

The Tiger King

Find out the meaning of the following words taken from the different parts of the story:

Part 1- fantastic, demise, astrologer, miracle, prophets, prediction, stupefaction, beware, rumour.

Part 3- banned, confiscated, vowed, 'durai', 'duraiani'.

Part 4- unforeseen, hurdle, standstill, extinct, hara-kiri.

Part 5- gloom, exemption, wantonly, catastrophic, fainted, slivers, suppurating, sore, revenge.

Satire, conceit, irony, willfulness, minions, game- hunting, callousness, ecology.

Read the following questions and answers carefully:

1. Who was Tiger King? How did he get his name? What happened when the tiger king was ten day old? What was the astrologer's **prophecy** (something said about the future)?

- The Maharaja of Pratibandapuram was known as the Tiger King. He got this name because he spent his life in the mission to kill 100 tigers. Astrologers had predicted that the king would be killed by the 100th tiger that he met.

When the king was a ten day old baby, astrologers **predicted** (said about the future) that the king would die one day. Then a **miracle** happened- the ten day old king spoke. He asked how he would die. The astrologer said that the king was born in the hour of the Bull. Bull and tiger are enemies. So the king would be killed by a tiger. The baby roared that tigers should beware of him. At the age of twenty years, the king killed his first tiger. Then the astrologer said that the king would be killed by the 100th tiger that he met. From that time, the king set on his mission of killing 100 tigers.

2. Why was hunting tigers banned in Pratibandapuram?

- Astrologers had said that the king of Pratibandapuram would be killed by the 100th tiger that he met. So the king set on the mission to kill 100 tigers. To complete his mission as quickly as possible, he declared that nobody except him could hunt tigers in his kingdom Pratibandapuram.

3. How did the Tiger King face the danger of losing his throne?

- To complete his mission of killing 100 tigers as quickly as possible, the Tiger King had declared that nobody except him could hunt tigers in his kingdom Pratibandapuram. Once, a British officer came to Pratibandapuram. He wanted to hunt a tiger and get photographed with the dead tiger. The king did not allow him to hunt. The officer asked for a dead tiger so that he could get photographed with it. The king did not allow it as well because other officers might come there to hunt tigers. Since the king did not fulfill the British officer's desire, he faced the danger of losing his throne.

To please the officer, the king and his minister decided to please the officer's wife. The king ordered for fifty diamond rings from a Calcutta jeweler. He sent those rings to the lady, thinking that she would take a few and return the rest. But the lady kept all the rings and thanked the king for the gift. The king lost three lakh rupees but his throne was saved.

4. When and why did Tiger King get married?

- The Tiger King was on the mission to kill 100 tigers. He killed 70 tigers in his own kingdom Pratibandapuram. So no tigers were left in Pratibandapuram. The king decided that he would marry that princess whose kingdom had tigers; in that way, he could kill the remaining 30 tigers in that kingdom.

5. Did the Tiger King really kill the 100th tiger in the jungle?

- The Tiger King did not really kill the 100th tiger in the jungle. That tiger had been brought from a zoo in Madras by the dewan (minister). The king fired the gun at the tiger. It fell down. The king thought that he had killed the tiger.

When the king went away, other hunters saw that the tiger was not dead. The king's bullet had missed the tiger. The tiger had just become unconscious at the gunshot's sound. The hunters killed the tiger but did not tell the truth to the king.

6. How did the 100th tiger take **revenge** upon the Tiger King?

- The 100th tiger in the jungle did not kill the king. But the king was killed by a wooden toy tiger. Thus the **wooden tiger became the 100th tiger that caused the king's death.**

On the third birthday of his son, the king bought a wooden toy tiger. The surface of the tiger was not polished. There were small rough pieces of wood poking up on the toy's surface. When the king was playing with the toy, a tiny piece of wood went inside the king's right hand. The king pulled it out. Next day, there was infection in his right hand. Three surgeons came from Madras. They operated upon the king's hand. They were successful in removing the infection but the king was dead. In this way, the wooden toy tiger became the 100th tiger that took revenge upon the king.

7. The story is a satire on the conceit of those in power. How does the writer use the literary device of dramatic irony in the story?

- The story is a **satire** (use of humor to point out the wrong things) on the pride and **conceit** (pride without any reason) of people who are in power. Powerful people are often proud. They think that they can do anything; they even dare to challenge their destiny. They do not understand it is foolish to challenge destiny. The Tiger King also thinks that by killing 100 tigers, he can escape getting killed by the 100th tiger he meets. The writer shows the king's foolishness and pride with the help of dramatic irony.

Irony is to show how someone's action or words lead to the exactly unwanted and opposite result. The king spent his life in the mission of killing 100 tigers. The irony was that he died because of a wooden toy tiger. All his pride and power could not change his destiny.

Answer the following questions:

- Mention any three names of the Tiger King.
- In what situation would the State astrologer tear his books, cut his hair short and become an insurance agent?
- What would the British officer have done with a dead tiger?
- After 10 years, why were no tigers left in Pratibandapuram? What excuses did the people make? Why?
- Why did the King want to double the taxes on the villagers?
- Where did the 100th tiger come from?
- Which quality can be observed in the shopkeeper's behavior towards the King? Do you think the King acted stupidly?
- What do you think about the attitude of the three surgeons from Madras?
