

Chapter – 8

Little Girls Wiser Than Men

Leo Tolstoy

Meeting of the two girls

- This story of Leo Tolstoy is set during Easter, a festival of the Christians.
- The snow had started melting and flowing in the lanes of the villages.
- Two little girls Akoulya and Malasha had just come from the church.
- They met in a lane where the dirty water had formed a pool.
- They were very happy and showing off their new frocks to each other.
- They were excited to see the water running in streams down the village street.

Splashing water

- Malasha and Akoulya had a sudden desire to splash about in the water.
- Akoulya suggested Malasha to remove their shoes and stockings to save them from being wet and dirty.
- They stepped into the puddle and began walking towards each other.

Quarrel between the two

- When they came close to each other Akoulya asked Malasha to walk carefully and not splash water.
- Malasha had splashed the dirty water on Akoulya's frock, eyes and nose.
- Seeing the stains on her new frock Akoulya was very angry.
- She ran after Malasha to beat her.

Intervention of the elders

- When Akoulya's mother saw her daughter's dirty dress, she scolded her.
- Akoulya blamed Malasha for it.
- Akoulya's mother seized Malasha and struck her on the back of her neck.
- Malasha began to howl.
- Malasha's mother came out and shouted at Akoulya's mother.
- The two mothers began quarrelling.

The fighting of the families

- The quarrel between the mothers drew the attention of the men of both the houses.
- They came out shouting.
- They all went on quarrelling without listening to others.
- Akoulya's old grandmother tried to make peace but they would not listen to the old woman.

Little girls make peace

- Amidst the quarrel of the big people, Akoulya wiped the mud off her frock and went back to the puddle.
- She started making a channel through which the water could run out into the street.
- Malasha joined her and helped her with a chip of wood.
- As they saw the chip float along on their stream, they were highly delighted.
- They happily ran together straight into the group of men.

Little girls teaching the 'big people'

- Akoulya's grandmother drew the attention of the fighting men to the little girls.
- Look, these girls have forgotten about their quarrel and you are still fighting!
- The men looked at the little girls.
- They were ashamed.
- They laughed at themselves and went back to their own home.
- The two innocent children – the dear little souls – thus teach the 'big people' that it is not wise to keep on quarrelling on petty issues.

Questions

Now, on the basis of your understanding of this story try to answer the following questions:

1. Why did Akoulya shout at Malasha?
2. Why does the writer call the two little girls 'dear little souls'?
3. What lesson do you learn from the story "Little Girls Wiser than Men"?