

Anticipate

① Judging from the title, imagine what the text may deal with?

It may deal with an Indian woman who is expecting or has just given birth to another daughter- the second in the family?-which is often considered as very bad news in India as girls are considered as a liability/a burden/a drain.

② Read the introduction. Imagine why Kavita has decided to give birth to her child in an abandoned hut instead of her home.

She may be a single mother / she may have been raped and may be ashamed of having a baby. She may have been rejected by her family / She may have wanted to hide the baby as she knew it would be a baby girl and that it would be killed by her husband/ she knew she would be asked to abandon the baby...

Read the text carefully and answer the following questions

③ List all the characters present in the extract. (names /relationship)

-Kavita -the midwife -Jasu, Kavita's husband and the baby's father -the baby girl

④ Sum up the story briefly in your own words

Kavita, an Indian woman, has given birth to a baby girl in an abandoned hut. She asks the midwife to fetch her sister for help but instead of Kavita's sister, her husband, Jasu, turns up. When he understands the baby is another girl he asks Kavita to give it to him -probably to get rid of it - but Kavita refuses to obey and stands up to her husband. He then explains that they need a boy to help them in the field and that they can't afford to raise another girl. But Kavita is determined to save her baby at least for one night...maybe more.

⑤ Focus on l 1 to 11

-How does Kavita first react when she sees she has given birth to a baby girl? Pick all the words describing her feelings and then rephrase.

l 3 "her body shudders with silent tears" = she is heart-broken/devastated/helpless

- What does Kavita mean when she says "no one heard my prayers" (l1)? Explain in your own words.

We can imagine she prayed for a boy but her wish was not granted.

-What does she ask the midwife? Why?

She asks the midwife to fetch her sister and not to tell anyone /not to break the news about the baby's birth. She wants it to remain a secret as she may not want her husband to come and snatch/grab the baby from her. She thinks she can rely on her sister to help her to find a solution to her problem

⑥ Focus on l 12 to 25 -

-How does Jasu feel when he first walks into the hut? Why? Quote the text to back your answer.

He is overjoyed/ delighted and proud because he is convinced that his wife has given birth to a baby boy. l 13 his eyes are "gleaming" / L 13 14 "Where is he? Where is my little prince? "/ His arms are already "outstretched" (l15) to hold the boy.

-Describe Jasu's change of attitude quoting from the text. Explain in your own words.

When he understands the newborn is another girl, he is so disappointed that he loses his temper and shouts at Kavita as if she were responsible for not having a boy (l 20 "he shouts")

-What does Jasu blame Kavita for?

He blames Kavita for failing to give birth to a son. He accuses her of not being able to give him a son.

-Focus on Kavita's reaction. Pick out the text and then rephrase. How can you account for it?

At first "she stiffens" (l16) then "clutches her baby to her chest" (l16) and "wraps" her "trembling arms around the baby, shielding her small body" (l 16 to 19). She is really shaken and probably scared of her husband and yet she seems determined to protect her newborn from her husband at all costs / to stand up to her husband. Indeed, she knows that her husband was hoping for a boy and that he will snatch the baby from her to get rid of it. She even answers him back, shouting in a piercing voice (l 22 "the shrillness of her voice"). She seems to be physically overwhelmed / overcome by emotion / anger (l 22 "the tension flood into her limbs"). She can't hold her anger back. She can't contain herself. She can't refrain from shouting at her husband.

⑦ Focus on l 26 to the end

- How does Jasu react as Kavita stand up to him?

Jasu is first bewildered / puzzled. Indeed, he is not used to his wife challenging/defying him/ standing up to him / rebelling against him/ questioning his decisions.

It is the first time she has dared to challenge him / stand up to him / answer him back...

Then, he tries to calm her down and to reason with her.

-What arguments does he put forward?

He argues that they need a boy to work on the farm / they already have one child to raise / they won't have enough money to bring up a girl. He mentions his cousin who can't afford the dowry for their daughter.

- How does Jasu look upon girls?

Jasu thinks girls are a liability / a burden / a "drain" for the family.

-What is Kavita determined to do? Why? (can you imagine what happened to her first baby girl?)

She seems determined to keep her daughter. She'll do anything to prevent an infanticide. She would rather die than let him take her daughter. When she says "I won't let you take her this time" (l34) we understand that she must already have given birth to a baby girl who was taken from her/killed/abandoned.

-What does she beg her husband in the end? Guess why? What does she secretly intend to do?

In the end she begs her husband to let her keep the baby just for one night. She may intend to run away with her newborn. / to give her baby to her sister who will take her to an orphanage where she will be safe...

-How does Jasu react? Quote the text and explain.

"Jesu remains silent, looking down at his feet" (l43) as if he were ashamed of what he had said or intended to do.

What will happen afterwards?