

QUESTIONS ABOUT
HOMELESS BIRD
Part 1

This is about a thirteen year old Indian girl (Koly) whose parents find her a husband because they can't afford to feed her. The story follows Koly's life until she reaches adulthood. Words unfamiliar to Americans are found in a glossary at the end.

The questions below start at the beginning and end after the first section of Chapter Seven.

Chapter One

1. What is a dowry? Are dowries a custom in your country?
2. How does Koly's father earn a living? How does her mother?
3. Koly's parents can't afford school for her. What is that money needed for?
4. What does Koly's mother make for the wedding? What does Koly make?
5. The bridegroom's family demands money for the dowry. What do her parents do?
6. What valuable item from her own dowry does her mother contribute?
7. List the things Koly takes with her when she leaves for her wedding.
8. What signs are there that this wedding match might be a mistake? Why does the family go through with it anyway?
9. Describe how Koly is prepared for the wedding.
10. Read the words quoted from the wedding ceremony. Discuss them.
11. Describe the bridegroom.
12. What does Koly do with her earrings?
13. Where does Koly sleep on her wedding night?

Chapter Two

14. Koly is forbidden to visit her new husband Hari , but she does anyway. Describe this visit. How does Sass (her mother-in-law) react when she discovers them together?
15. What does Koly's sister-in-law Chandra tell her the family wants from the marriage?
16. Hari is examined by a physician. What is his sickness? How long will he live?

Chapter Three

17. What is the purpose of the visit to Varanasi? Why is Koly allowed to go?
18. Describe what Koly sees at the Ganges River. What rite does the family perform with Hari? Does Hari like the water?
19. What happens to Hari the night after the Ganges visit?
20. Hari is cremated and his ashes scattered on the Ganges. Read the funeral chant included near the end of Chapter Three. Discuss it.

Chapter Four

21. What is Koly told to wear to the government office? What does Sass say the forms they obtain are for? Is she telling the truth?
22. What impact do Sass's scoldings have on Koly?
23. Why does Sassur (her father-in-law) teach her to read?
24. Where does she practice reading? Why there?
25. Does Sass think women need to read? Explain.

Chapter Five

26. Koly wonders whether Chandra's bridegroom will be good to her. What does Chandra say? Do you believe her answer is right?
27. What is Sass keeping for herself? What does Koly try to do? What happens?
28. Why does Sass demand Koly's earrings? What is Sass's reaction when she refuses?
29. Koly embroiders a quilt for Chandra's wedding. What events does she sew into it?
30. Describe Chandra's new husband.

Chapter Six

31. When Sass refuses to be her friend, whom does Koly befriend?
32. What does the government official tell Koly she must do to get her widow's pension?
33. What happens to Sassur the day he comes home early?

Chapter Seven

34. Describe Sassur's funeral.
35. Describe Chandra after a year of marriage.
36. What does Koly trade for Sassur's book of poems?