

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 7: BIRTH



BIRTH

~Summary~

-by AJ Cronin

Joe Morgan was Waiting for Dr Andrew

Dr Andrew had recently graduated from medical college. He was practising as an assistant to Dr Edward Page in a small Welsh mining town named Blaenelly. One night he was returning home when he found Joe Morgan waiting for him outside the doctor's home. He had been there for more than an hour. He looked relaxed to see the doctor. He informed that the doctor was needed at their home as his wife was expecting to deliver a baby after almost 20 years of marriage. Dr Andrew asked him to wait for a few minutes. He went inside, got his medical bag and set out for Joe Morgan's house.

The Case Demanded All Attention of Dr Andrew

Joe Morgan stopped outside the house and requested Dr Andrew to go inside alone. Through a narrow staircase the doctor reached a small, clean but scantily furnished room. He found two women beside the patient, Susan Morgan's mother, a tall, grey-haired woman of nearly seventy, and an elderly midwife.

Susan's mother offered him a cup of tea. So, Dr Andrew sensed that she didn't want him to leave, as there would be some waiting period. Dr Andrew was tired but still decided to stay.

An hour later, Dr Andrew went to check the patient and came down. The restless footsteps of Joe Morgan could be heard as he paced the street outside.

Dr Andrew's Mind Wandered

Dr Andrew was so deep in his thoughts that the voice of the old lady (Susan Morgan's mother) surprised him. She informed him that her daughter didn't want him to give her chloroform if it would harm the baby. Dr Andrew replied that it would do no harm. Just then he heard the midwife's voice. It was half-past three and Dr Andrew perceived that it was time for him to start working on the delivery.

The Horrifying Dilemma

After a harsh struggle for an hour, the child was born, a perfectly formed boy. Unfortunately, it was not breathing. A shiver of horror passed over Dr Andrew. He had promised the family so much. He wanted to resuscitate the child, but the mother herself was in a very desperate state.

He gave the child to the midwife and turned his attention to Susan Morgan, the mother, who was lying unconscious. Her pulse was slow and her strength was reducing.

After a few minutes of continuous efforts, he stabilised her by giving her an injection. Then he asked for the child. The midwife had kept the child under the bed, presuming him to be dead. Dr Andrew pulled out the child. His head was hanging loosely and the limbs seemed boneless. He concluded that the child was suffering from asphyxia pallida (an abnormal medical condition in a newly born baby).

Dr Andrew's Efforts to Save the Child

Dr Andrew recalled a case he had once seen in the Samaritan (a medical journal) and the treatment that was given. He asked the midwife to quickly get hot water and cold water in two bowls.

He started plunging the child once into the icy water and then into the steaming bath alternately. Fifteen minutes passed and nothing happened. Dr Andrew was getting frustrated. He could see the unbelieving faces of the midwife and the old lady but he continued his efforts.

The Miracle

Dr Andrew started rubbing the child's chest with a rough towel and thumping his little chest, trying to get breath into that limp body.

Then, as if by miracle, the child's chest began moving. Dr Andrew felt weak and nervous at the site of life springing under his hands. He redoubled his efforts and the child was now breathing. Life came to his limbs, head became erect, the child's skin started turning pink and suddenly the child cried.

Dr Andrew is Relieved

After so much frantic effort and success, Dr Andrew felt weak and speechless. The old woman, Susan's mother, was still standing against the wall, praying.

Andrew went downstairs and told that he would fetch his bag later on. He found Joe Morgan still waiting with an anxious, eager face. Dr Andrew gave the happy news that both the mother and the baby were all right.

Andrew was really happy and exclaimed, 'Oh God, I've done something real at last.' He had achieved a feat in medical history which would certainly brighten his future.

NCERT SOLUTIONS

Questions (Page No. 70)

(Reading with Insight)

Question 1. "I have done something; oh, God! I've done something real at last." Why does Andrew say this? What does it mean?

Answer: Andrew spoke these words in the ecstasy of saving both the mother and the child's lives. Andrew was depressed before the operation because of the pain his girlfriend had caused him. When he successfully delivered the baby, he discovered that the baby had died. Then he decided to first cure the mother, which he did. Following that, he carefully observed the baby and determined the problem. He then immediately administered the necessary treatment and resuscitated the baby. As a result, he successfully did something meaningful. Till that point, he was just thinking and then he did something real.

Question 2. There lies a great difference between textbook medicine and the world of a practising physician. Discuss.

Answer: The world of practicing physicians and textbook medicine is vastly different. Textbook medicine is purely scientific, whereas patient care is an art. The world of practicing physicians necessitates a unique set of abilities and knowledge. Although textbook medicine provides a conceptual framework for treatment, no doctor can treat a patient without employing intuitive practices. The way Andrew brings a stillborn child back to life in the story Birth attests to this fact. The nurse initially dumps the child, believing it to be dead. Andrews, on the other hand, takes a chance, and the miracle occurs. He initially applies textbook knowledge, but the child does not recover. He never gives up hope. He uses his intuitive method, and the miracle occurs. Treatment is based on science and goes beyond. It is a science as well as an art form. Birth is a work of realistic fiction. In other words, the story's elements have been drawn from real-life experiences and woven into the fabric of fiction.

Question 3. Do you know of any incident when someone has been brought back to life from the brink of death through medical help. Discuss medical procedures such as organ transplant and organ regeneration that are used to save human life.

Answer: Write your own answer.