

The Tiger King Important Questions

Long Answer Type Questions (6 Marks, 120-150 words)

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:

[‘Conceit’ means an extremely favourable and high opinion of one’s own abilities and worth, while ‘satire’ refers to the use of irony, humour, exaggeration or ridicule to expose and criticize stupidity and vices of people in a particular context or situation.]

The story is a satire on the conceit of those in power. The king is known to be an extremely conceited person right from the beginning. As a ten-day-old infant, he pronounced the words, “Let tigers beware!” By challenging the astrologer’s prediction, he also challenges his death. Moreover, killing seventy tigers within a period of ten years and bringing the entire species close to extinction, marrying for the convenience of killing more tigers, exercising his authority to punish or tax people according to his whims and fancies, flaunting his power and richness in sending about fifty rings to the British officer’s lady or paying a bill of three lakh rupees, having a temper that would make other people lose their job or even life etc., are all part of this conceit. He does nothing for the sake of his people in the capacity of a king. All this has been highlighted in the story using humour, irony and exaggeration.

Death is an inevitable phenomenon associated to life itself. Challenging death on the basis of prediction by astrologers is as good as a wasted effort. Even after the monumental task of killing ninety-nine tigers, the hundredth tiger escaped being shot by the king’s gun. Unaware of this, he dies merely because of a “tiny little wooden tiger” and not by any ferocious living creature like tiger. Thus, the dramatic irony surfaces strongly at the end of the story when the readers realise what the king never does.

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

ANSWER:

The author uses satire in his story to talk about the indiscriminate killing of tigers. The entire species of tigers had become extinct at the state of Pratibandapuram and that of his wife’s native state by the time the king himself dies. What is pointed in a subtle manner is that these killings are a result of mere whims and fancies. They do not have any logical explanation at the face of the inevitable status of death. Moreover, the silence on the death of tigers itself draws a strong co-relation between the life of the king and that of the ninety-nine tigers killed by him.

Besides, no second thought was ever given while killing the tigers. There is also an implicit suggestion of killings for preserving the vain glory of human in the British officer’s request for a photograph with a dead tiger. It is as if these animals’ existence is at stake for more than one reason

and for no fault of their own. The absurdity highlighted in the killings, by the author, also makes the readers wonder if these animals deserve more security than human beings.

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

ANSWER:

Maharaja's minions were servile towards him primarily because of his fury and obstinacy which might result in either losing their jobs for no apparent fault of theirs or facing unjustified punishments. No one dared to take the risk of explaining the consequences of the killings to the king or give him any right suggestion or advice. No one tried to argue any of his decision – be it annihilation of tigers or marrying for the sake of availing further opportunity for tiger-hunt. No one questioned his neglect of duties towards his people or state. They simply did not wish to interfere and were happy to comply lest they should face the consequences. They merely had to submit to his whims and fancies as they existed purely for that very reason. The simple reasoning was that if they cannot do an assigned job, they did not deserve to be in the job. Even his dewan was asked to resign from his post when he tried to point out the impracticality of doubling the taxes collected from people. All his subordinates lived in a piteous state of constant terror of him so much so that the shopkeeper couldn't communicate the original price of an item, the hunters couldn't inform him about the hundredth tiger being alive and even his dewan had to stealthily arrange for a tiger to be brought from Chennai. Their sincerity to him, if any, was always shown overpowered by the fear of their king.

Yes, there are lots of similarities between the Maharaja's story and the present political order. People are discontented as those in power seem to be indifferent to their welfare and that of the state and ecology. Selfish aims and concerns guide decisions, and mere whims and fancies can change the situation of law and order. Those who try to bring some positive reform may also not be able to do so as they fear losing their jobs or facing other dire consequences. Taxes taken from the public are also constantly misappropriated. Reforms either do not materialise or do so with an extremely slow pace. Yet, the best part is that the real situation is not as bleak as in the story. There are people working for the benefit and welfare of their community and society, and positive changes do happen.

The astrologer's prediction about the death of the Tiger King came to be true. Do you agree with this statement?

Answer. I agree with the statement that the astrologer's prediction about the death of the Tiger King came to be true. The astrologer had predicted that Tiger King would be killed by a tiger and he should be wary of the hundredth tiger. This statement of the astrologer forced the king to go on a killing spree. The hundredth tiger was not killed by the king himself but by the hunters, who found out that the old tiger had not died by the bullet of the king but only fainted by the bullet whizzing past him. The hundredth tiger was a wooden toy tiger which the king had presented to his three-year old son. It killed the king merely by a sliver of wood protruding from it that pierced his right hand. The wound developed pus and it soon spread all over the arm. The best surgeons failed to save the king and thus, the astrologer's prediction about the death of the Tiger King proved to be correct.

Short Answer Type Questions (3 Marks, 30-40 words)

Question.1. What gave the astrologers the greatest surprise of their life while they were studying

the horoscope of the ten-day old prince? (Foreign 2014)

Answer. When the astrologers were reading the horoscope of the little prince, they were taken by surprise when the ten-day old infant asked about the manner of his death. When the chief astrologer told him that a tiger would be the cause of his death, the baby retorted with arrogance, "Let the tigers beware!"

Question.2. How did the Maharaja please a high ranking officer? (Compartment 2014)

Answer. A high ranking British officer visited the state of Pratibandapuram and sought permission for tiger hunting from the Maharaja. The Maharaja declined his request, but as he did not want to upset the officer, he sent fifty diamond rings to the officer's wife which cost the king three , lakh rupees.

Question.3. Why did the Maharaja ban tiger hunting in the state? (Delhi 2014)

Answer. As the prince was crowned the king, the astrologer's prediction regarding his (the king's) death by a tiger reached his ears. This prompted the Maharaja to kill a tiger but the astrologer informed him that he had to successfully kill hundred tigers to escape the prophecy. Thus, in order to reach that mark, the Maharaja banned tiger hunting in the state except for himself.

Question.4. Why did the Maharaja decide to get married? (Compartment 2014)

or

What is the reason for the Tiger King's sudden decision to marry? (Compartment 2014)

Answer. In order to defeat the astrologer's prophecy, the Maharaja had to kill a hundred tigers. He had already killed seventy tigers and the tiger population in his state neared extinction. For this reason, he wished to marry a girl in the royal family of a state with a rich tiger population, where he would kill the rest of the tigers.

Question.5. Why did the Maharaja double the land tax? (All India 2014)

Answer. The Maharaja had successfully killed ninety-nine tigers but struggled hard to find the hundredth tiger. Once, there came a news of a tiger being spotted at a hillside village but it turned out to be untrue. This infuriated the Maharaja, who ordered the dewan to double the land tax in order to punish the villagers for the false news.

Question.6. How did the Tiger King become the victim of the hundredth tiger? (Foreign 2014)

or

How did the Tiger King meet his end? What is ironical about his fate? (All India 2009)

Answer. The Tiger King met his end through the wooden tiger, which he had bought as a gift for his son on his third birthday. While he was playing with his son, a splinter of the poorly made toy tiger pricked the king's hand. The infection turned into a sore, which spread all over his arm. In spite of the best surgeons, the king's life could not be saved.

The irony is in the fact that in spite of killing nearly all the tigers in the area, he had to face his death by a toy tiger.

Question.7. What, sort of hunts did the Maharaja offer to organise for the high-ranking British officer? What trait of the officer does it reveal? (All India 2013)

Answer. Tiger hunting was banned in Pratibandapuram. When the British official came with a tiger hunt request, the Maharaja told him that he may conduct a boar hunt, a mouse hunt, even a mosquito hunt, but not a tiger hunt. In reply to this, the British officer said that he only wanted to be photographed holding a gun and standing over the dead body; the tiger could be killed by the Maharaja. This shows the shallowness of character of the officer.

Question.8. Why was the Maharaja so anxious to kill the hundredth tiger? (AR India 2012)

Answer. When the Maharaja was barely ten days old, the chief astrologer had predicted that a tiger would be the cause of his death. When the Maharaja was twenty, he killed one tiger. When he asked his astrologer, the astrologer said that he would kill ninety-nine tigers, but he should be fearful of the hundredth tiger. That was the reason why the Maharaja was so anxious to kill the hundredth tiger.

Question.9. What warning did the astrologer give the Tiger King when he killed the first tiger? Did the prediction of the astrologer come to be true? (Foreign 2011)

Answer. When the Maharaja boasted about killing the first tiger, the astrologer said that he may kill ' ninety-nine tigers, but must be "very careful with the hundredth tiger." Yes, the astrologer was absolutely true in this prediction, because finally the Maharaja was killed by the hundredth tiger.

Question.10. How did the Dewan manage to arrange the hundredth tiger for the Maharaja? (Foreign 2011)

Answer. The Dewan had brought a tiger from the People's Park in Madras and kept it hidden in his house. When the Maharaja threatened him with dire consequences, he understood that the only way to save himself was to 'plant' a tiger for the kill. So, he and his aged wife dragged the tiger to the forest where the king was hunting. The king took aim and the beast soon collapsed.

Question.11. Why was the Maharaja sunk in gloom even after having killed seventy tigers? (Foreign 2011)

Answer. During ten years, the Maharaja had managed to kill seventy tigers. As a result, the tiger population became extinct in his kingdom. This made the Maharaja anxious because he thought he would not be able to achieve his target of killing a hundred tigers and so his life would be in dangSr.

Question.12. What led the Maharaja to start out on a tiger hunt? (All India 2010)

Answer. The Maharaja knew the old saying that killing even a cow in self-defence was no sin. So, in order to save his own life and prove the astrological prediction wrong, he started shooting all his enemies, i.e. the tigers he found in the forests of his state and nearby regions.

Question.13. When did the Tiger King stand in danger of losing his kingdom? (Delhi 2010)

Answer. Once, a high-ranking British officer visited Pratibandapuram. He was very fond of hunting tigers and being photographed with them. However, the Maharaja refused to give him permission to hunt tigers because he feared that other British officers too would turn up with the same request. It was because of his refusal that the Maharaja stood in danger of losing his kingdom.

Question.14. What happened to the tiger provided by the Dewan Saheb? (Delhi 2009)

Answer. The tiger provided by the Dewan Saheb was very old and stood in complete submission. The Maharaja look aim and fired, but-actually the bullet missed the tiger and the tiger only fainted from the sharp sound of the bullet. As nobody wanted the Maharaja to know about it, one oflhe hunters himself shot the tiger later on.

Question.15. Describe the efforts made by the Tiger King to achieve his target of killing a hundred tigers. (All India 2009)

Answer. The Tiger King made numerous efforts to fulfil his target of killing a hundred tigers. He stayed in the forest for many days. He fired many of his officers for not getting him tigers. He had to spend a ransom of three lakh rupees to impress the British official and discourage him from killing the

tigers. He even went to the extent of marrying to kill the population of tigers in the neighbouring state to meet his target. In a way, he did all he could to achieve his goal , of killing a hundred tigers.

Question.16.Did the Tiger King shoot the hundredth tiger? Give reasons for your answer. (Foreign 2009)

Answer. The Tiger King actually did not shoot the hundredth tiger. The tiger being a weak one, fainted from the shock of a bullet whizzing past him and the ignorant king celebrated his achievement. Later, when the hunters took a closer look at the tiger, it woke up as if from a deep slumber.

Question.17.How did the Tiger King celebrate his victory over the killing of the hundredth tiger? (Delhi2008)

Answer. When the Maharaja thought that he had killed the hundredth tiger, his joy knew no bounds. The elated king returned to his capital and ordered his staff to bring the dead tiger in a grand procession. The tiger was buried and a tomb was erected over it.

Question.18.What was the Dewan's tiger like? How did he take it into the forest? (Delhi 2008)

Answer. The Dewan's tiger was old and had been brought from the People's Park in Madras. It was kept hidden in the Dewan's house. At midnight, the Dewan with his wife dragged the tiger to his car and thrust it onto the seat. With great difficulty, the tiger was pushed out of the car and planted in the forest to be shot by the Maharaja.

Question.19.Why did the Dewan decide to give up his own tiger to be killed by the Maharaja? (Delhi 2008)

Answer. The Maharaja refused to leave the forest unless he killed the hundredth tiger that had been sighted by the villagers. The Maharaja was furious and sacked many officers. He ordered the Dewan to double the land tax of the village and when the Dewan tried to stop him, the Maharaja asked him to resign. So, to save his job, the Dewan decided to arrange for a tiger to be killed by the Maharaja.