

RESTORED

A PLAY ABOUT LEPROSY
(also suitable for glove puppets)

by

JILL TIPPING

THE LEPROSY MISSION
HEALTH EDUCATION CENTRE
MUZAFFARPUR, BIHAR 842 002

COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL
326, V Main, I Block
Koramangala
Bangalore-560034 -
India

CHARACTERS

JAGDISH MISTRI	—	a skilled mechanic
SHYAM MISTRI	—	a mechanic
LAKHAN	—	factory foreman
NIRMAL BABU	—	factory accountant
SUNIL	—	a Para-Medical worker at the leprosy clinic.
TWO THIEVES		



Editor's Note : To "get the sack" is an English idiom.
It means "to be dismissed from one's job",
usually for some misdemeanor.

CHARACTERS
SCENE 1

On The Factory Floor

(A large piece of machinery is standing in the centre of the stage. Jagdish and Shyam come in carrying a hammer and a wrench.)

Jagdish

Come on Shyam. Let's try to get this job done quickly, then we'll have time for a good tea break. (He drops his wrench with a clatter and picks it up)

Shyam

Yes, a good idea—as long as the supervisor doesn't see us.

(They both start work on the machinery. Jagdish again drops his wrench.)

Shyam

What's the matter with you these days? You keep on dropping things.

Jagdish

Oh Shyam, I don't know what is wrong.....

Shyam

What do you mean Jagdish ?

- Jagdish** My right hand feels so clumsy these days. I can't seem to do anything well at all.
- Shyam** Let me see.....(he takes hold of Jagdish's hand)
- Jagdish** There's nothing to see—it looks normal but it keeps tingling and feels heavy.
- Shyam** Well it certainly looks normal enough—Oh quick—get on with your work—here comes the supervisor !
- (they start working on the machinery again. The Supervisor enters and comes up to the machine.)
- Supervisor** Haven't you two finished yet? It's taken you two days to do this one job. (He looks at the machine more carefully) What sort of work is this—look here. Jagdish, you haven't screwed this properly at all—this is very poor work ! (Jagdish bends over to look and drops his wrench on the Supervisor's foot. The Supervisor hops around holding his foot.)
- Supervisor** Oh ! Oh ! Oh ! You clumsy fool, look what you have done now. Really you are a clumsy fellow. Your work is getting worse every day. I'm not keeping you any longer in this Factory. Go and collect your money and be gone.
- Jagdish** (Falling to touch the Supervisor's Feet) Please forgive me — it was an accident. I'll do better—really I will.....

Supervisor No ! I've spoken to you before about your clumsiness. You'll have to go.

(Jagdish gets up and goes out sadly.)

Now Shyam, get on with this job quickly. Let me see this machine finished properly when I come back.

(Supervisor leaves and Shyam gets on with his work.)

Shyam Poor Jagdish, I wonder what he will do now, he has a wife and six kids to support as well as his old Mother.

CURTAIN

SCENE 2

In The Accountant's Office

(Nirmal Babu is sitting at a desk counting money and writing in his ledger. Jagdish enters sadly. Nirmal Babu looks up.)

Nirmal Good morning Jagdish bhai. You look sad, what is wrong with you ?

Jagdish I've come to collect my money—the Supervisor has given me the sack.

Nirmal Given you the sack ! Why ? Whatever for ?

Jagdish Oh Nirmal Babu, I don't know what is wrong these days. My hand feels so strange—it keeps tingling and feels heavy and clumsy. I can't do my work properly at all

Nirmal Jagdish bhai, that sounds like the trouble I had when I was a student—Do you keep dropping things too ?

Jagdish Yes, that was the last straw—I dropped a wrench on the supervisor's foot.....

Nirmal (Laughing) Ho ! Ho ! I wish I'd seen that—I bet he shouted.....

Jagdish Yes he did—but he gave me the sack too ? But what happened to you Nirmal Babu ? You were saying that you had had this sort of trouble.....

Nirmal Yes, it was when I was a student. I got so depressed about it.

Jagdish But what did you do ?

Nirmal I went to the Doctor and he referred me to the Leprosy Clinic.....

Jagdish Leprosy Clinic (startled) but surely this isn't leprosy—look, my fingers are quite straight (he holds out his hand).

Nirmal True enough, but tingling and heaviness may be the first signs of leprosy. (He holds out his hands) Look at my hands now. You'd never know there had been anything wrong with them.

Jagdish They certainly look normal. What did you do ?

Nirmal Well, as I said, I went to the leprosy clinic and got treatment for the disease before it had a chance to do any real damage.

- Jagdish** Do you mean to say that leprosy can be treated ?
- Nirmal** Yes, of course. Leprosy can be treated just like any other disease. You go to the clinic tomorrow Jagdish bhai and start treatment. It is at.....(insert name of local clinic with details of day and time), and is open from 8 o'clock until midday. (He passes a pile of money over the desk)
Here is your money. Sign the receipt here. Thankyou. (Jagdish picks up the money).
- Jagdish** Thankyou for telling me Nirmal Babu. I'll certainly go to the clinic. How much does it cost ?
- Nirmal** Good. The treatment is free. Goodbye Jagdish bhai, let me know how you get on—Good luck to you.
- Jagdish** (Leaving the room) Goodbye and thankyou.

CURTAIN

SCENE 3

At the Leprosy Clinic

(There are some posters on the wall and a desk at one side of the stage. The P.M.W. is sitting by the desk. Jagdish enters and looks around)

Jagdish I wonder where I have to go (he sees P.M.W.) Oh, here's some one I'll ask him.

Sunil Good morning bhai. Can I help you ?

Jagdish I've come to see the Doctor.....

Sunil Have you been here before ?

Jagdish No never, this is my first time.

Sunil Oh, well come over here while I fill in a card for you. (he puts a card ready on the desk and starts to write)
What is your name ?

Jagdish Jagdish Mistry.

Sunil What work do you do ?

Jagdish I'm a mechanic. I used to work at the Sharma Workshop but I got the sack. Now I have no work.

Sunil Why did you get the sack ?

Jagdish I couldn't do my work properly. I kept dropping things. My hand seems to tingle all the time and feels heavy and clumsy.

Sunil Hmm ! Let me see—(he looks at Jagdish's hand and feels behind the elbow) Yes, your nerve is a bit swollen. Let me see the other hand (he feels that too.) If I hit your arm how does it feel ? (he taps Jagdish's arm and Jagdish jumps & pulls his hand away).

Jagdish Oh ! It's like an electric current going through my arm, please don't do that again.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL 6
326, V Main, 1 Block
Koramangala
Bangalore-560034
India

- Sunil** (smiling) No, No, once is enough. Well Jagdish, It certainly looks like leprosy.....
- Jagdish** (anxiously) Will my fingers get deformed ? What can I do about it ?
- Sunil** Not if you work hard at your excercises. There is no need for anyone to get deformed fingers nowadays. We know how to cure leprosy and how to prevent deformity.
- Jagdish** That is good news. Please tell me what to do.
- Sunil** Come to the next room and see the Doctor, then I will show you how to massage your fingers.
(they go off stage together.)

Curtain

SCENE 4

At The Leprosy Clinic

(The scene is the same as before. Sunil and Jagdish enter together. Jagdish is carrying a bottle of tablets)

- Sunil** Well Jagdish, now you have learnt to massage your hands. Doctor has given you your tablets for the month, so now you can go home and go to work normally.

Jagdish But I can't go to work. I haven't got a job any more. The supervisor gave me the sack.

Sunil Oh yes. I had forgotten. Do you think it would help if I came and spoke to the supervisor ?

Jagdish It might help, but he is a very disagreeable man.

Sunil We can but try ! Meet me at the factory gate at 8 o'clock tomorrow morning. I don't promise anything but he may have some suggestion to make. Goodbye for now.

Jagdish Goodbye. I'll be there by 8 o'clock.

Curtain

COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL
320, V Main, 1 Block
Koramangala
Bangalore-560034
India

SCENE 5

At The Factory Gate

(Jagdish stands waiting at the gate. Sunil comes in and waves.)

Sunil Good morning Jagdish. I'm glad to see you.

Jagdish Good morning.

Sunil Now, where can we find the Supervisor.

Jagdish He's in the Factory. I'll go and find him.

- Sunil** Ask him if he would be kind enough to see me for a few minutes.
(Jagdish goes off)
Oh I do hope I'll be able to help Jagdish. If only everyone came to the clinic with the first signs of leprosy there would be so much less deformity—Oh, here they come !
(Jagdish & Supervisor come on stage)
- Jagdish** (Speaking to the Supervisor). This is the health worker from the clinic.
- Sunil** Good morning Sir. Thankyou for seeing me.
- Supervisor** Good morning. What can I do for you ?
- Sunil** I have come to ask your help for Jagdish here. He tells me he has lost his job because he is having trouble with his hands.
- Supervisor** Yes, that's right—he used to be my best worker but lately he has become so slow and clumsy, I could not keep him. (He turns angrily to Jagdish) Why have you come back ? I told you yesterday that there was no work for you here—now you have brought this man here to trouble me. Go away—I'm not having a clumsy fool like you in my factory !
(Sunil intervenes, speaking placatingly)
- Sunil** Please sir listen to me before you get angry with Jagdish. Jagdish cannot help being slow and clumsy at present. It is the result of his disease.....
- Supervisor** Disease !—What disease ? He looks healthy enough to me.

- Sunil** He is quite fit. The disease which Jagdish has is one that has affected the nerves in his arm. If he takes treatment he will get better.
- Supervisor** What sort of disease affects the nerves in the arm ? I never heard of such a disease.
- Sunil** Yes you have Sir ! Jagdish has the early sign of leprosy.....
- Supervisor** (Stepping back in fear) Leprosy ! You dare to stand there and tell me one of my men has got leprosy ! Get out !—get out !—You'll be infecting all of us ! Everybody knows that leprosy is a very infectious disease !
- Sunil** No, no, that is the mistake most people make. Very few people have the infectious type of leprosy. Jagdish has the non-infectious type which has attacked the nerves in his arm. That is why his hand has become so clumsy.
- Supervisor** Not infectious ! I didn't know there was such a thing.
- Sunil** Well, you may take my word for it. 85% of all leprosy patients are never able to spread the disease to others. Now, about Jagdish—he has started taking treatment, and if he massages and exercises his fingers they will shortly be as good as ever. But he needs a regular job so that he can support his family.
- Supervisor** This isn't a charitable institution—we can't employ those who do bad work !
- Sunil** I realise that. I just wondered whether there was some other job which Jagdish could do. He has been a good worker in the past,

- and you know he is trustworthy. Couldn't you give him a temporary job in another department ?
- Supervisor** Well, the night watchman has gone off sick—
- Jagdish** Oh sir, Please let me take his place. I could easily do a watchman's job. I'll do anything if you'll give me another chance.
- Supervisor** Very well. Start at 9 o'clock tonight. We'll see if you can do that job well.
- (Supervisor goes off).
- Sunil** Well Jagdish, it's the best we can do for the time being, but at least you'll be able to look after your family now. Don't forget to take your tablets each day and keep massaging those fingers.
- Jagdish** I certainly will remember to do that. I don't want to lose this job as well. Thankyou sir. Goodbye.
- Sunil** Goodbye. See you next month at the clinic.

CURTAIN

SCENE 6

The Factory at Night

(Jagdish is walking around with his stick and a lantern. He calls out and thumps the stick on the ground as he goes.)

Jagdish

It seems quiet enough again tonight. I'll sit down for a few minutes and eat my meal.

(He opens his tiffin carrier and begins to eat) Ho, these are tasty chops today. I must tell my wife to make these more often. (He packs up the tiffin)

Jagdish

Well I don't need to go round for another ten minutes. I've got time to massage my hands again.

(he begins to massage his hands). They really are much stronger already. What a good thing that Nirmal Babu told me to go to the clinic

Oh well, I suppose I'd better do another round of the building (he picks up his stick & lantern)

(The two thieves creep in and start to climb the wall of the factory) What's that noise ! (he listens, then creeps forward)

Thieves—trying to get into the factory !

(Jagdish runs forward, brandishing his stick and shouting

Thief, Thief !

(The thieves run away and Jagdish chases them. He catches one of the men & brings him back to centre of stage)

So—I caught you red handed—come with me. I'm going to hand you over to the police.

(He marches the struggling thief off.)

CURTAIN

828

COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL
326, V Main, 1 Block
Koramangala
Bangalore-560034
India

SCENE 7

Outside The Factory

(Supervisor comes in wheeling his motor bike. He is unable to start it.)

Supervisor Oh dear, I can't get this thing to start. I wish I knew more about engines.

(Jagdish comes in)

Jagdish Good evening Supervisor Sahib. Are you having trouble ?

Supervisor Yes, I can't get this bike to start. (he looks up and is surprised to see Jagdish) Oh, it's you Jagdish. How are you ? I hear you caught a thief last night.

Jagdish Yes, but he was a useless sort of man. I caught him easily. Let me try. (he tries to kick start the motor bike without success) No, it's not firing at all. Let me have a look at the engine. Have you a wrench ?

(Supervisor hands him a wrench and Jagdish tinkers with the engine)

Supervisor You, don't seem to be having any trouble with your hands now Jagdish—you have't dropped the wrench even once !

Jagdish (starting the engine successfully) Ah, that's got it. No, my hands are much stronger now. I've been taking tablets regularly and doing my massage. Already they are much better.

Supervisor Well I'm glad to hear it. You'd better come back to your old job on Monday. Ram Prasad is leaving and we'll be short of a mechanic then.

Jagdish Oh thank you, I'll be glad to come back. I promise I won't fail you again. Now I know the cause of my trouble and how it can be cured.

Supervisor Yes, it's a pity more people don't know that leprosy is a curable disease. We should ask your Health Worker to come and speak to all the factory staff and teach them that leprosy can be cured and deformity prevented.

Jagdish Yes, that's a good idea. Everyone should know the true facts, then they would not be afraid of leprosy. I will certainly ask him. Goodbye Sahib.

Supervisor Goodbye—see you on Monday.

CURTAIN

THE END