

Bholi

Summary of the Chapter

This story is all about a simple village girl named Bholi. Her real name was Sulekha. But fate deceived her and when she was ten months old, she fell off the cot damaging some part of her brain. As a result, she could pick up speech only after she was five years old, but she stammered. Later on, when she was two – years old, she had an attack of small pox that left her with blank spots all over the body. The other children often made fun of her and mimicked her. Therefore, she talked very little.

Ramlal had seven children in all – three sons and four daughters. Bholi was the youngest. All other were healthy and strong except Bholi. Bholi was seven years old when a primary school opened in their village. The Tehsildar came to perform the opening ceremony of the school. He told Ramlal that as a revenue official and as a representative of the government in the village, he should send his daughter to the school and set an example before the villagers. When he consulted his wife about the issue, his wife did not agree with him. Yet she decided to send Bholi to the school.

The next day, Bholi was given a bath, and a new dress to wear. Her mother combed her hair and then she was sent to the school. When her father left her in the school, she sat in a corner in the class. When her teacher asked her name, she stammered and the children started laughing. At this Bholi started weeping. But the teacher's voice was soft and soothing. It encouraged her a lot and finally she could tell her full name. Then the teacher told her that if she would come daily to school, she would speak without a stammer and one day she would become the most educated girl in the village. Then no one will dare to laugh at her. Then they will listen her carefully.

Years passed and the village now turned into a small town. One night Ramlal consulted his wife about the proposal made by Bishamber, a grocer in the neighbouring village. His wife readily agreed to it. Bholi was also listening this conversation. The day of her marriage came. When the bridegroom was about to garland her, some lady pulled her veil down showing her face to him. The bridegroom had a quick glance at her face and noticed pox marks on her face. At this, He asked Ramlal to give him five thousand rupees as dowry in

order to marry that ugly girl. After some arguments, Ramlal handed over the money to Bishambar. But Bholi asked his father to take money back from him as she did not want to marry that old lame and greedy person. Everybody was surprised because Bholi was not stammering at all. The bridegroom went back with his baraat. Ramlal could not lift his head due to shame and grief. He asked Bholi as who will marry her now. But Bholi said to him that she would serve his parents in their old age and teach in the same school where she had learnt so much.

Quick Revision Notes

- Bholi, the fourth daughter of Numberdar Ramlal in a village, was a simple and pock-marked girl. Her real name was Sulekha.
- At ten months she fell off her cot, damaging her brain and making her a simpleton.
- At two years she was a victim of small pox, which left her pock-marked.
- She learnt to talk at five years, but used to stammer.
- When a primary school was opened in the village, the Tehsildar told Ramlal to send his daughters to school.
- Though Ramlal's wife felt that sending daughters to school affected their chances of marriage, Bholi's parents decided to send Bholi to school because they felt she would be difficult to get married anyway as she is ugly.
- Bholi was initially afraid of going to school, but due to the encouragement of her teacher, she continued her studies. 8. After a few years the village became a small town and Bholi received an offer of marriage from a widower who was lame but rich. He also did not ask for any dowry.
- At the time of the wedding, the bridegroom saw Bholi's pock-marked face and demanded? 5000 as dowry, which Ramlal gave.
- Bholi refused to marry the greedy widower. She later on said that she will take care of her parents and teach in the same school where she got her education.