

“The Tiger King” by Kalki

TEXTUAL QUESTION ANSWERS

(From *Vistas* Supplementary Reader)

Reading with Insight

1. The story is a satire on the conceit of those in power. How does the author employ the literary device of dramatic irony in the story?

Answer: The author uses **dramatic irony** by showing the reader what the Tiger King does not know: that he cannot escape death despite his efforts. The king kills 99 tigers to defy a prophecy about his death by a tiger, but ironically, he is killed by a wooden toy tiger—the 100th tiger—proving the prophecy right. The reader is aware of the king’s foolishness, but the king remains ignorant until the end, which heightens the satire.

2. What is the author’s indirect comment on subjecting innocent animals to the willfulness of human beings?

Answer: The author indirectly criticizes the senseless killing of animals for human vanity and ego. The Tiger King's obsession with killing tigers for his safety and glory reflects how animals become victims of human arrogance and cruelty.

3. How would you describe the behavior of the Maharaja’s minions towards him? Do you find them truly sincere toward him or are they driven by fear when they obey him? Do we find a similarity in today’s political order?

Answer: The Maharaja’s courtiers and officials are not sincere; they obey him out of fear. They flatter him, manipulate situations, and even risk being punished just to remain in his favor. This reflects a pattern seen even today, where those in power are often surrounded by sycophants who prioritize personal gain over truth.

4. Can you relate to the Maharaja’s desire to prove the astrologer wrong? Do you think we sometimes go too far in proving others

wrong?

Answer: Yes, the desire to prove someone wrong can lead to extreme behavior. The Maharaja's obsessive tiger hunting stemmed from his ego and desire to defy fate. Similarly, people today often go to unnecessary lengths to prove others wrong, driven by pride or stubbornness, sometimes causing harm to themselves or others.

5. What is the author's message in the story? Do you agree with it?

Answer: The author's message is that no one can defy fate and that pride and power often blind individuals to reality. The story also critiques superstitions, the misuse of power, and senseless violence against nature. Yes, this message remains relevant as many still misuse authority and believe they can control destiny.



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS (SHORT & LONG ANSWERS)

◆ Short Answer Questions (30–50 words)

1. Who is the Tiger King and why is he called so?

Answer: The Tiger King is the Maharaja of Pratibandapuram. He earned this title after killing 99 tigers in an attempt to defy a prophecy that he would be killed by a tiger.

2. What prophecy was made about the Tiger King?

Answer: At his birth, astrologers predicted that the prince would grow up to be a warrior but his death would come from a tiger.

3. How did the king react to the prophecy?

Answer: The king mocked the prophecy and vowed to kill 100 tigers to prove the astrologers wrong. He became obsessed with tiger hunting.

4. Why did the Maharaja ban tiger hunting in his state?

Answer: To ensure that only he could kill tigers and complete his

target of 100, the Maharaja banned others from hunting tigers in his kingdom.

5. Why did the Maharaja marry a princess from a different state?

Answer: He married a princess from a kingdom with a large tiger population so that he could continue hunting and reach his target of 100 tigers.

6. Why did the Dewan arrange an old tiger from the People's Park?

Answer: The Maharaja couldn't find the 100th tiger, and in desperation, the Dewan arranged an old tiger from a zoo to save his own job and life.

7. How did the hundredth tiger ironically bring about the Maharaja's death?

Answer: The hundredth tiger was not killed by the Maharaja—it fainted. Later, a wooden toy tiger caused a fatal infection from a splinter, fulfilling the prophecy ironically.

8. What is the significance of the wooden tiger in the story?

Answer: The wooden tiger, symbolizing fate, ultimately causes the Maharaja's death, proving that no one can escape destiny.

9. What role did flattery and fear play in the Maharaja's court?

Answer: Officials in the Maharaja's court obeyed him out of fear, not respect. They flattered him and manipulated situations to avoid punishment.

10. What lesson does the story teach about power and ego?

Answer: The story shows that power and ego can blind people, leading them to irrational actions. True wisdom lies in humility and acceptance of fate.

◆ **Long Answer Questions (120–150 words)**

11. Describe the Maharaja's journey from birth to death in connection with the prophecy.

Answer: Born to royal parents, the prince was prophesied to die from a tiger. As he grew up, he mocked the astrologers but soon took the prophecy seriously. He killed 99 tigers across kingdoms, banning others from hunting. He married into a tiger-rich state to find more tigers. Ironically, the 100th tiger survived, though thought dead. Later, a toy tiger gave him a fatal infection, fulfilling the prophecy. His life was a vain effort to fight fate.

12. What satire does the author present in "The Tiger King"?

Answer: Kalki uses satire to mock superstitions, blind ego, misuse of power, and the hypocrisy of those in authority. The Maharaja's obsession with defeating fate and earning the title of "Tiger King" turns into a joke when he is killed by a mere toy. The story ridicules how rulers waste resources and ignore logic for personal pride.

13. What role does fate play in the story?

Answer: Fate is central to the plot. Despite the Maharaja's efforts to outsmart it—by killing 99 tigers, taking political decisions based on tiger availability, and manipulating situations—he still dies due to the prophecy. It shows that no matter how powerful one is, fate is inescapable.

14. How does Kalki use irony in the story?

Answer: Kalki's use of irony is brilliant. The Tiger King escapes real tigers only to be killed by a harmless wooden toy. The 100th tiger, supposed to fulfill the prophecy, isn't even the cause of death—yet fate finds its own way. The king's efforts to avoid death lead him right to it.

15. How does the story reflect the absurdity of unchecked power?

Answer: The Maharaja uses his power to control laws, lives, and even nature. He kills innocent animals to prove a point. His ministers and subjects live in fear, not respect. The result is a critique of how

power, when unchecked by reason or morality, becomes ridiculous and self-destructive.

16. How does the story reflect the misuse of authority?

Answer: The Maharaja misuses authority by banning tiger hunting for others, using state resources to find tigers, and even threatening officials. His rule revolves around personal obsession, not public welfare, showing how authority can be twisted by personal motives.

17. Discuss the character traits of the Tiger King.

Answer: The Tiger King is arrogant, stubborn, superstitious, and egotistical. He misuses power and is obsessed with proving a prophecy wrong. However, he is also humorous in his actions, making him both a satirical and tragic figure.

18. How does the story criticize blind faith in astrology?

Answer: The story begins with the king mocking astrologers but ends with the prophecy fulfilled. Though he tries everything to defy fate, the superstition proves stronger. The story subtly mocks both blind belief and the efforts to disprove such beliefs in foolish ways.

19. What message does “The Tiger King” convey?

Answer: The story conveys that arrogance, obsession with power, and trying to control destiny lead to downfall. It emphasizes the importance of humility, rational thinking, and the futility of challenging fate.

20. Explain how the end of the story completes the satire.

Answer: The end is a classic example of poetic justice. The Maharaja, who believes he has conquered death, dies due to a wooden toy. His ignorance and misplaced pride come full circle, completing the satirical arc with both humor and irony.
