

APPENDIX I
SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL
FASTING, FEASTING

Fasting, Feasting is Anita Desai's novel of intricate family relations plays out in two countries, India and the United States. The core characters comprise a family living in a small town in India, where provincial customs and attitudes dictate the future of all children: girls are to be married off and boys are to become as educated as possible. The story contrasts the life of the main character, Uma, the family's older daughter, with Arun, the boy and baby of the family. Uma spends her life in subservience to her older demanding parents, while massive effort and energy is expended to insure Arun's education and placement in a university in Massachusetts.

Despite Uma's thirst for knowledge, she is removed from the convent school she adores in order to care for her new baby brother, Arun, as well as her parents. It is a role she maintains throughout her life. Uma is the picture of a bumbling incompetent who fails at almost everything she attempts, whether it is cooking, studying, or becoming a wife. Two attempts to arrange marriages for Uma end disastrously. She lives with this shame, even though she had nothing to do with the arrangements or the resulting deceptions.

In contrast, Uma's younger sister, Aruna, is beautiful, adept, and poised. Traditionally, the younger sister in a family cannot be married until any older sister has married and left the family home. However the family realizes that Uma's fate is to remain single because she has ever experienced the failed marriage. Until the end of life, the novel writes that she does not marry again and still in home obeying and pleasing what her parents need.

References: <http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-fasting-feasting/#gsc.tab=0>

APPENDIX II

ANITA DESAI'S BIOGRAPHY

Anita Desai, original name **Anita Mazumdar**, was born June 24, 1937 in Mussoorie, India. She is an English-language Indian novelist and author of children's books who excelled in evoking character and mood through visual images ranging from the meteorologic to the botanical. Born to a German mother and Bengali father, Desai grew up speaking German, Hindi, and English. She received a B.A. in English from the University of Delhi in 1957. The suppression and oppression of Indian women were the subjects of her first novel, *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), and a later novel, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975). *Fire on the Mountain* (1977) was criticized as relying too heavily on imagery at the expense of plot and characterization, but it was praised for its poetic symbolism and use of sounds. *Clear Light of Day* (1980), considered the author's most successful work, is praised for its highly evocative portrait of two sisters caught in the lassitude of Indian life. Its characters are revealed not only through imagery but through gesture, dialogue, and reflection. As do most of her works, the novel reflects Desai's essentially tragic view of life. *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988) explores German and Jewish identity in the context of a chaotic contemporary India.

Other novels by Desai include *In Custody* (1984; film 1994) and *Journey to Ithaca* (1995). *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) takes as its subject the connections and gaps between Indian and American culture, while *The Zigzag Way* (2004) tells the story of an American academic who travels to Mexico to trace his Cornish ancestry. Desai also wrote short fiction—collections include *Games at Twilight, and Other Stories* (1978) and *Diamond Dust, and Other Stories* (2000)—and several children's books, including *The Village by the Sea* (1982). *The Artist of Disappearance* (2011) collected three novellas that examined the collateral abandonment and dislocation wrought by India's furious rush toward modernity. Her daughter Kiran Desai won the Booker Prize for the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006).

References: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Anita-Desai>