

## **2.The Tiger King By Kalki**

The story 'The Tiger King' is a satire on the conceit of those in power. The writer tries to tell us how kings, not interested in the welfare of the people, circumvented all laws to suit their own selfish interests.

The story is about the Maharaja of Pratibandhpuram about whom the chief astrologer had predicted that the cause of his death would be a tiger. In order to prove the prophecies of the astrologer wrong, the Maharaja killed ninety nine tigers, but the hundredth tiger escaped his bullet. Later, one of the hunters killed it by shooting at it from a close range. The King thought that the hundredth tiger had been killed by him. However, an inanimate wooden tiger became the hundredth tiger that ultimately caused his death. The prophecy of the astrologer proved to be true, despite the king's best efforts to prove it wrong.

## **Points to Remember**

Maharaja Pratibandhpuram born as an extra-ordinary child

Prediction about his death due to a tiger the child was born under bull star bull and tiger are the enemies.

Ten day old child surprised all by his intelligent questions.

The child was brought up like an English child.

The Prince grew up and became a great king.

The king decided to kill a tiger killed the first tiger successfully.

But the chief astrologer warned him that he will be killed by the hundredth tiger.

King became the sole hunter, banned hunting in his estate.

He started killing tigers and thus killed seventy tigers.

At times the bullet missed, king fought the beast with his bare hands and won.

He married a princess whose kingdom boasted of tigers.

He killed ninety nine tigers.

But he was unable to find one more tiger.

The king had one thought during the day and the same dream at night.

The Dewan brought an old and feeble tiger from the zoo.

The tiger king aimed at it but it fainted. The king thought that he had killed the hundred tigers.

After the king went away the tiger opened its eyes in bafflement.

One of the hunters killed it.

The tiger was honoured and taken in a procession.

The king purchased a wooden tiger for his son to give him some special gift on his birthday.

Its sliver pierced the hand of the king.

Infection flared and developed into suppurating sore.

Three surgeons from Madras operated on the tiger king.

Announced 'The operation was successful. The Maharaja is dead.

### Extract Based Questions:

1. “The child will grow up to become the warrior of warriors, Hero of heroes. Champions of champions. But.....”

- a. Who spoke these lines?
- b. Why did the child get these confident predictions?
- c. Which literary device is functional in these lines?
- d. ‘But.....’ What was uttered after the pause and to what effect?

2. “The Maharaja vowed he would attend to all other matters.....killing the hundredth tiger”

- a. ‘The Maharaja belongs to which state?
- b. What does the term ‘other matters’ refer to.
- c. What made the maharaja take a ‘vow’
- d. What do you infer by ‘hundredth tiger’

3. “Shuddering at the sight of the gun,”Your majesty I am not a tiger!

- a. Who shuddered at the gun sight?
- b. Why was the clarification given ‘I am not a tiger’?
- c. What did ‘your majesty ‘intend here?
- d. Why was the speaker summoned by the majesty?

4. “Very good. Let this be your offering to the crown prince on his birthday..”

- a. Who spoke these line?
- b. Why was the offering to be made ?
- c. What will be given as the offerings to the crown prince ?
- d. Which birthday of royal prince had it been?

5. “The maharaja and the dewan held deliberations over the issue. As a result, a telegram ..... British company”

- a. Which issue is referred to in these lines ?
- b. Why were the deliberations held ?
- c. How did the issue affect Maharaja?
- d. What was the result of the deliberation?

6. “At midnight when the town slept in peace.....dragged the tiger to the car”

- a. Which town is referred to here?
- b. Why was the task completed midnight?
- c. Where was the tiger to be taken?
- d. Where was the tiger brought from?

7. "But he had to be extremely careful.....the chief astrologer said".

- a. Who does 'he' refers to in these lines?
- b. What does 'that last tiger ' mean?
- c. What was actually said by the chief astrologer?
- d. Why was it required to be careful?

8. "The Maharaja furry and obstinacy.....officers lost their jobs."

- a. Why was Maharaja in a state of anger?
- b. Who had lost their jobs?
- c. What was the outcome of maharaja's fury and obstinacy?
- d. Why had many officers lost their jobs?

9. "But the maharaja would not agree.....British officers turned up for tiger hunt.?"

- a. Which state did the maharaja belong to?
- b. Which proposal was declined?
- c. Why did Maharaja decline the proposal?
- d. What do these lines reflect about the maharaja's character?

10. And then, an unforeseen hurdle brought.....became extinct in the forest of Pratibandhapuram."

- a. Whose mission is referred to in these lines?
- b. What caused the mission come to a standstill?
- c. Why did the tiger population become extinct?
- d. What is the unforeseen hurdle?

### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

What was the miracle that took place in the royal palace?

Ans. When the Maharaja was a 10 day old infant, he spoke and asked intelligent questions about his death. After knowing that he would be killed by a tiger he uttered saying, Let tigers beware."

How was the Tiger King brought up?

Ans. As a child the Tiger King was brought up by an English nanny and tutored in English by an Englishman. He was given the milk of an English cow. He watched only English movies.

What did the State astrologer say he would do 'if the hundredth tiger were also killed'?

Ans. The State astrologer was so sure of his prediction that he announced that he would cut off his ceremonial tuft, crop his hair short and become an insurance agent in case the king was able to kill the 100th tiger too. He was sure that the Maharaja's death would be caused by the 100th tiger.

What did the high-ranking British officer wish to do? Was his wish fulfilled?

Ans. The high-ranking British Officer wanted to kill a tiger. He was denied the permission for hunting. He sent a word to the king that he would be happy if he was allowed to get photographed with the carcass of a tiger killed by the King. His wish remained unfulfilled.

How did the Maharaja get more tigers to kill, when he had killed all the tigers in his kingdom?

Ans. Left with no other alternative, the king ticked thought of getting married into a royal family. His only criteria for selecting a bride was- that his-in-laws' estate should have sufficient number of tigers. Finally, he found his desired match. He pursued his one point program of meeting the tally of hundred tigers.

How and why was the hundredth tiger honoured?

Ans. King had ordered that the hundredth tiger should be brought in the city in a procession and a tomb should be built over its mortal remains. It was to commemorate the killing of the hundredth tiger, his sole motive of life. After killing the hundredth tiger the king was very much relieved and had a sense of achievement.

### **SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

How did the 'duraiani' behave on receiving the gifts?

Why did the Maharaja's tiger killing mission come to a sudden halt?

Why did Maharaja order the Dewan to double the tax?

What did the Maharaja buy as a birthday gift for his son?

How did the king's hand become seriously infected?

How did the Tiger King acquire his name?

What predictions did the astrologers make at the birth of the Tiger King?

What steps were initiated by the Maharaja in order to ban tiger killing in his state?

How was Maharaja able to save his kingdom?

Why did the Maharaja decide to marry?

Why did the Dewan take the tiger to the forest? How?

How did the tiger taken by the Dewan meet its end?

Why does Kalki compare the new born infants claim with the bulletin issued by the war office?

How did the tiger king justify his tiger hunt?

How did the tiger king celebrate his victory over the killing of the hundredth tiger?

### **LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

How did the Tiger King meet his end? What is ironical about his death? How did the prediction of the chief astrologer come true, though he had killed the hundred tigers?

Ans. It was the 3rd birthday of the Maharaja's son and he wanted to buy a present from the toy shop. He bought a wooden tiger which was poorly carved by an unskilled carpenter. It had a rough surface with tiny slivers of wood standing up like quills all over it, his arm got infected. In four days, it developed into a suppurating sore and spread all over the arm. The King died while being operated upon. The King's death is ironical but not surprising. Having

'killed' the 100th tiger, the - king was thrilled for he had fulfilled his vow and disproved the the prediction of the royal astrologer. He was at ease for he thought he would not die of a tiger's attack. No wonder, he ordered the 'dead' tiger to be taken in a procession through the town and get a tomb erected over it. All this while he did not know that the 100th victim was not killed by him but by other hunters. That is indeed quite ironical. Death was lurking around him and the king was unaware of it. Again, it is ironical that a king who had killed 100 tigers and was bold and fearless died of a mere sliver on the body of a wooden tiger. Thus, ironically death does come to him from a tiger.

How flattery is eating into roots of our society and polity ? Explain taking reference from 'The Tiger King ?

Ans. Flattery is evident in almost all places. It basically satisfies the ego of person who is being treated in lofty terms. With words and gestures a false world is created around so as to befool that fellow. Actually the person frames unrealistic ideas about himself and falls prey to the sweetened pills. Wrong deeds are committed so as to meet the self interest. The genuine people are ignored at the cost of fake ones. It checks the healthy growth of relationships and hence the development of society. The real cause and issues are left behind and pretensions prevail. This whole idea unfolds in The Tiger King in humorous manner - to appease the king, the courtiers did not spare a chance to fulfill his whims and fancies. Such sort of administration leads to the ultimate fall of a state. The King met his end on the operation table at the hands of his saviors i.e. the doctors.

### **LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

Write down the character sketch of 'The Tiger King'.

What efforts did the maharaja make to save his life from the tigers?

How did the Dewan help the Tiger King in killing hundredth tiger?

The story, "The Tiger King" is a satire on the conceit of those in power." Do you agree with this statement ? Explain with reference to the lesson that you have read.

Giving a bribe is an evil practice. The Tiger King bribed the British officer to save his kingdom. Why is it wrong to take or give a bribe?

Now a day you must have noticed animals being made to work for long hours mercilessly. They carry heavy sacks, ferry passengers etc. They are beaten mercilessly too. Taking references from the above facts, write a paragraph on "Cruelty Towards Animals" and suggest ways to prevent it.

Many animals are on the verge of extinction due to rampant killing and poaching by the greedy people. Plan an Awareness Campaign for the students of your school to save animals designing poster for it.

In order to save animals like tigers, lion etc. we keep them in the zoo. Do you think the animals are safe in the zoos ? Why or Why not.

Why did the general overlook the matter of enemy soldier?