**AUNT JENNIFER’S TIGERS by Adrienne Rich**

Reference to Context.

1. *“Aunt Jennifer's tigers prance across a screen,  
   Bright topaz denizens of a world of green.  
   They do not fear the men beneath the tree;  
   They pace in sleek chivalric certainty.”*
2. Why are the tigers called ‘Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers’?
3. Explain the phrase, ‘denizens of a world of green”.
4. Why don’t they fear the men?
5. How do they walk?
6. *“Aunt Jennifer's finger fluttering through her wool  
   Find even the ivory needle hard to pull.  
   The massive weight of Uncle's wedding band  
   Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand.”*
7. Why are aunt’s fingers fluttering?
8. What is the effect of the fluttering?
9. Explain ‘the massive weight of Uncle’s wedding ring”.
10. What is Aunt Jennifer’s state of mind?
11. *“When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will lie  
    Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by.  
    The tigers in the panel that she made  
    Will go on prancing, proud and unafraid.”*
12. Why are the hands called ‘terrified’?
13. Who mastered Aunt? Why?
14. Explain ‘ringed with ordeals’.
15. Will Aunt’s death affect the tigers? Why or why not?

Short Answer Questions.

1. Describe the tigers made by Aunt Jennifer.
2. Aunt Jennifer’s efforts to get rid of her fear proved to be futile. Comment.
3. Why does Aunt Jennifer create animals so different from her character?
4. What is suggested by the phrase ‘massive weight of Uncle’s wedding band’?

**ANSWER KEY**

Reference to context.

1. a. The tigers are called ‘Aunt Jennifer’s tigers’ because they have been embroidered by Aunt Jennifer.  
   b. tigers are called denizens of a world of green because they are natives of the green forest.  
   c. They don’t fear the men as they are tigers and not Aunt Jennifer.  
   d. They prance in chivalric certainty.
2. a. Aunt’s fingers are fluttering due to nervousness and a disturbed state of mind.  
   b. Due to the fluttering Aunt finds even the ivory needle hard to pull.  
   c. The massive weight of Uncle’s wedding band signifies a life of bondage. Aunt feels weighed down by her marriage.  
   d. Aunt Jennifer is in a state of turmoil, mental trauma.
3. a. The hands are called terrified as Aunt Jennifer is nervous and she is dominated by her husband.  
   b. Aunt Jennifer has been mastered by her husband through the marriage and he is a dominating person who doesn’t treat her like an equal. He believes in relationship based on male authority and power.   
   c. Aunt Jennifer is a prisoner of marriage. She has lost her identity. The freedom that she dreams of through her art is symbolic of her oppressed self. She is shackled by her wedding ring and this is what the phrase ‘ringed with ordeals’ signifies.  
   d. No. The tigers are a work of Aunt Jennifer but they are not bound to her like she is bound to her husband. They will continue to live after her death.

Short Answer Question.

1. Aunt Jennifer’s tigers are bright like topaz. They live in the green forest, unafraid of the men beneath the trees. They prance about in chivalric certainty. Aunt Jennifer on the other hand is timid and oppressed and afraid of her husband.
2. Aunt Jennifer creates tigers that are so unlike her own personality as a coping mechanism. She attempts to get rid of domination by her husband through this creation.
3. Aunt Jennifer attempts to get rid of her fear by creating ferocious and fearless tigers. Her attempts are proven futile as she doesn’t escape her oppression even after death. Her terrified hands will be ringed with ordeals she was once mastered by.
4. ‘Massive weight of Uncle’s wedding band’ suggest male domination of a women through the tools of an oppressive marriage. It is a symbol of bondage and gender inequality. The weight is too heavy for Aunt to bear. The marriage she is in is a very unhappy one.