

## Birth – Important Questions

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**Q. Who was Joe Morgan? Why had he been waiting for Dr. Andrew Manson?**

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

**Q. Why did Joe Morgan call on the doctor?**

**Ans.** Joe and his wife had been married for nearly twenty years. Now they were expecting their first child. Joe's wife needed immediate medical attention. Therefore, he called on the doctor.

**Q. Where did Joe lead Andrew? Why did he not go in with the doctor?**

**Ans.** Joe Morgan led Andrew to his house, number 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. Even his voice showed signs of strain.

**Q. Why was Joe Morgan waiting for Dr. Andrew Manson and what was Dr. Andrew's response?**

**Ans.** Joe Morgan was waiting for Andrew because he was going to have his first baby after twenty years. Andrew was concerned. There was still some time for the baby to be born. The family was worried that he would go but he decided to wait.

**Q. What was Andrew's view of marriage? Why was he resentful and confused.**

**Ans.** As Andrew sat dozing by the kitchen fire his thoughts wandered over the subject of marriage. He thought of Bramwell who was foolishly devoted to a woman who deceived him meanly. Then he thought of Edward Page who was married to the ill-natured Blodwen and was now living unhappily, apart from his wife. This led him to the conclusion that all marriages are dismal failures. Then he thought of his girl friend, Christine and wished to consider marriage as a pleasant state.

**Q. Why did Mrs. Morgan's mother offer to make a cup of tea for the doctor?**

**Ans.** Mrs. Morgan's mother was a wise and experienced old woman. As the doctor moved about the room after examining the patient, she realised from his facial expression that there would be a period of waiting. She feared that he would leave the case, saying he

would return later. In order to detain him she offered to make a cup of tea for him.

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

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**Ans.** Mrs. Morgan’s mother offered to make a cup of tea for the doctor. The experienced woman 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.

**Q. Why did the doctor decide to stay there until everything was over, though he knew there would be a period of waiting?**

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**Ans.** After examining the patient, the doctor knew that there would be a period of waiting. He also knew that he would not be able to enjoy even one hour’s sleep if he went home. So, he decided to stay there until everything was over.

**Q. What disturbed Andrew out of his thoughts as he sat brooding by the kitchen fire?**

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**Ans.** As Andrew sat brooding by the kitchen fire, he was disturbed out of his thoughts to hear the voice of the old woman. She was telling him that her daughter didn’t want to be given chloroform if it would harm the baby. Just then, he heard the nurse’s voice calling from the top landing.

**Q. Why did a shiver of horror pass over Andrew?**

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

**Q. Why was the doctor in dilemma?**

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**Ans.** The woman gave birth to a still child. When the doctor looked at the lifeless form, a shiver of horror passed over him. He was torn between his desire to attempt to rejuvenate the child and his responsibility to the mother, who herself was in a desperate condition and needed immediate attention. So, he was in a dilemma.

**Q. What dilemma did Andrew face when the child was born.**

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**Ans.** The Morgans were expecting their first child after twenty years of their marriage. The child was stillborn and lifeless. The mother was in a desperate state and in immediate need of doctor’s attention. Now, Andrew was in a dilemma. He wanted to attend both of them and save them.

**Q. How was the doctor’s dilemma solved?**

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**Ans.** The doctor’s dilemma was solved instinctively, not consciously. He handed the child to the nurse and turned his attention to the mother who lay faint. She was almost pulseless. Her strength was ebbing fast. The doctor made frantic efforts to restore the

flabby woman. Gradually, her heart strengthened and the doctor knew that he could safely leave her.

**Q. Why was the mid-wife frightened when the doctor asked about the child?**

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**Ans.** When the doctor knew that he could safely leave the mother, he asked about the child. The mid-wife was frightened. Taking it as a still child, she had dumped it beneath the bed amongst the soaked newspapers.

**Q. Describe the condition of the child when the doctor pulled it out.**

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**Ans.** When the doctor pulled the child out, its limp, warm body was white and soft. Its skin was lovely, smooth and tender. Its head was hanging loosely on the thin neck. Its limbs seemed boneless. It was a perfectly formed boy.

**Q. Dr. Andrew tried an entirely new method but he managed to save the life of the child. What was the method which was the last resort for him?**

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**Ans.** Dr. Andrew began a special method of respiration. He took two basins and plunged the child into the icy water and then into the steamy water. As a last resort, he rubbed the child's body, crushing and releasing his chest. Suddenly, the child's chest moved and it gave a cry. This is how he saved the baby.

**Q. What was the child suffering from?**

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**Ans.** As soon as the doctor saw the child, he knew that it was a case of suffocation, the condition caused by lack of oxygen and excess of carbon dioxide in the blood. It is accompanied by paleness of the skin, weak pulse, and loss of reflexes.

**Q. Describe briefly the efforts made by the doctor to revive the child.**

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**Ans.** The doctor lay the child on a blanket and began the special method of respiration. Then he immersed it alternately in cold water and lukewarm water. Fifteen minutes passed, but no breath came from the body of the child. Then the doctor made one last effort. He rubbed the child with a towel, crushed and released the chest with both his hands. Thus, he tried to get breath into the limp body. His efforts bore fruit. The little chest gave a short, convulsive heave. The doctor redoubled his effort. The child was now gasping.

**Q. How did Andrew react to the first glimpse of the success of his efforts to help the stillborn child come alive?**

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

**Q. What was the state of the room after the resuscitation of mother and child?**

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**Ans.** The room was littered with blankets, towels, basins and solid 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.

**Q. Why did Andrew say “I’ll fetch my bag later, nurse?”**

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**Ans.** Andrew had worked hard single-handedly and constantly to save the mother as well as the still born child from the jaws of death. The constant efforts, tension, desperation caused by failure combined to make him weak and dozed. Being tired he told the nurse that he would fetch his bag later.

**Q. How did Andrew assess that night’s work?**

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**Ans.** As Andrew left driller’s house he felt tired. He kept thinking of the work he had done that night. He realized that at last he had done something real. For him it was an achievement.

**Q. Why was Andrew Manson called? How did he react to the call of duty?**

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**Ans.** 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 for his bag and immediately left for the driller’s place.

Since, the expecting mother did not need his services immediately, he decided to wait downstairs. He re-examined her after an hour. It was at 3.30 a.m. when the nurse called him. He struggled for an hour before the child was born. Then he worked feverishly to revive the weak mother and still born child. He had to use all his knowledge and experience in discharging his duty. He did not pay attention to his own tensions. Duty stood first in front of him and he responded to it single-handedly.

**Q. Describe thoughts and feelings of Andrew Manson as he sat dozing by the kitchen fire?**

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**Ans.** Andrew Manson had recently come out of medical school and started his medical practice as an assistant to Dr. Edward Page in a small mining town. One night he was called to attend a woman who was expecting her first child. After examining the patient Andrew knew that there would be a period of waiting. He was tired but he decided to stay there until everything was over. He knew that he would not be able to enjoy even an hour’s sleep if he went home. As Andrew sat by the kitchen fire, his thoughts were rather muddled up. He had rather a disappointing evening with his girlfriend, Christine, that day. Then, he was still obsessed by the episode he had seen at Cardiff station. He thought

of Bramwell who was foolishly devoted to a woman who deceived him meanly. Then he thought of Edward Page who was married to an ill-natured woman and was now living unhappily, apart from his wife. He reached the conclusion that all marriages were dismal failures. Suddenly, the image of Christine, with her eyes towards him, flashed across his mind. Now, he wished to consider marriage as a pleasant state. He sat thus brooding, thinking of Christine.

**Q. Why was Andrew Manson torn between two desires? How did he resolve this dilemma?**

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**Ans.** Andrew was a medical practitioner in a small mining town. One night he was attending a woman who was expecting her first child. After a long wait and an hour long hard struggle of Andrew, the woman gave birth to a still child. Andrew was in dilemma. When he gazed at the lifeless child, he shivered with horror. Then he looked at the mother who was in a desperate state and needed immediate attention. He was torn between his desire to attempt to bring the child back to life and his obligation towards the mother. Soon the dilemma was resolved. Instinctively he gave the child to the nurse and turned his attention to the mother who lay unconscious. She was almost pulseless. Her strength was ebbing fast. Andrew knew that it was a race against time. He made frantic efforts to restore the flabby woman. Instantly he smashed a glass ampoule and injected the medicine. After a few minutes her heart strengthened. Andrew knew that she was now out of danger and he could safely leave her.

**Q. Give a brief account of the efforts made by Andrew to revive the still born baby.**

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**Ans.** A shiver of horror passed over Andrew as he gazed the still form of the new born baby. Though it was a perfectly formed boy, its limp warm body was white. The whiteness meant lack of oxygen. Andrew only remembered the treatment given to such case in the Samaritan. He gave the child artificial respiration before he had asked for cold and hot water. Then, he dipped the child alternately in cold and hot water. Now, the child was quite slippery. He rubbed it with rough towel. Then, he pressed and released the chest till it heaved up. Andrew doubled 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. Its head did not lie back spinelessly. The child gave a cry. It was alive. His efforts were successful.

**Q. Why does Andrew comment that he had done something 'real at last' in Blaenelly?**

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**Ans.** Having put the mother on the path of recovery, Andrew asked about the child. Taking it for a still child, the nurse had dumped it beneath the bed. Andrew pulled the child out. It was a perfectly formed boy. Its limp warm body was white and soft. Its head was hanging loosely on the thin neck. Its limbs seemed boneless. Andrew at once knew it was a case of Asphyxia Pallida. He ordered the nurse to get him hot water and cold water and basins. In the meantime, he laid the child upon a blanket and began the special

method of respiration. When the nurse brought the basins, he splashed cold water in one basin and lukewarm in the other. He hurried the child between the two. Fifteen minutes passed, but no breathe came from the body of the child. In sheer desperation he rubbed the child with a towel, crushed and relaxed the little chest with both hands. Thus he tried to get breath into the limp body. Then a miracle happened. The little chest gave a short, convulsive heave and then another. Andrew redoubled his effort. The child was now gasping, deeper and still deeper. Then came the child's cry. Andrew heaved a sign of relief. He handed the child to the nurse and climbed down the stairs. As he walked down the street he kept thinking. "I've done something, oh, God! I've done something real at last." It was perhaps his thanks giving to God to enable him to do the impossible. He was happy that he saved a life and did something meaningful.

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**Q. Compare and contrast Andrew's emotional, mental and physical state at the beginning of the story and at the end.**

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**Ans.** In 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. What he has witnessed at Cardiff station filled his mind with sadness. Though he thought of marriage a blissful state, he couldn't help remembering the miserable failure of many marriages.

At the end of the story, he is physically exhausted but emotionally cheerful and mentally alert. His mind is filled with joy and self-satisfaction. He has performed like a magician. He calls upon God as witness that he has done something real at last. This sense of achievement helps him overcome physical fatigue. He has the sense of duty which helps him attend to the patients whole heartedly.

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**Q. What impression do you form of Andrew Manson on the basis of the story, 'Birth'?**

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**Ans.** 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. He is filled 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 and is not afraid to try unique methods. He has a tender heart too. He is aware of the feeling of others. He knows how deeply Susan loved her up coming baby. He has polite manners and re-assuring tone. On the whole, Andrew is presented as a dedicated doctor.