability from India. Write a paragraph of about 250 words describing the initiatives taken up by Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhiji for the eradication of untouchability.