



QUESTION BANK – THE TIGER KING
Sub: ENGLISH - Class: XII

Introduction

The story 'The Tiger King' is a satire on the pride and stubbornness of those in power. The writer takes us to the days of autocratic and eccentric kings. These kings lived under the thumb rule of British, hence they fear them. Most of the time the rulers were not interested in serving the people and working for the welfare of the public; instead they spent their time in foolish pursuits. They flouted all laws and bent them to suit their selfish interests. The Maharaja of Pratibandapuram tried to belie what was written in his fate. The chief astrologer had predicted that the cause of his death would be a tiger. The King tried his best to belie the prediction. His campaign of tiger-hunting was very successful. All his strategies and wise plans worked till he killed 99 tigers. But the hundredth tiger eluded him till his death. The irony of fate brings quite an unexpected end of the Maharaja. The hero who killed ninety-nine tigers couldn't kill the only one that was left. The last tiger he thought to be dead survived. The King's bullet had missed its mark. Ironically, the hundredth tiger which caused his death was not a ferocious beast of blood and flesh. It was a wooden tiger. One of the slivers of wood pierced his right hand and caused infection and a suppurating sore. It ultimately led to his death.

Theme

Animals and birds are as much part of the nature as human beings. The destruction or haphazard killing of one species may not only lead to its extinction, but it will adversely affect the ecological balance. Those animals which serve as food for the wild animals, will increase in large number, if the beast of prey are wiped out. Each species, howsoever fierce, deadly, ferocious or poisonous has its role in maintaining ecological balance in nature.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS:

1. **What extraordinary event happened when the Tiger King was merely ten days old?** When the tiger king was only ten days old the astrologers made an incoherent prediction that the child would grow up and one day meet his death. While others heard them sadly, the baby prince asked a very wise question as to what was new in such a prediction as it is a universal truth that everyone

should die. He further asked him to reveal the manner of his death.

2. What were the two hurdles that the maharaja had to face during his tiger hunt? The two hurdles that the maharaja faced during his tiger hunt for ten years were the extinction of tiger population in his own country and the arrival of the British officer who wished to kill tigers.

3. What was the rationale behind the astrologer's prediction that the tiger king would be killed by a tiger?

According to the astrologers, the Tiger King was born at the hour of the bull-star. Anyone who is born at the time of the bull is killed by tiger because tiger and bull are enemies.

4. Why did the Tiger King decide to marry?

The Tiger King went on a tiger hunt to kill the hundredth tiger to remove his fear of death but the tiger population in his country went dry. To hunt further tigers he married a princess whose father's forest had tigers in it.

5. Why did the Tiger King exempt the hillside villagers from their taxes for three years?

During his tiger hunt, the Tiger King was left with just one tiger to be killed. After his desperate search for a single tiger there came news that there was a tiger in a village in his country. Pleased to hear that, the king announced exemption of tax for that villagers.

6. Why did the Devan decide to bring a tiger from the People's Park?

The hundredth tiger was not very easy to hunt down. The king became furious and mad and dismissed many of the officers. Being a wise man, the Devan knew the country would pass into the hands of Indian National Congress and that he too would lose his position, he decided to bring an old tiger from the People's Park in Madras.

7. "At another time he was in danger of losing his throne". How?

While the Maharaja went on killing tigers one after another and thus reaching his tally of the hundredth tiger, an English officer landed in Pratibandapuram with an intention to hunt tiger. But the maharaja was not happy with this and denied permission to the officer which roused the latter's ill will. The maharaja was firm on his decision and stood at risk of losing his crown by not yielding to an English officer.

8. What was the compromise the British officer was ready to make with the king? Why did the king refuse this?

The British officer was ready for a compromise when he heard that the maharaja was unwilling to let him hunt in his forest. The officer sent his messenger to the king and informed him that he could take the photograph after the tiger was killed by the king. Even though this appeared to be the best solution, the king refused the suggestion fearing that soon other officers also would come to his forest with similar requests.

9. How does the maharaja appear to be a satirical character?

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The maharaja of Pratibandapuram deserves to be called a maharaja in every sense. He was strong enough to kill the wild tigers with his bare hands- not one, but 99 tigers. He was bold enough to stand against a British officer by refusing him permission to hunt in his forest. He was wise enough to please the officer by pleasing his wife with expensive gifts. He was even cunning enough to arrange his marriage with a princess whose father's forest had the maximum number of tigers. Yet he appears to be the opposite of what he had done and what he was because this powerful king was finally killed by the sliver of a worthless wooden tiger! His death brought him great shame. His boldness, cunningness, strength and bravery failed miserably at the hands of an insignificant wooden tiger. He can also be laughed at for blindly believing the astrologers, for the dereliction of duty as a king, for imposing tax on the villagers out of rage and for dismissing his officers for no official reason.

10. What threw the Dewan of the Tiger King to a state of imbecility while standing in front of the king's hunting gun?

The Diwan, king's chief minister, is the comedian in the story. He was a man of tactics and availed the benefits of his brain only under emergency such as the loss of his office. He was well aware of the king's fury. While standing in front of the king's brandished gun, the old man imagined a bullet piercing his heart and out of this fear he was thrown into a state of imbecility.

11. What is the irony at the end of the story?

The powerful tiger king, who had killed 99 tigers, was finally killed by the sliver of a worthless wooden tiger! His death brought him great shame. His boldness, cunningness, strength and bravery failed miserably at the hands of an insignificant wooden tiger. He can also be laughed at for blindly believing the astrologers, for the dereliction of duty as a king, for imposing tax on the villagers out of rage and for dismissing his officers for no official reason.

12. What gave the astrologers the greatest surprise of their life while they were studying the horoscope of the ten-day old prince? (Foreign 2014)

Answer. When the astrologers were reading the horoscope of the little prince, they were taken by surprise when the ten-day old infant asked about the manner of his death. When the chief astrologer told him that a tiger would be the cause of his death, the baby retorted with arrogance, "Let the tigers beware!"

13. How did the Maharaja please a high ranking officer? (Compartment 2014)

Answer. A high ranking British officer visited the state of Pratibandapuram and sought permission for tiger hunting from the Maharaja. The Maharaja declined his request, but as he did not want to upset the officer, he sent fifty diamond rings to the officer's wife which cost the king three lakh rupees.

14. Why did the Maharaja ban tiger hunting in the state? (Delhi 2014)

Answer. As the prince was crowned the king, the astrologer's prediction regarding his (the king's) death by a tiger reached his ears. This prompted the Maharaja to kill a tiger but the astrologer informed him that he had to successfully kill hundred tigers to escape the prophecy. Thus, in order to reach that mark, the Maharaja banned tiger hunting in the state except for himself.

15. Why did the Maharaja double the land tax? (All India 2014)

Answer. The Maharaja had successfully killed ninety-nine tigers but struggled hard to find the hundredth tiger. Once, there came a news of a tiger being spotted at a hillside village but it turned out to be untrue. This infuriated the Maharaja, who ordered the dewan to double the landtax in order to punish the villagers for the false news.

16. How did the Tiger King become the victim of the hundredth tiger? (Foreign 2014) or

How did the Tiger King meet his end? What is ironical about his fate? (All India 2009)

Answer. The Tiger King met his end through the wooden tiger, which he had bought as a gift for his son on his third birthday. While he was playing with his son, a splinter of the poorly made toy tiger pricked the king's hand. The infection turned into a sore, which spread all over his arm. In spite of the best surgeons, the king's life could not be saved.

The irony is in the fact that in spite of killing nearly all the tigers in the area, he had to face his death by a toy tiger.

17. Why was the Maharaja so anxious to kill the hundredth tiger? (AR India 2012)

Answer. When the Maharaja was barely ten days old, the chief astrologer had predicted that a tiger would be the cause of his death. When the Maharaja was twenty, he killed one tiger. When he asked his astrologer, the astrologer said that he would kill ninety-nine tigers, but he should be fearful of the hundredth tiger. That was the reason why the Maharaja was so anxious to kill the hundredth tiger.

18. How did the Dewan manage to arrange the hundredth tiger for the Maharaja? (Foreign 2011)

Answer. The Dewan had brought a tiger from the People's Park in Madras and kept it hidden in his house. When the Maharaja threatened him with dire consequences, he understood that the only way to save himself was to 'plant' a tiger for the kill. So, he and his aged wife dragged the tiger to the forest where the king was hunting. The king took aim and the beast soon collapsed.

19. When did the Tiger King stand in danger of losing his kingdom? (Delhi 2010) Answer.

Once, a high-ranking British officer visited Pratibandapuram. He was very fond of hunting tigers

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and being photographed with them. However, the Maharaja refused to give him permission to hunt tigers because he feared that other British officers too would turn up with the same request. It was because of his refusal that the Maharaja stood in danger of losing his kingdom.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS (5 MARKS, 120-150 WORDS)

1. How did the Tiger King stand in danger of losing his kingdom? How was he able to avoid the danger? (Delhi 2012)

Answer. Once a high-ranking British officer visited Pratibandapuram. As he was fond of hunting tigers, he expressed his wish of tiger hunting to the king but the king refused permission. Then the British officer requested that he only wanted to be photographed holding gun and standing over the dead body of the tiger; the Maharaja could kill the tiger. However, the Maharaja denied him this permission also, fearing that it would lead to further similar requests from other officers. As the Maharaja did not want to upset the British officer and risk losing his kingdom, he sent a fifty diamond rings to the wife of the officer. The lady kept all the rings and sent him a note of thanks. In this way, the king managed to save his kingdom.

2. The astrologer's prediction about the death of the Tiger King came to be true. Do you agree with this statement? (All India 2008)

Answer. I agree with the statement that the astrologer's prediction about the death of the Tiger King came to be true.

The astrologer had predicted that Tiger King would be killed by a tiger and he should be wary of the hundredth tiger.

This statement of the astrologer forced the king to go on a killing spree. The hundredth tiger was not killed by the king himself but by the hunters, who found out that the old tiger had not died by the bullet of the king but only fainted by the bullet whizzing past him. .

The hundredth tiger was a wooden toy tiger which the king had presented to his three-year old son. It killed the king merely by a sliver of wood protruding from it that pierced his right hand. The wound developed pus and it soon spread all over the arm. The best surgeons failed to save the king and thus, the astrologer's prediction about the death of the Tiger King proved to be correct.

Q3. How did the Tiger King meet his end? What is ironical about his death?

Ans. It had been predicted by astrologers that the hundredth tiger would prove to be fatal for the Tiger King. He then set out to hunt all the tigers. He vowed he would attend to all other matters only after he had realized his aim. He managed to kill ninety-nine but the Maharaja's bullet missed the hundredth tiger who had fainted from the shock of the bullet. The ignorant king was jubilant. It is ironical that the brave king did not know that the hundredth tiger had fainted and had been killed by

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a hunter . The wooden toy tiger the king got as a birthday present for his son was the cause of his death. It is ironic that the king who killed many tigers with his bare hands died of a 'sliver' from the body of the toy tiger. The sliver caused infection and developed a suppurating sore. The Tiger King died while being operated upon. In this way destiny took its final revenge upon the Tiger King and death ironically came to him from a tiger.

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