

10th Standard - English

Bholi Summary

I

About Bholi

Her name was Sulekha. But since childhood she had been called Bholi, the simpleton. Bholi was the fourth daughter of Numberdar Ramlal. When Bholi was ten months old, she had fallen from the cot. She had damaged some part of her brain. So due to that she remained backward in mind.

Bholi's weak points

Bholi was very fair and pretty at birth. But she had the attack of smallpox when she was two years old. Her body, except the eyes, was disfigured. She had deep pock-marks over her body. She stammered also. Other children made fun of her. As a result, she talked little.

.Worries about Bholi

Ramlal had seven children—three sons and four daughters. Bholi was the youngest. All the children except Bholi were healthy. Mangla and Champa could be married when time would come. Radha, the eldest daughter had already been married. But Ramlal was worried about Bholi. She was neither beautiful nor intelligent.

Bholi taken to school

Bholi was seven years old when a primary school was opened in the village. The Tehsildar came to perform the opening ceremony. He asked Ramlal to set an example for the villagers. He must send his daughters to school. At first Ramlal's wife objected to it. She said that no one would marry Bholi. But Ramlal took Bholi to school the next day.

Bholi at school

Bholi wore some decent clothes that day.

New clothes had never been made for Bholi. The old dresses of her sisters were given to her. She was bathed. Her hair were oiled. Bholi feared much. The headmistress asked Bholi to sit down in a corner of the classroom. Bholi did not know what was school like. But she was glad that there were many girls of her own age. They would be her friends.

Bholi's first day at school

The lady teacher said something to the other girls. Bholi did not understand. She looked at the pictures on the wall. She was charmed by them. These were of goat, the parrot, the cow. All were like what Bholi had seen. The teacher asked Bholi her name. But she stammered. She kept her head down. She felt that other girls would laugh at her. She began weeping.

II

Teacher's love for Bholi

The teacher called her name. She spoke very softly. No one had spoken to her earlier like that. Her heart was touched. The teacher, then, asked her name. When she stammered, the teacher did neither get angry nor laughed. She encouraged Bholi. She patted Bholi with love. She asked Bholi to take the fear out of her heart. She also told her that she would speak rightly one day. Then she would not be afraid of any body.

Bholi reads

The teacher gave Bholi a book. It had nice pictures of dog, cat, goat, horse, parrot etc, in colour. The teacher told her that she would be able to read in about one month. She would read a bigger book. Then no one would laugh at her. Bholi felt happy. She felt as if the bells in the village temple were ringing. Her heart was beating with a new hope and a new life.

Changes in Bholi's village

The years rolled. The village became a small town. The primary school became a high school. Now there was a cinema and a cotton ginning mill. The mail train began to stop at their railway station.

About Bholi's marriage with Bishamber

One night after dinner, Ramlal asked his wife about Bishamber's proposal to marry Bholi. His wife was happy that Bholi was getting a wealthy bridegroom. Bishamber had a big shop and a house of his own. He was forty-five or fifty. He limped also. He had the children from his first wife also. He did not know if Bholi had pock-marks on her face. Bholi had heard herself her parents speaking so.

Bridegroom arrives

On the fixed date, Bishamber came as a bridegroom. He sat on a decorated mare. There was a brass-band playing before the bridegroom. Bholi's sisters got jealous of her. Ramlal was also overjoyed to see such pomp. He had never even dreamt that his fourth daughter would have such a grand wedding.

About wedding

At the fixed time, the brahmin asked to bring the bride. Bholi was dressed in a red silken bridal dress. One of Bishamber's friends asked Bholi to garland the bridegroom. Women slipped back Bholi's veil. Bishamber looked at her quickly. He asked his friend if he had seen the pock-marks on Bholi's face. His friend told him that it didn't matter. He was also not young. Bishamber asked for a dowry of five thousand rupees. Ramlal put his turban—his honour—at Bishamber's feet. Ramlal was to give five thousand rupees to Bishamber as dowry.

Ramlal gives ? five thousand

Ramlal offered Bishamber two thousand rupees. But Bishamber refused. He threatened that they will go back. He also told to keep his daughter. Ramlal had tears on his face. At last he put five thousand rupees at Bishamber feet. Bishamber asked for the garland.

Bholi's refusal to marry

Once again Bholi had veil over her face. But she looked straight at Bishamber. There was neither anger nor hate but only contempt in her eyes. Bishamber raised the garland to place it round Bholi's neck. But she threw it into the fire.

She told her father that she won't marry Bishamber. She asked him to take the money back. She also told that she was willing to marry the lame old man. But he turned out to be greedy and hateful. She won't marry him.

Bholi's boldness

Other women wondered how Bholi a 1 harmless dumb cow had become so violent. Bholi told them that is why they were giving her to that greedy man. But she won't go. All started going back. Ramlal stood rooted to the ground. His head bowed low with grief and shame.

Bholi thinks of future

The flames in the sacred fire slowly died down. Ramlal told Bholi that no one would marry her then. What would they do with her ? Bholi told her father not to worry. She told him that she would serve them in old age. She would teach in the same school. Her teacher had seen the whole drama. She showed her satisfaction at it. She did so like a great artist does on his creation of art.