

EN2104-08_Gender Roles_part I

1. What do you consider to be typically **male** as well as **female characteristics**?

Jot down at least 5 ideas each, perhaps not only stereotypes.

(Remember: *Exceptions confirm the rule.*)

2. If you were reincarnated as an animal, what animal would you like to be and why?

Take a few notes.

3. What associations (= *connotation*) does seeing or thinking of a tiger evoke in you?

Write down a few ideas.

4. Now read, and hopefully enjoy the following fable. Then do the tasks below.

The Tigress and Her Mate by James Thurber

- Proudfoot, a tiger, became tired of his mate, Sabra, a few weeks after they had set up housekeeping, and he fell to leaving home earlier and earlier in the morning, and returning later and later at night. He no longer called her 'Sugar Paw', or anything else, but merely clapped his paws when he wanted anything, or, if she was upstairs, whistled. The last long
- 5 speech he ever made to her at breakfast was 'What the hell's matter with you? I bring you rice and peas and coconut oil, don't I? Love is something you put away in the attic with your wedding dress. Forget it.' And he finished his coffee, put down the *Jungle News*, and started for the door. 'Where are you going?' Sabra asked.
 - 10 'Out,' he said. And after that, every time she asked him where he was going, he said, 'Out,' or 'Away,' or 'Hush.'
- When Sabra became aware of the coming of what would have been, had she belonged to the chosen species, a blessed event, and told Proudfoot about it, he snarled, 'Growp.' He had now learned to talk to his mate in code, and 'growp' meant 'I hope the cubs grow up to be xylophone players or major-generals.' Then he went away, as all male tigers do at such a
- 15 moment, for he did not want to be bothered by his young until the males were old enough to box with and the females old enough to insult. While waiting for the unblessed event to take place, he spent his time fighting water buffaloes and riding around with plainclothes tigers in a prowler car.
- When he finally came home, he said to his mate, 'Eeps,' meaning 'I'm going to hit the sack, and if the kids keep me awake by yowling, I'll drown them like so many common house kittens.' Sabra stalked to
- 20 the front door of their house, opened it, and said to her mate, 'Scat.' The fight that took place was terrible but brief. Proudfoot led with the wrong paw, was nailed with the swiftest right cross in the jungle, and never really knew where he was after that. The next morning, when the cubs, male and female, tumbled eagerly down the stairs demanding to know what they could do, their mother said,
 - 25 'You can go in the parlor and play with your father. He's the tiger rug just in front of the fireplace. I hope you'll like him.'
- The children loved him.

Moral: Never be mean to a tiger's wife, especially if you're the tiger.

3 Sugar Paw – Zuckerpfötchen, 6 attic – a space/room at the top of the house under the roof, 12 blessed – fortunate/happy, 12 to snarl – (of animals) to growl angrily showing the teeth – (of persons) to speak aggressively/angrily, 17 plainclothes – wearing ordinary clothes, 17 prowler car – (here) a patrol car, 18 to hit the sack – (informal) to go to bed, 19 to stalk – to walk proudly, 213 to lead – (here) to open (the fight)

Assignments

1. Write a **summary** of the text.

> Remember the rules of writing a summary, outline respectively. Take especially good care of using your **own words** as far as possible.

(Keywords for the following tasks are okay.)

2. How is Proudfoot characterized?
3. What characteristics said to be typical of a lot of males' behavior towards their partners are criticized / satirized here?
4. In what way does Thurber employ exaggeration? Point out a few examples and explain the intended effects.
5. As this is a **fable**, identify some characteristic features.
6. Comment on the moral and include references to the meaning/message of the whole text.
7. What else could the Tigress have done to get even with her mate? Think of at least 2 different endings.