



Q31. "The bullet had missed it." "This time he killed it without missing his mark." Whose bullet had missed the tiger? How was the beast killed ultimately? Bring out the irony of the situation.

Ans: The Maharaja's bullet missed the tiger though he had taken careful aim at the beast. The shock of the sound of the bullet made it faint. One hunter took aim from a distance of one foot and shot the tiger dead.

It is ridiculous that the Tiger King who had killed ninety-nine tigers should miss his aim. It is funny that the hunter takes aim from a hand-shaking distance. The whole situation is ironic.

Q32. How does the hundredth tiger take its final revenge upon the Tiger King?

Ans: The Tiger King could not kill the hundredth tiger. It had merely fainted from shock of the sound of the bullet. It is the wooden tiger from the toyshop that becomes the cause of Maharaja's death. One of the slivers on its body pierces the Maharaja's right hand. Infection flares up and the prick develops into a suppurating sore. The Maharaja dies during the operation.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1. What do you learn about princes and kings of native Indian states during the British rule from the story 'The Tiger King'?

Ans: The story 'The Tiger King' presents a fair glimpse of the young princes and the Maharajas of native Indian states. Their long names with descriptive titles and decorative honours was more a rule than an exception. They considered recognition from the British government and its officers a favour. They aped the Britishers in upbringing, education, manners and behaviour. The Maharajas were autocrats and their words were the law. They could be benevolent as well as stubborn. Their minions as well as ministers feared and respected them. Sometimes their whims proved quite costly to the state coffer. The Maharaja of Pratibandapuram spends three lakh of rupees on gift of diamond rings to retain his kingdom. Marriages with princesses of other states are based on considerations other than love or virtues of the girl. In short, the Princes and Maharajas are portrayed as whimsical, stubborn and excitable persons proud of their virtues and valour.

Q2. What did the astrologers predict about the infant prince? What was the miracle that baffled them? What did the chief astrologer enlighten the prince about and how?

Ans: As soon as the prince was born, astrologers predicted that one day the Tiger King would certainly have to die. It was the influence of the star under which he was born. At that very moment a great miracle took place. An astonishing phrase emerged from the lips of the ten-day-old Jilani Jung Jung Bahadur, "O wise prophets!" Everyone stood motionless with astonishment and stupidity. The infant said that all those who are born will have to die one day. So he did not need their predictions to know that. However, there would be some sense in it if they could tell him the manner of that death.

The astrologers were baffled that a baby barely ten-day-old has not only opened his lips in speech but had also raised intelligent questions. It was quite incredible. The chief astrologer fixed his eyes upon the little prince. He said that the prince was born in the

hour of the

Bull. The Bull and the Tiger are enemies. Therefore, death comes from the Tiger.

Q3. How did the Maharaja try to disprove the prediction of the chief astrologer? What did the state astrologer assert when the Maharaja summoned him to show his first kill?

Ans: Since the astrologers had predicted death from Tiger, the Maharaja decided to kill tigers to defend himself. Hence he started out on a tiger hunt campaign. There were enough tigers in the forests of Pratibandapuram state. The Maharaja was thrilled beyond measure when he killed his first tiger. He sent for the state astrologer and showed him the dead beast.

The Maharaja asked the astrologer what he said then. The astrologer said that his majesty might kill ninety-nine tigers in exactly the same manner, but he must be very careful with the hundredth tiger. Maharaja wanted to know what would happen if the hundredth tiger was also killed.

The state astrologer said that in that case he would tear up all his books on astrology and set fire to them. Moreover, he would cut off his tuft, crop his hair short and become an insurance agent.

Q4. What problems did the Maharaja face in pursuit of his mission? How did he resolve them?

Ans: The Maharaja started his mission of killing one hundred tigers with single-minded devotion. He focused all his energy and attention to it. He vowed that he would attend to all other matters only after killing one hundred tigers. Initially, the king seemed well set to realise his ambition. Then dangers and difficulties cropped up. There were times when the bullet missed its mark. The tiger would leap upon him and he had to fight the wild beast with his bare hands. Luckily, each time the Maharaja, who had indomitable courage, won.

Once he was in danger of losing his throne because he did not permit a high-ranking British officer to hunt a tiger in the Pratibandapuram forest. The king did not accede to his request for being photographed with a gun on the carcass of a tiger killed by the Maharaja. The Maharaja had to part with a costly gift to placate his injured feelings and save his kingdom.

Q5. How does the author satirise the hunting instincts of the persons in authority?

Ans. The story tells us that big game hunting was considered a royal sport. The Maharaja of Pratibandapuram went to the extent of banning tiger-hunt in his own kingdom by all others except himself.

Tiger-hunt became an obsession for him. He thought of tiger during the day and dreamt of it at night. He postponed all affairs of the state and devoted himself only to tiger-hunt. Thus, a pastime or sport became the only aim of his life. He married for the sake of tiger. He chose a princess in whose kingdom there were plenty of tigers. He could undertake any risks for tiger-hunt.

The British officers had also developed a fondness for this royal sport. Perhaps they considered it a status symbol. They were publicity conscious and wanted to be photographed with a gun in hand and the carcass of a tiger at feet. Various other hunts were also prevalent. These included boar-hunt, mouse-hunt and mosquito-hunt. The descending order of risk and resistance from the victims makes us laugh at the whims and craziness of the hunters. Thus, the story exposes the fondness of persons in authority for hunting wild animals.

Q6. How did the Maharaja devise a new avenue to fulfil his ambition to kill one hundred tigers? How far did he succeed?

Ans: The Tiger King had resolved to kill one hundred tigers. During ten years he killed seventy tigers in his kingdom. Then the tigers

became extinct in the forests of Pratibandapuram. The Maharaja devised a plan. He decided to get married. He asked the dewan to collect statistics of tiger population in different native states. Then he was assigned the job to find out if there was any girl in the royal household that he could marry. The main criterion for the selection of the princess was that her father's kingdom should have a large number of tiger population. The dewan complied with the orders of the Maharaja. Then the Maharaja married a girl from a state which possessed a large tiger population. Each time he visited his father-in-law, he killed five or six tigers. In this way he was successful in killing ninety-nine tigers.

Q7. Give an account of the Maharaja's impatience for the hundredth tiger and the actual encounter. What, do you think, caused the death of the Tiger King?

Ans: The Maharaja was keen to kill the hundredth tiger. If he did so, he would have no fears left. It became impossible to locate tigers anywhere. When the villagers informed him of the activities of a tiger near hillside, he went to the forest and waited there. The tiger seemed to have deliberately hid himself to defy the Maharaja's will. The wise, aged dewan got an old tiger brought from the People's Park in Madras. He released it at night in the forest near the Maharaja's camp. In the morning, the same tiger wandered into the Maharaja's presence and stood there meekly. The Maharaja took careful aim at the beast. The tiger fell down. Actually the bullet had missed it. The old tiger had fainted with the shock of the bullet passing near him.

The Tiger King died due to an infection from a tiny sliver of a wooden tiger. The prick developed into a sore with pus. A surgical operation was performed on his arm, but he died. The writer comments that the hundredth tiger took its final revenge upon the Tiger King.

Q8. Comment on the ending of the story 'The Tiger King'. Do you find it convincing? Give reasons.

Ans: The ending of the story 'The Tiger King' seems tame, unconvincing and rather contrived. It seems unnatural and unrealistic. It is beyond comprehension how a king who has overpowered ferocious tigers in single combat with bare hands succumbs to a prick from the sliver of a wooden tiger.

It is amazing to find how the infection flares in the Maharaja's right hand. In four days, the prick develops into a suppurating sore and spreads all over the arm. The three surgeons perform a successful operation but fail to save the Maharaja. How is the operation successful then? It seems that the author wants us to believe that the astrologer was right and the hundredth tiger took its final revenge upon the Tiger King. This ending may satisfy superstitious readers with orthodox beliefs, but for the enlightened minds of the age of computers and rockets it is a bitter pill to swallow.

Q9. Comment on the appropriateness of the title 'The Tiger King'.

Ans: 'The Tiger King' is a quite appropriate and suggestive title. It focuses attention on the hero of the story—The Maharaja of Pratibandapuram, who is also nicknamed the Tiger King. The story spans from his birth to death and covers all the landmarks connected with his passion—tiger-hunt. For him human relations and the affairs of the state are secondary. He marries a princess for the sake of a tiger. When he celebrates the third birthday of the crown prince, he brings a wooden tiger for him as a gift. It is ironic that the sliver of the wooden tiger causes his death. The overconfidence and false sense of security of the Tiger King on having killed the hundredth tiger leads to his doom. The story which begins with the prediction of death of the Tiger King right at his birth, ends with his death from a tiger. Thus, the title is quite apt.

Q10. What devices does the author use to make the story 'The Tiger

King' humorous and interesting?

Ans: The author uses many literary devices to make this story humorous as well as interest-ing. He introduces the elements of shock and surprise by making the ten-day-old baby open his lips to talk and ask intelligent questions. The predictions of the astrologers convey inevitability of death, but the man of indomitable courage i.e., the Tiger King faces the agent of death i.e., the tiger many times and comes out victorious every time.

The description of the education and upbringing of crown princes of Indian states and their craze for 'English' provides lots of fun. The mention of various hunts: tiger-hunt, boar-hunt, mouse-hunt, mosquito-hunt makes us laugh at the pastimes of the people in authority at the cost of innocent animals. The last two hunts seem funny and ridiculous.

The Maharaja's thought of marrying a girl for the sake of tiger is also amusing. The behaviour of the high-ranking British officer and that of the Maharaja and his dewan at different points in the story provoke laughter and maintain the reader's interest in the narrative.

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