

## Summary

- The story is about Sulekha, nicknamed Bholi (meaning simpleton).
- She was the youngest daughter of Ramlal, a village revenue official.
- As a child, she fell from a cot, injuring her brain → making her slow to learn.
- Later, smallpox left her face disfigured with pockmarks.
- Because of her stammer and looks, everyone neglected her, and she lacked confidence.
- A teacher encouraged her when she was sent to school. The teacher's kindness gave her hope and courage.
- Years later, her parents arranged her marriage to Bishamber Nath, an old, greedy man who demanded dowry after noticing her pockmarks.
- Bholi, to everyone's shock, refused to marry him, showing courage and self-respect.
- She declared she would serve her parents and teach in the village school.

#### Theme

- Education & Empowerment → Education transformed Bholi's life.
- Self-respect & Courage → Bholi stood up for her dignity.
- Social Evils → The story criticizes dowry and the neglect of the girl child.
- Transformation → From a timid, stammering girl to a confident woman.

#### Characters

- Bholi (Sulekha) Weak, stammering, neglected girl who later becomes strong, courageous, and self-respecting.
- Ramlal Bholi's father, a village official, traditional-minded.
- Bholi's Mother Harsh, unsympathetic, concerned only about marrying off her daughters.
- Teacher Kind, supportive, inspires Bholi to study and be confident.

• Bishamber Nath – Old, greedy, selfish man who demanded dowry.

# Message of the Story

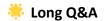
- Education is a powerful tool for women's empowerment.
- True beauty lies in confidence and character, not appearance.
- One must have the courage to stand against injustice.
- · Society must reject dowry and value girls equally.

## Literary Devices

- Symbolism → Bholi represents suppressed girls in society.
- Irony → Called "Bholi" (simpleton), yet she shows the greatest wisdom and courage.
- Contrast → Her transformation from shy to confident.

#### ? Short Questions & Answers

- 1. Who is the author of Bholi?
  - F K.A. Abbas.
- 2. What was Bholi's real name?
  - **Sulekha.**
- 3. Why was she called Bholi?
  - **because she was simple, slow to learn, and stammered.**
- 4. What disfigured Bholi's face?
  - Pockmarks from smallpox.
- 5. Who encouraged Bholi to study?
  - + Her teacher.
- 6. Why did Bholi refuse to marry Bishamber Nath?
  - **because** he demanded dowry and insulted her parents.
- 7. What did Bholi decide at the end?
  - To serve her parents and teach in the village school.



## Q1. How did education change Bholi's life?

Answer: At first, Bholi was neglected, stammered, and lacked confidence. People treated her as worthless. But when she went to school, her teacher's encouragement gave her courage. Education helped her gain self-respect and confidence. It gave her the strength to reject a greedy man and live with dignity.

## Q2. What social issues does the story Bholi highlight?

Answer: The story highlights issues like gender inequality, neglect of the girl child, and the dowry system. Bholi was treated as a burden because of her looks. The dowry demand of Bishamber shows the greed and injustice in society. But through Bholi's courage, the story sends a message that women must fight against such evils.

## ▼ Value-Based Q&A

- 1. What values are shown by Bholi at the end?
  - *c* Courage, self-respect, honesty, and determination.
- 2. What lesson does the story give to students?
  - **Education** is the key to empowerment, and one should never compromise self-respect for societal pressure.