

'Thabyegone Ywa'
Episode I

SEQUENCE 1.

[The village is asleep. A BBC reporter (a city girl) is strolling quietly down its near deserted streets... there is a hush in the world... except for the millions of insects and frogs.]

Reporter (Walking and speaking quietly) Welcome, listeners to Thabyegone village. It is 4 o'clock in the morning on this the 14th of November 2003. And here I am walking down its streets – Oh!!! ... *(she wobbles on her heeled sandals)* ... well, it's dusty tracks, really. Now, if it was full daylight, you'd see behind me the Market town that is at the right side of the Yangon-Mandalay Super Highway. *(Faint sound of river)*

What you can hear is the swift flowing river, Thapyae. And if it was light, what you could see would be the small white pagoda on Thapyae hill with sweet charming bells and yellowish first crops of golden paddy fields. *[Loud cow bellow and charging hooves. Reporter squeals as she is pushed out of the way....]*

Chwet Ni Watch out!

Moe Lay uick – it's getting away.

Chwet Ni Don't shout –you'll wake everybody!

Moe Lay 've dropped the paint

Chwet Ni Just don't drop the bottle (i.e.the drink). *[We hear the sounds of the boys chasing after the cow]*

Reporter *[Calling after them --- loud whispered call]* HEY! Come back. I've lost my shoe. Hey! *[But the boys have gone too far to hear reporter.]*

Reporter *[Brushing the dust off her clothes]* Dear listeners, what you have just heard are a group of local boys led by Chwet Ni. you see, it's the festival of Kyee Ma Noe Pwe. *[Distant cow moo].*

Reporter ... And that's them! Up to no good! That cow has come from cattle merchant, U Tin Htwe's house. And that boy with a crew cut --- that's CHWET NI – he's hugging the cow and the other two are painting it carefully. This kind of haphazard action is usually done by... *[Loud dog bark as it rushes past reporter]*

Reporter Ah! Watch out...! *[Cut to close-up with the boys] [The cow ...moos, the dog barks woof...woof]*

Moe Lay: My goodnessdamn dog....shoo..shoo

Chwet Ni: Quiet!

Moe Lay: How can I be quiet? See the dog.

Chwet Ni: So far things have gone pretty well only this cow is giving us trouble.

Moe Lay: Run! Run! Hey guys run! ..ha I bumped into something. *[Reporter cries out as she is bumped into]*

Reporter Watch where you're going!

Naing Naing (to reporter) Sorry. Sorry! [*He runs off after the other lads*]

Reporter On a festival day such as today, I suppose we should make allowances? This is the group of Chwet Ni and Naing Naing and their comrades who are between 20 and 25 years old. Now, on the other side of the road ... there is the house of Dr. Quack, Pauk Sa and his sister Daw Sein Hla who is the supervisor of Cheroot factory. If you listen carefully you will hear..."

SEQUENCE 2

[*Cut to close-up interior. We hear a loud moan of Mrs Cheroot. We are in their house*]

Daw Sein Hla: Ko Pauk ... Ko Pauk wake up. I'm dying with this terrible stomachache.

Ko Pauk Sa: [*Yawning*] What! Ah ... what is it? I'm right in the middle of very beautiful dream.

Daw Sein Hla: I've got the stomachache ...oh ...no. It hurts...so painful.

Ko Pauk Sa: Whatdo you want me to accompany you to the toilet? Why don't you go by yourself. Your 'tha-nut-khar' on your cheeks in the moonlight are so obvious that even ghosts will not dare to bother you.

Daw Sein Hla: Why do I have to bother you, if I want to go to the toilet only? Here, I've got such a terrible stomachache...oh..no.

Ko Pauk Sa: I thought so. You ate so much at the 'Da-saung-taing' festival as the food was free.

Daw Sein Hla: Okay. Stop grumbling...[*Retching*]

Ko Pauk Sa: Oh no! If you are going to be sick you are going outside!

Daw Sein Hla Have pity on me, brother!

Ko Pauq Sa I'll give you a shot.

Daw Sein Hla No. No injections! Your needles are as blunt as the hide of a water buffalo! [*Fade down on sounds of Mrs Cheroot trying to avoid being injected!*]

SEQUENCE 3

[*and cross to: Exterior.... Chwet Ni & Naing Naing are outside the house of Dr Spade and Mrs Cheroot. Monastery gong sounds...and cock's crow.... They are busy with the spade.*]

Moe Lay You've finished the bottle!

Chwet Ni I let you finish painting the cow!

Moe Lay But you've drank it all!

Chwet Ni Look! (*he is peering through their window*) He's chasing her with a syringe! Calls himself a doctor!

Moe Lay My parents go to him.

Chwet Ni Yes – and so did mine. Till he made a mess of my little sister, Thidar.

SEQUENCE 5

Reporter The ‘hooligans’ being referred to are back at their homes. But Chwet Ni has not gone to bed. No. That’s him over there: sleeping in the cab of the family truck ...*[Fade up close-up on snoring . (In the cab)]* He’s been celebrating ... perhaps a little bit too much.
[Car horn.]

Chwet Ni *[Grunts]*

Reporter And this car you can hear...*[Car horn angrily]*.... this car has become stuck in the rutted road.

Dr Kyaw Kyaw *[off]* Hey! You! You with your feet hanging out of the windows!

Chwet Ni Grunts

Dr Kyaw Kyaw Yes you! Move yourself and give me a hand. The car’s stuck. Getting stuck in this god forsaken little hole of a village – what a start to a day!

Chwet Ni *[calling back to Dr Kyaw Kyaw]* You talking to me!

Dr Kyaw Kyaw Yes, you! Unless you think I’m talking to your pig oh!; the smells here are like a Like a pig sty!

Chwet Ni Who are you?

Dr Kyaw Kyaw Just move yourself and help me get this car out of the ruts! *[In distance we hear Mya Gyi roar.]* ‘Where are they!’ ‘Who did this! Who painted this cow!

Reporter *[over sounds of Chwet Ni getting out of truck and going to help the stranger to push his car]* . That’s Mya Gyi shouting in the background. He has just seen the words they had painted on the cow.

‘Robber head.’

SEQUENCE 6

[Cut to where Mya Gui and Dr Spade are standing]

Mya Gyi How dare they!

Ko Pauk Sa It’s shameful. Especially as you, Mya Gyi, are going to be our new village chairman.

Mya Gyi Not yet, Dr Spade. They have to appoint me yet. But when they do I’ll bring order to this village and to those louts! *[calls]* Chwet Ni!!!!!!

SEQUENCE 7

[Cross to sounds of Chwet Ni & Dr Kyaw Kyaw trying to push the car out of the rut].

Dr Kyaw Kyaw I can hear other voices. Go and get their help.

Chwet Ni No! No. You see – I am as strong as an ox. By myself. I can push this car out of the
[He cries out as he falls over.]

Dr Kyaw Kyaw Oh for goodness sake!

[*Chwet Ni is rolling on the ground clutching his ankle and crying*] ‘Ow! Ow!’

Dr Kyaw Kyaw What have you done?

Chwet Ni Severed an artery. I’m bleeding all over the place.

Dr Kyaw Kyaw Don’t exaggerate. Let me look.

Chwet Ni I think I’m going to be sick ---

Dr Kyaw Kyaw If your breath is anything to go by, I’d say you feel sick because you’ve been drinking. Let me see your foot!

Chwet Ni Blood. See!

Dr Kyaw Kyaw Its a small cut. What are you doing!!!!?

Chwet Ni Stopping the bleeding.

Dr Kyaw Kyaw With dirt?

Chwet Ni It works every time!

Dr Kyaw Kyaw It’s how to get infections! You’re rubbing dirt into the wound! You need to go home and clean it with running water, if possible.

Chwet Ni Oh yeh? And what do you know, Mr City Stranger smarty pants?

Dr Kyaw Kyaw I know because I’m a doctor. The new doctor. Dr Kyaw Kyaw, how do you do.

Chwet Ni What are you doing here then?

Dr Kyaw Kyaw I took a wrong turning. Now... when you’ve helped me get this rented car out of this rut, you can point me in the right direction for the market town, and then you can go home and wash your foot. Oh – and you had better come to the clinic this afternoon. You’ll need a tetanus injection.

Chwet Ni What?

Dr Kyaw Kyaw You probably had one when you were young – at least I hope you did, but out here in this jungle! Who knows -- , but unless you’ve had a booster since, you need one now. You should have one every 10 years in order to prevent it.

Chwet Ni I don’t need a booster; I don’t need an injection. We have our own doctor in the village. We don’t need you city boys!

Dr Kyaw Kyaw Push and stop talking. [*being ironic*] You’ll need to give your jaw a rest if you are going to get Tetanus.

Chwet Ni What do you mean?

Dr Kyaw Kyaw Tetanus – nasty disease... First you’ll feel feverish, then start sweating heavily and your jaw will be locked and you’ll never be able to speak again!!
[*In background we hear the villagers calling for Chwet Ni*] “Chwet Ni! Where is he!? He’s always late! Where’s the truck! Etc.” [*roar of car engine cuts this sequence to its close*].

Chwet Ni Just get in and keep your mouth shut, little sister. Be a good girl and your bro will get you a special gift today.

Thida What?

Chwet Ni Well ...a hair band may be.

Thida But if I said that I saw you take Mya Gyi's wife's longyi...

Chwet Ni Okay, Thida. I'll get you something else.

Thida And if I say that I saw you painting some words on a cow..

Mya Gui [*distant*] Hey! Chwet Ni! I want a word with you!

Chwet Ni [*calling*]_Mya Gyi Good morning. [*to Thida*] So – little sister – I'll get you a pair of high heels you want as well.

Thida I love you, Chwet Ni!

Chwet Ni Such a sweet faced blackmailer! [*She laughs as she climbs in*].

Thida At least my big brother Chwet Pyu doesn't get in to trouble like you!

Mya Gyi [*approaches*] Chwet Ni ... I want a word with you.

Chwet Ni Indeed, and I would want a word with you – but – isn't that Mrs Cheroot being helped by her brother. I better go and help; she looks really poorly. [*Calling*] Daw Sein Hla – how are you? Here – let me give you a hand.

Mya Gyi [*running after him*] You can't get around me, young man. Last night – there were things done last night that---

Chwet Ni Yes. You are right; you have caught me out. Yes, It was me. I did it.

Mya Gyi You see!

Ko Pauk Sa You did that thing with the spade?

Chwet Ni Good morning Dr Pauk Sa! Had I only had a spade it would have helped me very much. [*To Mrs Cheroot*]. Now in you go.. [*much groaning and heaving as Daw Sein Hla is hoisted up into the truck*].

Mya Gyi And the cow?

Chwet Ni Cow? I was needing a spade to help the doctor.

Ko Pauk Sa To help me?

Chwet Ni You? No. The *real* doctor.

Ko Pauk Sa I beg your pardon?

Chwet Ni Dr Kyaw Kyaw Htet. He saved my foot from bleeding to death. See?

