

## The Weed

By- Amrita Pritam

1. Who is Angoori?  
A: The new bride of an old servant of the narrator's neighbour's neighbour.
2. Why was Angoori "new with a difference"?  
A: She was the second wife of a twice-married husband.
3. Who is Prabhati?  
A: Angoori's husband, an old servant.
4. How long did Angoori and Prabhati wait to consummate the union?  
A: Five years.
5. How long had Angoori been in the village?  
A: Only a few months.
6. How is Angoori described?  
A: She had rustic freshness and girlish coyness.
7. Why did Prabhati go home six years ago?  
A: To cremate his first wife.
8. What did Angoori's father do after the cremation?  
A: Took Prabhati's wet towel and wringed it dry.
9. What did wiping the towel symbolize?  
A: Wiping away Prabhati's tears of grief.
10. What did Angoori's father say through the gesture?  
A: "I give you my daughter to take the place of the one who died. You need not cry now."
11. How did Angoori marry Prabhati?  
A: Her father offered her to Prabhati at his first wife's cremation.
13. Why was Prabhati not called "new"?  
A: Because he had already "drunk at the conjugal well" with his first wife.
14. Who tells the story The Weed?  
A: A first-person narrator observing from a distance.
15. What does the story criticize?  
A: Patriarchal customs where women are married off quickly without choice.
16. How many years ago did Prabhati's first wife die?  
A: About six years ago.
17. How was Angoori's marriage to Prabhati arranged?  
A: After the cremation, Angoori's father took Prabhati's wet towel, wrung it dry, and symbolically said he was wiping away his tears. By drying the "tear-wet towel," he offered his daughter as replacement.
18. Why after her marriage Angoori was postponed to union with her husband for five years?  
A: For two reasons, (i) her tender age, and (ii) her mother's paralytic attack.
19. What ornament did Angoori wear in her toe?  
A: A ring.
20. What ornament did Angoori wear in her arm?  
A: A bracelet.
21. Name the ornament that Angoori wear in her forehead.  
A: It is called aliband.
22. Which ornament of Angoori was broken?  
A: Necklace.
23. What ornaments did Angoori want to buy?  
A: Nose-pin.
24. Why did not Angoori learn reading?

A: Because it was a sin for women to read.

25. Who is Ram Tara?

A: A night-watchman.

26. Who is Angoori and whom is she married to?

A: Angoori is a young, innocent village girl who is the new, second bride of Prabhati, an old servant/watchman working for a neighbor.

27. How did Angoori's marriage to Prabhati come about?

A: After Prabhati's first wife died, Angoori's father offered her to him as a second wife. Their actual union was delayed for five years due to Angoori's young age and her mother's illness.

28. Why did Angoori refuse to learn to read?

A: Angoori believed that reading was a "sin" for village women. This superstition was deeply ingrained in her by her upbringing, reflecting the patriarchal control over women's education in her society.

29. What was Angoori's reaction when the narrator asked her to learn to read?

A: Angoori was shocked and states that reading is a "sin" for women.

**30. Discuss how the writer of *The Weed* establishes Angoori as a victim of social and patriarchal forces. [10 marks]**

**Answer:** Amrita Pritam shows Angoori as a victim. The first page proves her life was decided by others. "The Weed" is a beautiful short story of a rustic girl. Angoori, the protagonist, is a typical Indian village girl, black, young and beautiful. Simple, uneducated and superstitious, she was married as the second wife of an old man. A victim of the patriarchal society and forced to marry by parental choice, Angoori believes it is 'the weed' given by a man that makes a girl fall in love, which is a sin. At the end, she realizes that she herself is a victim of 'the weed', the natural inclination of a girl for the man she loves.

Victim of Class: She is married to "the old servant of my neighbour's neighbour's neighbour." Three degrees removed from the narrator. She is at the bottom of social hierarchy poor, servant's wife, and invisible. Angoori's marriage to Prabhati a much older, unappealing servant is not based on choice or affection. It is arranged by her father, who symbolically seals the deal by wringing dry Prabhati's wet towel after the cremation of his first wife. This action commodifies Angoori, treating her as a replaceable object secondhand" for an old servant to maintain his domestic comfort, highlighting that women's lives are dictated by male decisions. She has no surname, no voice, and no direct introduction. Class has already made her nobody.

Angoori describes the way in which marriage is done in their community. A girl when she is five or six, adores someone's feet. He is the husband. The girl has no particular role in her marriage. Her father takes money and flowers and puts them at his feet and all of a sudden the man is declared to be the husband of the girl. The girls don't even see the man before their marriage. And her concept about love marriage is a clear indication of how the women are oppressed socially and how this oppression is disguised to be natural and biological. Angoori believes that when a man makes a girl eat the wild weed which he gives her in a paan, she will start loving him. Angoori strongly believes that love can come in no other ways.

Angoori's status is maintained by her lack of education, which she has been taught is a "sin for village women". This internalized belief keeps her dependent and intellectually restricted a stark contrast to the freedom of the educated city "bibi" the narrator. Pritam mentions about the purdah Angoori wears to keep herself from men and women, but as time moves ahead, one can see the changes that happen to her clothing. The veil soon started to shrink until it covered only her hair, as was becoming to an orthodox Hindu woman. The story also highlights how the society shrinks the world of women to just her home, husband and probably to the silver jewellery that she owns.

Victim of Father: Her father uses a dead woman's funeral to bargain his daughter. A father's role is to protect, but here he is the first to traffic her. Poverty makes daughters into currency. The story also highlights the myths that surround a woman created by the patriarchal society. The patriarchal society never wishes the women to rule them or question them. When Amrita Pritam asks Angoori whether she wants to learn reading, she says that it is a sin for the village women to read but it is not so for the men and the city women. This statement of hers clearly proves how influential the society is, in structuring and forming the thoughts in uneducated women's mind. Angoori has never learned to question all that she was told to believe

Everyone knows Prabhati didn't cry, but everyone acts like drying his towel is noble. Angoori is sacrificed to maintain this social lie. The titular "weed" is used as a metaphor for patriarchal control over female desire. By believing that love for a man is caused by a magical, sin-inducing weed rather than natural affection, Angoori is forced to view her own feelings as unnatural or sinful. When she develops feelings for Ram Tara, she experiences guilt and shame rather than joy, turning her into a victim of her own conditioned fear.

Conclusion: Amrita Pritam doesn't wait for the rape to make Angoori a victim. The first page shows she was born a victim – of class, of gender, of father, of marriage, and of social lies. Her instinctive affection for the younger Ram Tara, which leads to her tearful breakdown. The Weed ultimately shows that while Angoori is a victim, her subtle, emerging desire to learn to write her name represents a slow, agonizing awakening against these deeply ingrained patriarchal constraints. Through the character of Angoori the author has portrayed the position of a common woman in the Indian society and also the role played by the society in attributing the femininity to her. Amrita Pritam has exposed the age old customs, traditions, superstitious beliefs associated with the lives of people in rural India.