

# CHAPTER - 2

## THE TIGER KING

### READ AND FIND OUT

#### Q1. Who is the Tiger King? Why does he get that name?

**Ans.** The Maharaja of Pratibandapuram was called the Tiger King. At the time of his birth the astrologers declared that the prince would have to die one day. The ten-day-old prince asked the astrologers to reveal the manner of his death. The wise men were baffled at this miracle. The chief astrologer said that his death would come from a tiger. The young prince growled and uttered terrifying words: 'Let tigers beware!' He decided to kill one hundred tigers. He, thus, got the name 'Tiger King'.

#### Q2. What did the royal infant grow up to be?

**Ans.** Crown prince Jung Jung Bahadur grew taller and stronger day-by-day. He was brought up by an English nanny and tutored in English by an Englishman. He got the control of his state when he came of age at twenty. He decided to kill tigers. For him it was an act of self-defence, as the astrologers had predicted his death by a tiger

#### Q3. What will the Maharaja do to find the required number of tigers to kill?

**Ans.** Within ten years the Maharaja was able to kill seventy tigers. Then the tiger population became extinct in the forests of Pratibandapuram. One day the Maharaja sent for the dewan and asked him if he was aware of the fact that thirty tigers still remained to be shot down by his gun. The dewan shuddered with fear. The Maharaja told him that he had decided to get married. He asked the dewan to draw up statistics of tiger populations in different native states. Then he was to investigate if there was a girl he could marry in the royal family of a state with a large tiger population. This plan was put into practice. The dewan found the right girl from a state which possessed a large number of tigers. The Maharaja killed five or six tigers each time he visited his father-in-law. Thus, he was able to find the required number of tigers to kill. He shot ninety-nine tigers.

#### Q4. How will the Maharaja prepare himself for the hundredth tiger which was supposed to decide his fate?

**Ans.** Maharaja's anxiety reached the highest level of excitement when only one tiger remained to be killed. He thought of the hundredth tiger during the day and dreamt of it at night. But tiger farms ran dry even in his father-in-law's kingdom. It became impossible to locate tigers anywhere. If he could kill just that one single beast, the Maharaja would have no fear left. As the late chief astrologer had said that Maharaja should beware of the hundredth tiger. The Maharaja was sunk in gloom. Then came a happy news. In his own state sheep began to disappear frequently from a hillside village. Surely, a tiger was at work. The villagers ran to inform the Maharaja. The Maharaja announced a three-year exemption from all taxes for that village. He set out on the hunt at once. But the tiger was not easily found. The Maharaja continued camping in the forest and waiting for the tiger.

**Q5. What will now happen to the astrologer? Do you think the prophecy was indisputably disproved?**

**Ans.** In order to save his skin, the dewan got an old tiger brought from the People's Park in Madras. It was kept hidden in his house. One midnight with the help of his aged wife, he dragged the tiger to the car and shoved it into the seat. He himself drove the car straight to the forest where the Maharaja was hunting. The dewan hauled the beast out of the car and pushed it down to the ground. Next day, the same old tiger wandered into the Maharaja's presence. The Maharaja was overjoyed. He took careful aim at the beast. The tiger fell down in a crumpled heap. The Maharaja was extremely happy that he had killed the hundredth tiger. The hunters found that the old tiger was not dead. It had only fainted on hearing the sound of the bullet. They did not want the Maharaja to know this fact and lose their jobs. So one of them shot at it and killed it. The dead tiger was taken in procession through the town and buried there. A tomb was erected over it. The prophecy was not disproved as the king met his death with the infection caused by the sliver of a wooden tiger. The astrologer was already dead. He could not be punished or rewarded.

### **READING WITH INSIGHT**

**Q1. 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?**

**Ans.** On surface level, 'The Tiger King' seems to be a simple story about a royal prince, his growth and exploits as a king. The prophecies at his birth about the manner of his death make the story interesting by introducing the element of surprise and suspense. On a deeper level, the story is a satire on the conceit of those in power. It is usually seen that those in power have too much pride in themselves and what they do. Two such specimens in the story are the Tiger King and the British officer. The author employs dramatic irony and humour to show their faults and weaknesses. The words of these characters carry an extra meaning. They do not know what is going to happen. The Tiger King resolves to hunt a hundred tigers to disprove the prediction of the astrologer. In his stubbornness, he falls prey to a wooden tiger. The high-ranking British officer is equally vain. He is more interested in photograph with carcass than hunting itself. The Tiger King offers to organise any other hunt except tiger-hunt. It may be a boar-hunt, mouse-hunt or a mosquito-hunt. He has to lose three lakh of rupees for his refusal. The ego of the British officer is satisfied when his wife is pleased to get diamond rings sent by the Maharaja.

**Q2. What is the author's indirect comment on subjecting innocent animals to the willfulness of human beings?**

**Ans.** For centuries innocent animals have been subjected to the willfulness of human beings. Man has been killing animals for sport, meat or organs of body. The author does not make any direct comment about it in the story. Man advances strange logic to defend even his unlawful and cruel acts. The Maharaja quotes an old saying, "You may kill even a cow in self-defence". Hence, he finds no objection to kill tigers in self-defence. It reveals not only the callousness of human beings towards wildlife but their disregard for maintaining ecological balance. The extinction of tiger species in Pratibandapuram state and the state ruled by the Maharaja's father-in-law amply illustrates the result of man's cruelty towards wild animals. An old tiger has to be brought from the People's Park in Madras to satisfy the king's whim to kill one hundred tigers.

**Q3. 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?**

**Ans.** A minion is an unimportant person in an organisation who has to obey orders. The Maharaja has many minions or servants. Most of them fear the Maharaja and obey his orders faithfully. They dare not disobey him or contradict him. The Maharaja's displeasure means loss of job or even loss of life. Only a few of them are truly sincere towards him. One such person is the chief astrologer. He is willing to burn his books of astrology, cut off his tuft and crop his hair short if his prediction proves untrue. The others try to keep the Maharaja in good humour. Even the dewan is no exception. Many officers lose their jobs when the Maharaja's fury and obstinacy mount higher. The king's bullet misses the hundredth tiger. It faints from the shock and falls as a crumpled heap. The hunters realise the truth, but they decide not to reveal it to the king. They fear that they might lose their jobs.

In today's political order, subordinates serve their superior bosses as deaf and dumb creatures who see only what their masters want them to see. Their self-interests and fear of elimination make them faithful servants.

**Q4. Can you relate instances of game-hunting among the rich and the powerful in the present times that illustrate the callousness of human beings towards wildlife?**

**Ans.** In our times, big game-hunting has been banned by law as so many species of wildlife have been declared endangered species. Sanctuaries, national parks and games reserves have been established to preserve wildlife from extinction and maintain ecological balance in nature. Even then sporadic cases of game-hunting are reported in newspapers now and then. It is generally noticed that the erstwhile rulers—kings or nawabs or the rich and powerful persons or famous film stars indulge in game-hunting. The cases against late M.A.K. Pataudi and Salman Khan are still pending in courts. Poachers and smugglers too destroy wildlife for skin, meat or for various organs of body and escape scot-free.

**Q5. We need a new system for the age of ecology—a system which is embedded in the care of all people and also in the care of the Earth and all life upon it. Discuss.**

**Ans.** Modern age is the age of ecology. A new consciousness has arisen among human beings. Animals and birds are as much part of nature as human beings. The destruction or haphazard killing of one species may not only lead to its extinction, but it will adversely affect the ecological balance. Those animals which serve as food for the wild animals will increase in large number, if the beasts of prey are wiped out. Each species, howsoever fierce, deadly, ferocious or poisonous has its own role in the scheme of things. We must devise a new system. It must focus on the care of all living beings on the Earth as well as the Earth itself and all life—vegetative or animal living on it. Steps have to be taken to preserve ecological balance in nature and prevent environmental pollution. Unpolluted air, water and food can make all living beings healthy and enable them to enjoy longer lives.

## **MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED**

### **SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS**

**Q1. Who is the hero of the story 'The Tiger King'? How may he be identified?**

**Ans.** The Maharaja of Pratibandapuram is the hero of this story. He may be identified as His Highness Jamedar-General, Khiledar-Major, Sata Vyaghra Samhari, Maharajadhiraja Visva Bhuvana Samrat, Sir Jilani Jung Jung Bahadur, M.A.D., A.C.T.C., or C.R.C.K. This name is often shortened to the Tiger King.

**Q2. What does the author consider imperative right at the start?**

**Ans.** Author considers it imperative to disclose a matter of vital importance about the Tiger King. He was a man of indomitable courage. Everyone who reads of him will have a natural desire to meet him face-to-face. But there is no chance of its fulfilment as the Tiger King is dead.

**Q3. Which matter about the Tiger King is of extraordinary interest?**

**Ans.** The manner of the death of the Tiger King is of extraordinary interest. The most fantastic aspect of his demise was that as soon as he was born, astrologers had foretold that one day the Tiger King would actually have to die.

**Q4. What was the great miracle that took place? What was its result?**

**Ans.** The astrologers said the child born under that particular star would one day have to meet its death. 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.

**Q5. What did the infant born just ten days ago tell the wise astrologers?**

**Ans.** The infant said that all those who are born will one day have to die. So he did not need their predictions to know that. He further said that there would be some sense in it if they could tell him the manner of his death.

**Q6. Why did the Maharaja order the dewan to double the land tax? [All India 2014]**

**Ans.** Maharaja went out on an expedition to find the hundredth tiger. The tiger could not be found. That is why in anger he ordered the dewan to double the land tax.

**Q7. How did the chief astrologer react to the infant prince's observation ?**

**Ans.** The chief astrologer was surprised. He placed his finger on his nose in wonder. It was incredible that the ten-day-old infant raised intelligent questions. 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.

**Q8. How did the crown prince Jung Jung Bahadur grow up?**

**Ans.** The infant had an uneventful childhood. He grew up just like other royal princes of Indian states during the British rule. The prince grew taller and stronger day by day. The boy drank the milk of an English cow. He was brought up by an English nanny and tutored in English by an Englishman. He saw nothing but English films.

**Q9. How does the author satirise the upbringing and education of crown princes of Indian states?**

**Ans.** The author makes us laugh by pointing out the excessive love of the Indian kings and queens for English education and English way of life. They seemed so enamoured of everything English that the crown princes drank the milk of English cows, were brought up by English nannies and tutored in English by Englishmen. They saw only English films. Thus, they were Indians only in flesh and blood, but aped Englishmen in culture and manners.

**Q10. Why did the Maharaja ban tiger hunting in the state? [Delhi 2014]**

**Ans.** Maharaja banned the tiger hunting in the state. Because he wanted to prove the predictions of state astrologer wrong that he would be killed by the hundredth tiger. That is why he put a ban on the hunting of tigers on all the tiger-rich forest of Pratibandapuram.

**Q11. Why, do you think, did the Maharaja send for the State astrologer?**

**Ans.** The Maharaja was excited beyond measure when he killed his first tiger. He felt proud of his feat. He wanted to show the dead beast to the State astrologer. So, he sent for him and wanted to know what he said then.

**Q12. Sum up in your own words the interview between the Maharaja and the State astrologer.**

**Ans.** On the orders of the Maharaja, the State astrologer said that his majesty might kill ninety-nine tigers in exactly the same manner. But he must be careful with the hundredth tiger. The Maharaja observed that the hundredth tiger might also be killed. What will happen then? The astrologer said that then 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.

**Q13. Point out the irony in the statement: "From that day onwards it was celebration time for all the tigers inhabiting Pratibandapuram."**

**Ans.** The state banned tiger hunting by anyone except the Maharaja. An official statement was issued. If anyone dared to harm a tiger even by flinging a stone at him, all his wealth and property would be confiscated. The tigers could rejoice that they would not be killed by the ruff-raff. The irony is that they were set to die at the hands of the Maharaja. The bullets of his gun awaited them.

**Q14. How did the Maharaja devote himself to realise his ambition? How far did he succeed?**

**Ans.** The Maharaja pursued his ambition with single minded devotion. He vowed that he would attend to all other matters only after killing the hundred tigers. He bravely faced many dangers to his life from tigers in achieving his mission. Sometimes he had to fight a tiger with his bare hands. But each time the Maharaja proved victorious by killing the beast.

**Q15. Why, do you think, was the Maharaja in danger of losing his throne ?**

**Ans.** The Maharaja had annoyed a high-ranking British officer by refusing him permission to hunt tigers in Pratibandapuram. The Maharaja did not relent even when the request was toned down that the durai himself did not have to kill the tiger. The Maharaja could do the actual killing. The durai wanted only a photograph of himself holding the gun and standing over the tiger's carcass. The Maharaja stood in danger of losing his throne because he prevented a British officer from fulfilling his desire.

**Q16. What traits of the Maharaja and the British officer are exposed and satirised through the episode of refusal of permission for tiger hunt by the British officer?**

**Ans.** It reveals that the Maharaja was wilful, obstinate and adamant. He had a false sense of honour. If he had permitted one British officers, others would also turn up. He is quite unreasonable and shows lack of understanding. Thus, he lacks practical approach. He would sacrifice diamonds to preserve his throne.

The British officer seems publicity conscious. He is more interested in the photographs with the dead-tiger than in the tiger-hunt. The costly gift of diamonds mollifies his hurt ego.

**Q17. Would it be proper to call the Maharaja 'penny-wise, pound foolish'? Give reasons for your answer.**

**Ans.** The Maharaja insists on restricting tiger-killing in his state to himself. He is unwilling to compromise in this regard. He would not let any other person be even photographed with a dead tiger in his state. He has to send a gift of fifty diamond rings to the British officer's good lady to placate the injured feelings of the man and to retain his kingdom. It illustrates that he was penny-wise, pound foolish.

**Q18. What sort of hunts did the Maharaja offer to organise for the high-ranking British officer ? What trait of the persons in high position does it reveal ?**

**Ans.** The Maharaja offered to organise any other hunt in place of the tiger hunt for the high-ranking British officer. He might go on a boar-hunt. A mouse-hunt might be conducted. They were ready even for a mosquito-hunt. This shows the vanity and love of idle pursuits and frivolous pastimes by the persons in high position.

**Q19. Comment on the 'rings episode' in the story 'The Tiger King'.**

**Ans.** The Maharaja of Pratibandapuram ordered a famous British company of jewellers in Calcutta to send samples of expensive diamond rings of different designs. Some fifty rings arrived. The Maharaja sent the whole lot to the British officer's good lady. He expected her to choose one or two rings and send the rest back. But she simply sent a letter of thanks. The episode reveals human weaknesses such as vanity, pride, greed, cunningness, flattery and appeasement.

**Q20..... an unforeseen hurdle brought his mission to a standstill". What was the mission and how did it stop? What do you find amusing in the reasons justifying the 'hurdle'?**

**Ans.** The Maharaja's mission was to shoot one hundred tigers. He had killed seventy tigers within ten years. Then the tiger population became extinct in the forests of Pratibandapuram. The possible reasons for the absence of tigers are quite amusing and even ludicrous. Either the tigers practised birth control or they committed suicide. They might have run away from the state. Perhaps they desired to be shot by the British hands alone.

**Q21. How did the dewan behave when the Maharaja summoned him and brandished his gun?**

**Ans.** The dewan shuddered at the sight of the gun. He cried out, "Your Majesty! I am not a tiger!" The Maharaja enquired which idiot would call him a tiger. The dewan then declared that he was not a gun. The Maharaja became a bit polite. Addressing him as 'Dewan Saheb' he assured him that he was neither tiger nor gun. He was summoned there for a different purpose.

**Q22. How did the dewan react to the Maharaja's declaration. "I have decided to get married"?**

**Ans.** The reaction of the dewan is quite funny and amusing. He thinks that the Maharaja wants to marry him. He says that he has already two wives. The Maharaja clarifies that he does not want to marry him. He wants a tiger. The dewan interrupts him saying that his ancestors were married to the sword. He might marry the gun if he liked. He added that a Tiger King was more than enough for that state. It did not need a Tiger Queen as well.

**Q23. How did the Maharaja make his intentions clear to the dewan ? What, do you think, is his first priority in marriage ?**

**Ans.** The Maharaja said that he was not thinking of marrying either a tiger or a gun. He wanted to marry a girl from the ranks of human beings. He asked the dewan to collect statistics of tiger population in the different native states. Then he should find out if there was a girl he could marry in the royal family of the state with a large tiger population. Evidently, his first priority is the tiger,

**Q24. How did the Maharaja succeed in raising his tiger tally to ninety-nine?**

**Ans.** The Maharaja married a girl from a state which possessed a large number of tigers. Each time he visited his father-in-law, he killed five or six tigers. In this manner he raised the tally of tigers killed by him from seventy to ninety-nine.

**Q25. Why was the Maharaja so anxious to kill the hundredth tiger?**

**Ans.** The Maharaja had killed ninety-nine tigers. If he could kill just one more tiger, he would have no fear left. Then he could give up tiger hunting altogether. He thought of the tiger during the day and dreamt of it at night. Moreover, he had to be extremely careful with that last tiger. The late chief astrologer had already warned him.

**Q26. "It seemed easier to find tiger's milk than a live tiger" Why? What does the contradiction imply?**

**Ans.** As the Maharaja reached near the coveted figure of hundred, his difficulties also multiplied. He had already killed ninety-nine tigers, but then the tiger farms ran dry even in his father-in-law's kingdom. It became impossible to locate tigers anywhere. The hundredth tiger seemed difficult to find. One can't get tiger's milk without finding the tigress. Yet it is thought easier than finding a live tiger. The contradiction implies the difficulty in locating a tiger.

**Q27. Why was the Maharaja sunk in gloom? Was he able to overpower it? How /How not?**

**Ans.** Only one tiger remained to be killed by the Maharaja, but it seemed impossible to locate a tiger. So, the Maharaja was sunk in gloom. Then he got the happy news. In his own state sheep began to disappear frequently from a hillside village. It was found out that this was not the work of Khader Mian Saheb or Virasami Naicker. Both of them could swallow sheep whole. It was then deduced that it was the work of a tiger. The villagers ran to inform the Maharaja about the availability of a tiger.

**Q28. What aspects of the Maharaja's nature and conduct does the wait for the hundredth tiger reveal?**

**Ans.** The wait for the hundredth tiger reveals the royal rage, obstinacy and firm determination of the Maharaja. He refused to leave the forest until the tiger was found. Many officers lost their jobs because of his anger. Even the dewan was asked to resign his post. This shows that the Maharaja was insensitive towards his employees.

**Q29. How, do you think, did the dewan try to help the Maharaja achieve his mission?**

**Ans.** The aged dewan was very wise. He brought an old tiger from the People's Park in Madras. He kept it hidden in his house. Judging the impatience of the Maharaja to shoot the tiger, he decided to release it near the Maharaja's camp. So, at midnight he dragged the tiger to the car with the help of his aged wife and shoved it into the seat. He drove the car himself straight to the forest and hauled the beast out of the car and pushed it down to the ground near the Maharaja's camp.

**Q30. How does the tiger behave towards the dewan, the Maharaja and the hunters? What does his behaviour show?**

**Ans.** The tiger behaves like a pet animal with the dewan. The dewan and his aged wife drag the tiger to the car and shove it into the seat. In the forest, the tiger launches its satyagraha and refuses to get out of the car. The Dewan tries hard to haul it out of the car and push it down to the ground.

It stands before the Maharaja as if in humble supplication. It falls down in a crumpled heap as the Maharaja fires the gun. It faints from the shock of the bullet whizzing past. It looks back at the hunters rolling its eyes in bafflement. This shows that it is a very old and weak tiger.

**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 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 nick named 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 second-ary. 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 interesting. 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.