



**INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH- (2022-23)**

QUESTION BANK- BIRTH – A J Cronin

Class: XI

Sub: ENGLISH

INTRODUCTION

‘Birth’ by A.J. Cronin is an excerpt from ‘The Citadel’ about Andrew Manson who has just graduated out of medical college and has just commenced his practice under the supervision of Dr. Edward Page as an assistant in Blaenelly. It is also an account of how a beginner skilfully handles a child delivery case and brings a still born child back to life.

I. CHARACTERS

Dr Andrew Manson: A newly graduated medical practitioner working in a small mining town, Andrew has taken up a job as an assistant to Dr. Edward Page. On the call of Joe Morgan, a miner, Andrew manages to help in a difficult birth and saves the baby’s life due to his knowledge and efforts.

Joe Morgan: A well built middle aged miner, Joe Morgan works as a driller in a mine. He is the husband of Susan Morgan who is to deliver a baby after twenty years of marriage. Joe asks Dr Andrew Manson to help in his wife’s delivery and reposes full faith in the doctor.

Susan Morgan’s Mother: She is a tall, grey-haired woman of nearly seventy who is concerned about her daughter’s happiness. She is smart and calculative enough to make the doctor stay in the house during waiting period by preparing a cup of tea for him. She is anxious about the child.

The Midwife: She is an experienced nurse who is there to assist in child birth. She is pessimistic about the child’s survival when it is found not breathing when born, but still assists Dr Andrew Manson in his work.

II. SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Question 1: Who was Joe.Morgan? Why had he been waiting for Dr Andrew Manson?

Answer: Joe Morgan was a driller in Blaenelly, a mining town. He was a big, strong and heavy middle-aged person. Joe and his wife Susan, who had been married nearly twenty years, were expecting their first child. Joe was waiting for the doctor to help Susan in the delivery of the child.

Question 2: Where did Joe lead Andrew? Why did he not go in with the doctor?

Answer: Joe Morgan led Andrew to his house, 12, Blaina Terrace. His wife was about to deliver her first child after being married for nearly twenty years. Joe was quite tensed. He refused to go inside the house. Even his voice showed signs of strain.

Question 3: “Don’t fret, mother, I’ll not run away”. Why do you think Andrew say so?

Answer: Mrs Morgan’s mother offered to make a cup of tea for the doctor. The experienced

woman had realized that there must be a period of waiting. She was afraid that the doctor would leave the case saying that he would return later.

Question 4: Why did Andrew decide to remain there until everything was over?

Answer: Andrew had reached Bryngower at about midnight. He was very worried and upset. He needed some rest and sleep. He knew that he could not sleep even for an hour if he went home. Secondly, he knew that the case would demand all his attention. He felt lethargic and decided to remain there until everything was over.

Question 5: What had Andrew been thinking about? How would you like to describe the state of his thoughts?

Answer: Andrew had been thinking about the unsuccessful married lives of some persons he knew. Bramwell was foolishly devoted to a woman who deceived him. Edward Page was bound to quarrelsome Blodwen. Denny was living unhappily apart from his wife. His thoughts were muddled (confused).

Question 6: What was Andrew's view of marriage? Why was he resentful and confused?

Answer: For Andrew marriage was a peaceful and beautiful state. He loved Christine. The conflict between his steady mind and overflowing heart left him resentful and confused.

Question 7: Why did Andrew feel surprised while sitting by kitchen fire?

Answer: Andrew had been thinking about the unsuccessful married lives of some persons he knew. He also had been thinking about Christine as he sat by the kitchen fire. He sat still and sadly for a long time. When the old woman sitting opposite him suddenly addressed him, Andrew felt surprised.

Question 8: Why did a shiver of horror pass over Andrew?

Answer: Andrew had struggled for more than an hour to help Mrs Susan Morgan in the safe delivery of her first child. At last, the child was born, but it was lifeless. As Andrew gazed at the still form of the baby, a shiver of horror passed over him.

Question 9: What dilemma did Andrew face?

Answer: His heart prompted him to resuscitate the stillborn child. His mind dictated him to attend to the mother who was laying in a hopeless state. Andrew faced the dilemma of whom he should attend to first.

Question 10: What efforts did Andrew make to revive Susan Morgan?

Answer: He smashed a glass ampule and injected the medicine. After this he flung down the hypodermic syringe. Then he worked quiet hard to restore the soft and weak woman. Her heart strengthened after a few minutes of feverish effort.

Question 11: In what state did Andrew find the newborn child? What did he conclude?

Answer: Andrew found the baby amongst wet newspapers under the bed. Its limp warm body was white and soft. Its head lolled on the thin neck. The limbs seemed boneless. The whiteness over the body meant suffocation caused by the lack of oxygen.

Question 12: How did Andrew's practical experience come handy?

Answer: Andrew had once seen a similar case in the Samaritan. He remembered the treatment that had been used. He at once decided to administer the hot and cold water therapy.

Question 13: What efforts did Andrew make to revive the newborn baby?

Answer: First, he laid the child upon a blanket and gave it artificial respiration. Then he dipped the child alternately in hot and cold water. After that he rubbed the slippery child with a rough towel. He pressed and released his chest till it began to breathe and gave a city.

Question 14: How did Andrew react to the first glimpse of the success of his efforts to help the stillborn child come alive?

Answer: As a result of Andrew's persistent efforts, the small chest of the baby heaved up. This short heave was followed by other heart beats. Andrew turned giddy. The sense of life, throbbing under his feelings almost made him faint.

Question 15: What was the result of Andrew's feverish efforts after the child's chest gave a short, convulsive heave?

Answer: Andrew redoubled his efforts. The child began to gasp deeper and deeper. A bubble of mucus came from a nostril. The limbs were no longer boneless. The pale skin turned pink. Then the child cried. It came alive.

Question 16: What was the state of the room after the resuscitation of mother and child? .

Answer: The room was littered with blankets, towels, basins and soiled instruments. The hypodermic syringe was impaled in the linoleum by its point. The ewer was knocked over. The kettle lay on its side in a puddle of water.

Question 17: Why did Andrew say, "Fill fetch my bag later, nurse"?

Answer: Andrew had worked hard single-handedly and constantly to save the mother as well as the stillborn child from the jaws of death. The constant efforts, tension, desperation caused by failure combined to make him weak and dazed. His throat was dry. He was tired.

Question 18: How did Andrew assess that night's work?

Answer: As Andrew left driller's house he felt tired. He kept thinking of the work he had done that night. He realised that at last he had done something real. For him it was an meaningful achievement.

III. LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Question 1: Why was Andrew Manson called in? How did he react to the call of duty?

Answer: Andrew Manson had just begun his medical practice in the small Welsh mining town of Blaenelly. He was called in to attend to Susan Morgan, who was expecting her first child after being married for nearly twenty years. Her husband, Joe Morgan had been waiting for an hour outside the closed surgery. It was nearly midnight when Andrew reached there. As Joe acquainted Andrew with his wife's condition, Andrew forgot his own affairs. He went inside his house for his bag and immediately left for the driller's place.

Since his services were not immediately needed by the expecting mother, he decided to wait

downstairs. He re-examined her after an hour. It was at 3:30 am when the nurse summoned him. He struggled for an hour before the child was born. Then he worked feverishly to revive the weak mother and the stillborn child. He had to use all his knowledge and experience in discharging his duty. He did not pay attention to his own physical tiredness or mental tension. Duty came first and he responded to it with single-minded devotion.

Question 2: Give a brief account of the efforts made by Andrew to revive the stillborn baby.

Answer: A shiver of horror passed over Andrew as he gazed at the still form of the newborn baby. Though it was a perfectly formed boy, its limp warm body was white. The whiteness meant suffocation caused by lack of oxygen. Andrew remembered the treatment given to such a case in the Samaritan. Before the hot and cold water came he had asked for, he laid the child upon a blanket and gave it artificial respiration. Then he dipped the child alternately in hot and cold water. Now, the child was quite slippery. He rubbed it with a rough towel. Then he pressed and released his chest till it heaved up. It was followed by other heaves. Andrew redoubled his efforts. The child started gasping. A bubble of mucus came from one tiny nostril. The pale skin turned pink. The limbs were no longer boneless. His head did not lie back spinelessly. The child gave a cry. It came alive.

Question 3: Compare and contrast Andrew's emotional, mental and physical state at the beginning of the story and at the end.

Answer: At the beginning of the story Andrew is physically tired and emotionally upset. He has just returned from a disappointing evening with Christine, the girl he loved. His thoughts are heavy and muddled. The episode he had witnessed at Cardiff station still filled his mind with sadness. Though he thought of marriage as a blissful state, he couldn't help remembering the miserable failure of many marriages.

At the end of the story, Andrew is physically exhausted but emotionally cheerful and mentally alert. His mind is filled with joy and self-satisfaction. He has performed an unusual feat, no less than a miracle. He calls upon God as witness that he has done something real at last. This sense of achievement helps him to overcome physical fatigue. His sense of duty towards his patients helps him to attend them whole-heartedly. He forgets his personal feelings and thinks only of reviving the patients.

Question 4: What impression do you form of Andrew Manson on the basis of the story 'Birth'?

Answer: Andrew Manson is a young man who has recently qualified as a doctor and started his medical practice as an assistant to Dr Edward Page in the small Welsh mining town of Blaenelly. He is in love with Christine and thinks of marriage as an idyllic state. His heart is overflowing with love. His steady mind and reason help him see the marriages of many persons as dismal failures.

Andrew is mature enough to keep his private and professional lives apart. Once confronted with his responsibility, he discharges his obligations to the utmost capacity. He is duty conscious. He believes in practical approach. He is pragmatic and is not afraid to try unique methods.

Andrew has a tender heart. He is aware of the feelings of others. He knows how deeply Susan loved her coming baby. He has polite manners and reassuring tone. On the whole, Andrew impresses us as a dedicated doctor.

Question 5: “I have done something; oh, God! I’ve done something real at last.” Why does Andrew say this? What does it mean?

Answer: The young doctor Andrew Manson had done a commendable work. His exclamation is justified. He had not only helped the middle-aged lady in the safe delivery of a male child but also restored them to perfect health. Susan Morgan’s strength was ebbing after the delivery. She was almost pulse less. Andrew gave her an injection and worked severely to strengthen her heart.

The major achievement of Andrew was to resuscitate the stillborn child. First, he laid the child on a blanket and began the special method of respiration. Then he tried the hot and cold water treatment dipping the baby alternately. He laboured in vain for half an hour. He then made another last effort. He rubbed the child with a rough towel. He went on pressing and releasing the baby’s little chest with both his hands. At last the baby responded. His chest heaved. Andrew redoubled his efforts. The child was gasping now. A bubble of mucus came from his tiny nostril. The pale skin turned pink. His limbs became hard. Then came the child’s cry.

Question 6: ‘There lies a great difference between textbook medicine and the world of a practising physician.’ Discuss.

Answer: Normally, the medicines prescribed in the textbooks are used by the practising physicians. However, in extreme cases of emergency, the physician’s experience, resourcefulness and practical approach become far more important than the theoretical knowledge. For example, a victim of burn-injury, snakebite or suffocation through drowning needs immediate help. The nearest available doctor may not have all the facilities needed for the case. In such a situation first-aid is a must to save the patient’s life before rushing him to the hospital for proper care. With limited resources at his command, the practising physician exercises all his practical experience to control the damage to the minimum and check the victim’s state from further deterioration. A stitch in time does save nine in such cases. The practical help comes as a boon.