

Text A: Excerpt from the article***Sex selection: Getting the baby you want***

By Amanda Mitchison

[...] The Gunns live in a nice suburban street in the south of England with their three small boys, but there is not a toy or half-chewed rusk to be seen. We sit around a glass coffee table. The room is clean and modern, the furnishings are that chicken soup colour favoured by architects – and expensive private clinics. Which is just where they are
5 heading. The Gunns want a baby girl. They are off next week to California to undergo in vitro fertilisation using a screening process called preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD).

The couple seem slightly bemused. Not so much because they are travelling halfway round the world for a fantastically expensive and invasive treatment. But because they
10 can't quite understand how they ended up having three boys in the first place. "Robert had always wanted a girl," Susan says. "We learned that our first child was a boy, and that was fantastic, and we kind of expected the next one to be a girl." Robert adds: "We were on the 'girl diet' for months. No red wine, no red meat, no coffee, and you had to have white rice and fish and chicken. It was quite bizarre. My friend was on it, too. He had a
15 girl.

"Robert and Susan had a second boy. "But in my family, and in Robert's, there are two boys and then two girls," Susan says. "I looked at my Christmas card list. Very weirdly, most of our friends have got two boys, and the ones who did go on to have a third child had a girl. Irrationally, I began to think to myself, 'Oh, this is how it is going to be... you
20 have two boys and then you get a girl.'

"But the Gunns got a third boy.

They are, of course, thrilled. But, Susan says, "I got sick of walking down the high street past BabyGap and seeing these delightful little girl outfits in the window and just getting this pang. This is an area of our lives that we can't influence unless we pay for it. Hmm,
25 that doesn't sound very nice but..." Robert, head down, shoulders hunched, adds: "We often get what we want in our lives. But we work for it.

"And they did work for it. They trawled the internet and found the Fertility Institutes clinic in Los Angeles, run by Doctor Jeffrey Steinberg. They spoke to him on the phone. They booked in. Susan had the blood tests and has started the course of drugs, and soon they'll
30 be off to LA. They'll take the boys with them, and visit Disneyland between the egg harvesting and implantation. Steinberg's clinic is a slick operation. It provides payment plans, a travel agent, a list of restaurants and hotels, and a babysitting service. [...]

(465 words)

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Annotations

Lines

² rusk German: Zwieback

^{5/6} in vitro outside a living organism, in an artificial environment

⁶ screening testing/examining

⁶ preimplantation genetic diagnosis genetic profiling of embryos before implantation

⁸ bemused confused

⁹ invasive involving cutting into the body

²⁷ to trawl to search 30/31 egg harvesting removal of eggs

³¹ slick clever and efficient (sometimes disapproving)