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Class-X

English

Footprints without Feet

Chapter-8

Bholi



K. A. Abbas

Part - 3

Neha Rajvanshi

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humiliate : बेइज्जत



Ramlal went and placed his turban — his honour — at Bishamber's feet. "Do not humiliate me so. Take two thousand rupees."

"No. Five thousand, or we go back. Keep your daughter."

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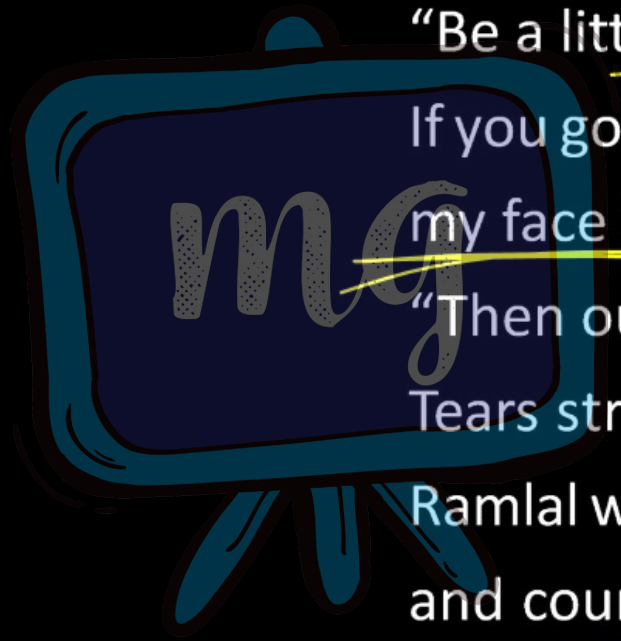

"Be a little considerate, please. If you go back, I can never show my face in the village."

"Then out with five thousand."

Tears streaming down his face, Ramlal went in, opened the safe and counted out the notes. He placed the bundle at the bridegroom's feet.

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triumphant : विजयी
gambled : दाँव

On Bishamber's greedy face appeared a triumphant smile. He had gambled and won. "Give me the garland," he announced.

Once again the veil was slipped back from the bride's face, but this time her eyes were not downcast.

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prospective : भावी
contempt : तिरस्कार

She was looking up, looking straight at her prospective husband, and in her eyes there was neither anger nor hate, only cold contempt.

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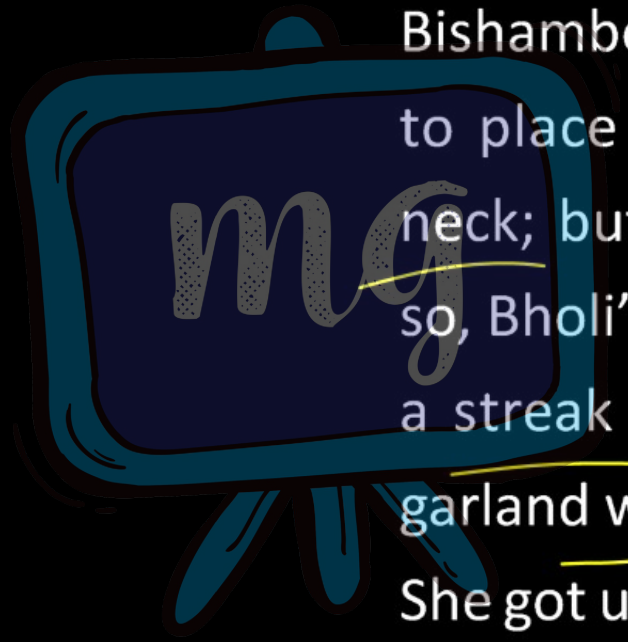

Bishamber raised the garland to place it round the bride's neck; but before he could do so, Bholi's hand struck out like a streak of lightning and the garland was flung into the fire. She got up and threw away the veil.

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"Pitaji!" said Bholi in a clear loud voice; and her father, mother, sisters, brothers, relations and neighbours were startled to hear her speak without even the slightest stammer.

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thunderstruck : आश्चर्य चकित

"Pitaji! Take back your money. I am not going to marry this man."

Ramlal was thunderstruck. The guests began to whisper, "So shameless! So ugly and so shameless!"

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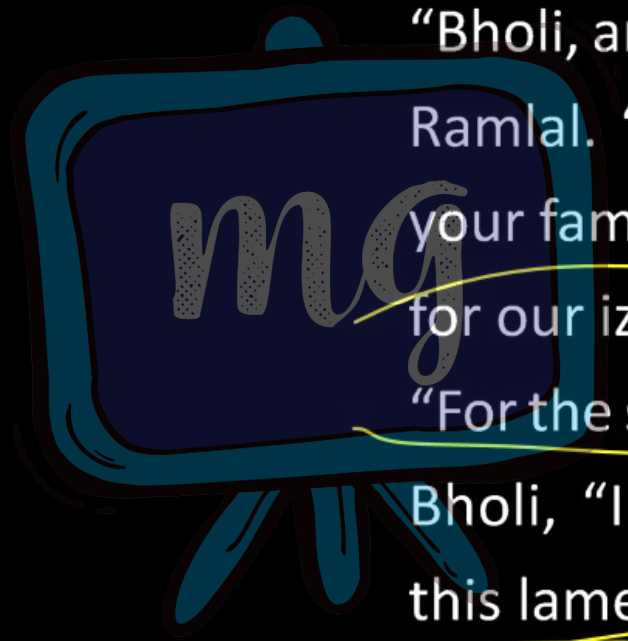

"Bholi, are you crazy?" shouted Ramlal. "You want to disgrace your family? Have some regard for our izzat!"

"For the sake of your izzat," said Bholi, "I was willing to marry this lame old man.

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contemptible : घृणित

But I will not have such a mean, greedy and contemptible coward as my husband. I won't, I won't, I won't."

"What a shameless girl! We all thought she was a harmless dumb cow."

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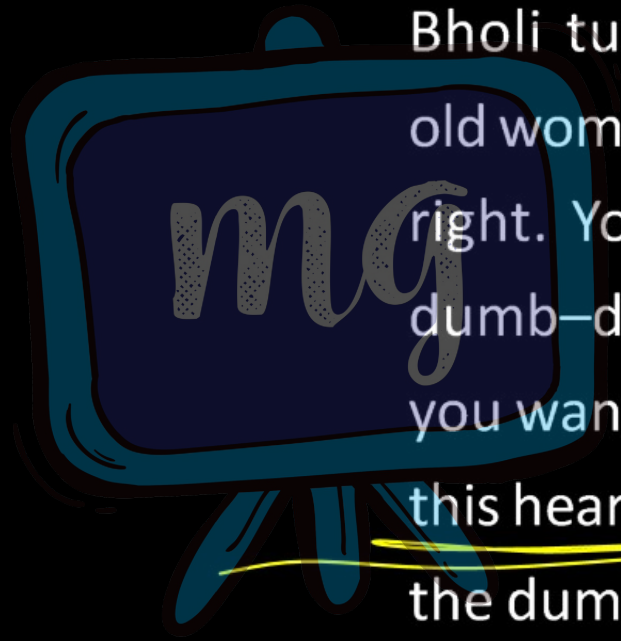

Bholi turned violently on the old woman, "Yes, Aunty, you are right. You all thought I was a dumb–driven cow. That's why you wanted to hand me over to this heartless creature. But now the dumb cow, the stammering fool, is speaking. Do you want to hear more?"

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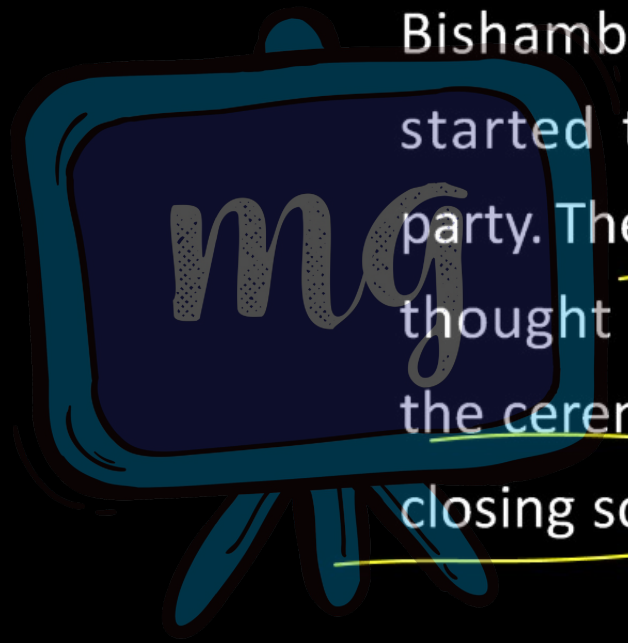

Bishamber Nath, the grocer, started to go back with his party. The confused bandsmen thought this was the end of the ceremony and struck up a closing song.

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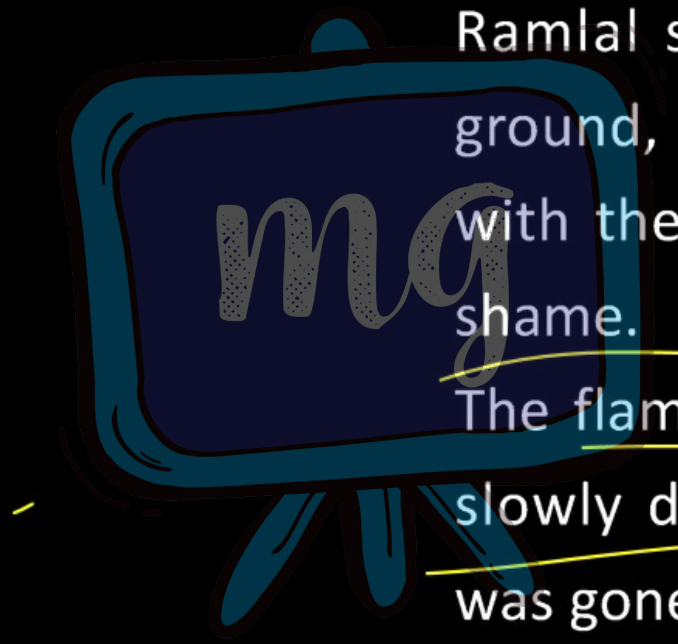

Ramlal stood rooted to the ground, his head bowed low with the weight of grief and shame.

The flames of the sacred fire slowly died down. Everyone was gone.

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Ramlal turned to Bholi and said, "But what about you, no one will ever marry you now. What shall we do with you?" And Sulekha said in a voice that was calm and steady, "Don't you worry, Pitaji! In your old age I will serve you and Mother and I will teach in the same school where I learnt so much. Isn't that right, Ma'am?"

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contemplating : गहराई से सोचना

The teacher had all along stood in a corner, watching the drama. "Yes, Bholi, of course," she replied. And in her smiling eyes was the light of a deep satisfaction that an artist feels when contemplating the completion of her masterpiece.

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Comprehension

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Question 1. Why is Bholi's father worried about her?

Answer : Bholi's father is worried about Bholi. It is because she has neither good looks nor intelligence like his other children. She is a simpleton, she stammers and her face is disfigured by marks of small-pox.

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Question 2. For what unusual reasons is (was) Bholi sent to school?

Answer : Bholi is sent to school as she is not good looking and not having the intelligence as her sisters and thus it was difficult to marry her off.

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Question 3. Does Bholi enjoy her first day at school?

Answer : Although her first day starts with fear and the feeling of shame, still she enjoys her first day at school as she finds her teacher very polite, encouraging and cooperative. She also likes the colourful walls of her class room and the books given by her teacher.

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Question 4. Does she find her teacher different from the people at home?

Answer : She finds her teacher different from the people at home. She finds the teacher's voice soft and soothing. In all her life she had never been called like that. The teacher also encouraged Bholi to speak confidently.

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Question 5. Why do Bholi's parents accept Bishamber's marriage proposal?

Answer : The three reasons were : first, Bholi would be lucky to get such a rich bridegroom. Second, Bishamber did not ask for any dowry. Third, he lived in another village and had no idea about the pock marks of Bholi.

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Question 6. Why does the marriage not take place?

Answer : The marriage does not take place. It is because the bridegroom demands a dowry of five thousand rupees. Bholi refuses to marry such a person who demands dowry.

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Question 7. Bholi had many apprehension about going to school. What made her feel that she was going to a better place than her home?

Answer : When her parents decided to send her village school, she got frightened as she had no idea about school.

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On the first day of the school, her mother bathed her and dressed her in new clothes. Her hair was oiled and combed. Only then did she begin to believe that she was being taken to a place better than her home.

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Question 8. How did Bholi's teacher play an important role in changing the course of her life?

Answer : Bholi's teacher actually played an important role in changing the course of her life. She was encouraging and affectionate towards her.

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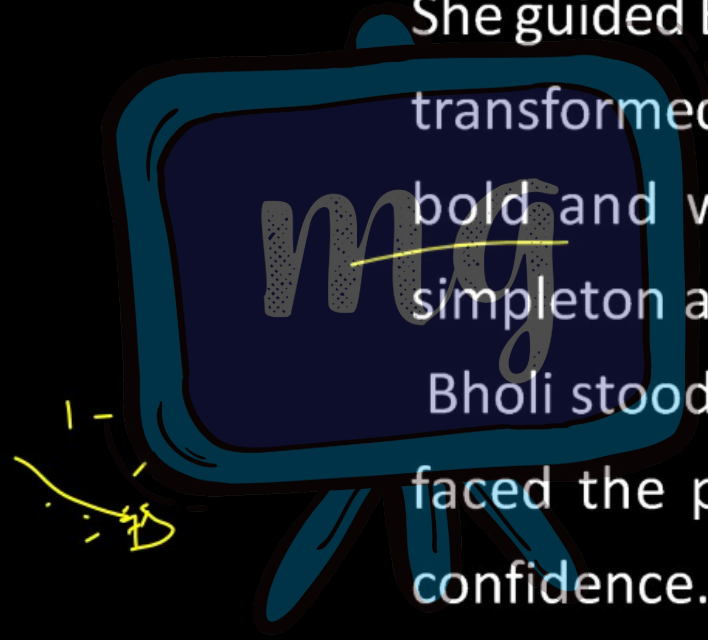

She guided Bholi at every step and transformed her into a confident, bold and wise girl from a shy, simpleton and dull girl.

Bholi stood on her own legs. She faced the problems of life with confidence.

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Question 9. Why did Bholi at first agree to an unequal match? Why did she later reject the marriage? What does this tell us about her?

Answer : Bholi agreed to an unequal match at first because she had overheard her parents' talks.

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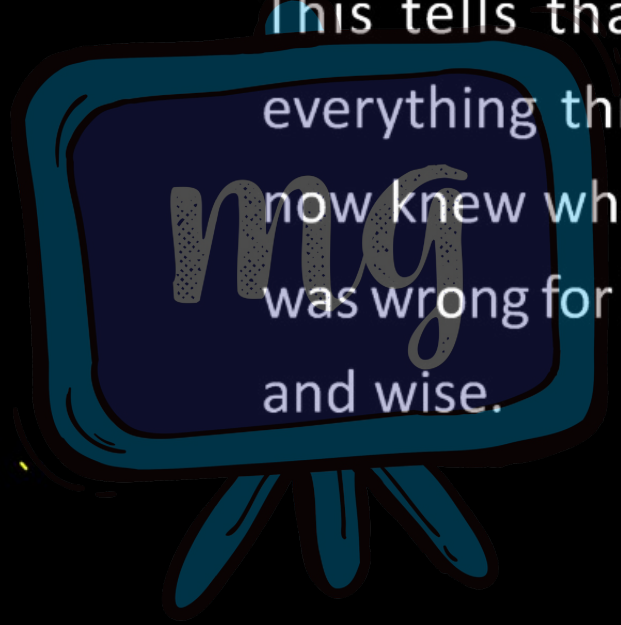
She was willing to marry with lame old man just because of her parents whom she wanted to be free from the worries of her marriage.

She later rejected the marriage. It was because the bridegroom was demanding a dowry of five thousand rupees.



This tells that Bholi understood everything through education. She now knew what was right and what was wrong for her. She was confident and wise.

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Question 10. Bholi's real name is Sulekha. We are told this right at the beginning. But only in the last but one paragraph of the story is Bholi called Sulekha again. Why do you think she is called Sulekha at that point in the story?

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Answer : Bholi is called Sulekha because she is now no more 'Bholi'. She is not a simple-hearted person. But she is a confident woman. She is now a mature and intelligent girl who is able to take her own decisions. She is aware of her rights and does not let anyone humiliate her family. So she is called by her real name.