

MY SAY: The brave new world

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Article

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Act I

A hungry dog is loitering on the beach near a fishing village when suddenly one of its hind legs gets caught in driftwood. As the dog struggles to free its leg, a boy passes by.

Scene 1

The dog pleads to the boy: "Can you please help release my hind leg from the driftwood?" The boy replies: "Why should I? You have been stealing a lot of fish from the villagers lately." Dog: "Please, the driftwood is hurting my leg. If you help me, I will not steal again. Don't you know that the dog is man's best friend?"

Scene 2

The boy pauses to think and finally decides to help. "All right then, I will take your word for it. Stay still while I help you, so you will not feel much pain."

Act II

The boy moves closer to the dog and bends down to slowly remove the driftwood that has trapped the dog's hind leg. As soon as the dog is free, it bites the boy. An argument ensues.

Scene 1

Boy: "Hey, why did you bite me?" Dog: "Didn't you know that this is how good turns are rewarded nowadays?" Boy: "What an ungrateful creature you are, after what I have done for you!" Dog: "You must be out of this world! Can't you see what has happened to the fish net hanging on that tree (pointing to a tree behind the boy). That net served the villagers well for years and everyone used it. Today, it has been left hanging on the tree, rain or shine, because it is torn in some places. Nobody cares any more!"

Act III

By now, the argument is taking place in full view of the village. A duck and a frog are listening intently.

Scene 1

Duck: "Yes, the dog is right. At one time, I used to have a long trail of ducks following me wherever I went and other animals too. Now that I am lame, most of them have disappeared. If you don't believe me, ask the frog." Frog: "The duck is right. It happened to me too. No one cares for me now. The younger frogs are more interested in promoting their own hopping skills." Duck: "In today's world, you are only good if someone can benefit from you. Beyond that, no one bothers. Did you get that, boy!"

Act IV

The boy is still unconvinced and demands to hear the views of a human being. An elderly fisherman joins the crowd just then.

Scene 1

The boy asks the fisherman: "Can you tell me your experiences in helping others?" Fisherman: "Boy, it is a long story. I am afraid the animals are right."

He relates how not too long ago, he was held in high esteem as the leader of the village. He urged everyone to work with him instead for him. Almost everyone threw their support behind him — the business community, the general workers and labourers, the youth and other fishermen too. They followed him and repeated his slogan everywhere they went. All seemed well, at least on the surface. "But," says the fisherman, "please look beneath the surface as well. This is where the crux of the matter lies. Unless you understand this, the rest can be deceiving and artificial. The true test will be when you face a severe crisis."

He says it is like a tsunami, which brings out everyone's true colours. When the sea becomes turbulent, no one wants to share his boat with anyone.

Unlike before, few understand what it means to sail in uncharted waters, what sacrifice means. This was not how it was when the boat was smaller.

In fact, to accommodate a bigger crew, a larger vessel was created, assuming that a bigger vessel was more stable and safer. After all, many of the new crew are from small boats that could not withstand even the smallest of storms. Unfortunately, their presence seems good only when sea is calm and non-threatening. The moment it turns rough, some quickly jump ship.

Self-interest and showmanship rear their ugly heads. Friends suddenly become enemies. Their failure suddenly become yours and yours alone. They talk of reform, not of themselves, but of others. Hypocrisy is at its peak. Some are even set to lead a mutiny!

To the elderly fisherman, however, this is nothing new, as the old proverb "Seperti melepaskan anjing tersepit" clearly indicates. Welcome to today's new reality — the brave new world of dog eat dog.

Note: This story is strictly fictitious. No one, dead or alive, is implied or implicated in this story.

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