

Plot

Chapter 1

Dawan and Kwai sit on the rickety old bridge above the river. Dawan asks Kwai what he will do if he gets the scholarship reserved for the best student in their class.

Dawan feels that she will not get the scholarship because she is a girl. In addition, their conservative parents think that it is foolish and wasteful to send girls to school.

They also discuss how unfair it is that the sacks of rice stacked up beneath the house are for the landlord's tax collector. After all, the poor villagers have worked hard for the harvest.

Chapter 2

The teacher asks students what they saw beneath their house in the morning. He gets them to discuss the issue of the landlord taking the sacks of rice as payment for their rent. He encourages his students to discuss what happens in their community.

A boy sitting by the window announces the approach of the headmaster. The teacher and students immediately pretend that they are studying Geography until the headmaster leaves.

Next, they discuss the responsibility of the scholarship winner. Finally, the teacher announces that Dawan wins the scholarship.

Chapter 3

Dawan's classmates gather around her after the lesson. She calls out to Kwai, but he turns away and leaves the classroom.

Dawan worries that Kwai will hate her as she has won the scholarship instead of him. When she gets home, Dawan fearfully informs her family that she has won the scholarship. Her father is angry because he feels that Dawan has taken her own brother's chance away. However, Dawan's grandmother supports her.

Dawan and her grandmother head to Cousin Noi's house, but halfway, Dawan's mother stops them and decides to go with Dawan.

Chapter 4

Noi and her husband, Ghan, do not support Dawan's decision to go to the city. While they are talking, an army officer comes to Noi's house for money. He is Mr. Phaspras who offered not to draft Ghan into the army if they agreed to pay him a sum of money. Up to the present, their debt to him keeps amounting as they cannot afford to pay what they initially promised.

Noi and Ghan describe their experiences and difficulties of living in the city. However, Dawan still insists on going to the city to study.

Chapter 5

Kwai is surprised that Noi and Ghan do not support Dawan's decision to move to the city. He tells her that he has asked the teacher and has found out that he achieved second place in the test.

If Dawan does not go to the city, Kwai gets to go instead of her. Nevertheless, she does not want to give up her scholarship for him. Kwai says he has not made a decision to tell Father about him being placed second.

Chapter 6

Dawan's father does not want her to go to the city. Kwai asks Father whether he could go if he had won the scholarship. Father thinks that it is more useful for boys to continue schooling.

Dawan decides to see the head monk in the temple. She intends to ask for his help to convince Father.

Chapter 7

Dawan goes to the marketplace to buy a lotus bud for the altar but she does not have enough money. She meets a girl selling lotus buds and caged sparrows, who offers her a lotus bud for free.

Dawan realises that the girl, Bao, is the sister of one of her classmates. Bao, in turn, realises that Dawan is the girl who had won the scholarship.

Chapter 8

Dawan goes to see the head monk in the temple. Dawan's teacher and the old monk are good friends. Hence, he has already heard from the teacher news that Dawan had won the scholarship while Kwai came second in the examination.

Dawan requests the head monk to persuade her father to allow her to go to the city. However, the head monk does not see why Dawan should go to the city school and refuses to help her.

Chapter 9

Dawan begins to feel hopeless but Bao encourages her not to give in. She lets Dawan release one of the caged sparrows for free. As a result, Bao is slapped by her brother, Vichai. When Vichai tries to hit Bao again, Kwai suddenly appears and stops him. Bao scolds Kwai for bullying Dawan after knowing that he is Dawan's brother. Consequently, Kwai tries to hit Bao for scolding him.

When Dawan tries to stop him, Kwai pushes her away. Unfortunately, she falls on top of a pile of broken bird cages and cuts her ankle. Cousin Noi happens to be there and helps to bandage Dawan's ankle.

Chapter 10

While limping home, Dawan wants to sit on the bridge but she sees her brother there. Kwai is thinking of Dawan's words about him being a bully.

Dawan passes her umbrella to him as it is raining. Kwai, knowing that Dawan still cares about him although he has hurt her, makes his decision.

Chapter 11

Father has heard from the teacher that Kwai came in second in the examination. He scolds Kwai for not telling him the news. Father speaks to both Kwai and Dawan. Finally, Father relents and agrees to let Dawan go to the city school.

Chapter 12

Dawan wakes up early on her last morning at home. She finds Kwai on the old wooden bridge looking forlorn. They share their feelings about her going to the city.

Kwai will miss Dawan once she goes to the city school as there will be no one there to watch the sunrise with him. As for Dawan, she will certainly miss everything at home. Dawan resolutely asks Kwai to watch the sunrise for her and to sing her song of the misty dawn.

Chapter 13

At the house, Dawan starts crying and says that she is not ready to leave. Her grandmother encourages her to be brave and courageous. As she is boarding the bus to the city, Dawan sees that many villagers have come to say goodbye. However, her brother is nowhere to be seen.

As the bus nears the river, she sees Kwai standing on the bridge, singing and waving to her. Dawan also flings out her arms as if to hug her brother and sings along.