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Read and find out

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

Ans. Jilani Jung Bahadur, the ruler of Pratibandapuram, is known as the Tiger King. Astrologers said that the baby boy would one day be killed by a tiger when the king was born. He said he would grow to be a formidable warrior and champion, but a tiger would kill him. The infant, who was only 10 days old, was listening to these conversations. As he grew older, he began tiger hunting and bravely killed numerous tigers, earning the nickname "Tiger King."

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Que. What did the royal infant grow up to be?

Ans. The Royal infant was born into the royal family and was handed over the throne when he was 20 years old. He was the king of Pratibandapuram. After attaining adulthood, his only wish was to kill Tigers. He started hunting one by one with the intention of killing his hundredth tiger. He was mentally and physically strong, so he thought of challenging the astrologer who had predicted his death. The king's full attention was tiger hunting and not servicing the people of his state.

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Read and find out

Que. 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. After this the population of tigers declined in Pratibandapuram. Then one day the king called his dewan and said that he is still 30 tigers away from his target of hunting 100 tigers. The king told him that he had decided to get married. He asked the dewan to draw up statistics of tiger populations in neighboring states. Then his job was to investigate if there was a girl he could marry in the royal family of a state with a large tiger population. Dewan was able to find a state where there was a good population of tigers. The king killed five or six tigers each time he visited his in-laws. This way, he was able to find the required number of tigers to kill. He shot ninety-nine tigers.

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Read and find out

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

Ans. When the Tiger King was not getting his hundredth victim as tiger then he started feeling sad. He tried a lot for the last tiger, but there was no success from anywhere. In the midst of this sadness, the king got good news that sheep are decreasing rapidly in a nearby village which simply meant that Tiger is still alive. The king announced a three-year exemption from all taxes for that village. People also showed great eagerness to search the tiger but did not get any success. The king felt that people are not finding tiger properly. After this, the king told the Dewan to double the tax of that village so that people immediately looked for the tiger for not paying him increased taxes. When Dewan and the rest of the people of the palace realized that they can lose their jobs, Dewan found a tiger from the forest and brought it in his car to the King's Palace. And this is how the king reached his 100th tiger.

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Read and find out

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

Ans. Astrologer was older when King was born and the former died when King hunted 99 tigers. His prediction turned out to be correct and the tiger became the reason for king's death. But it was not a real tiger but a wooden tiger, whose small edge caused the infection and it became the reason for the death of the king. When the king failed to find the hundredth tiger and the desperation grew, the Dewan then decided to get a tiger from Madras and presented it to the Maharaja. Due to King's misfortune, tiger survived because of missing the bullet at the hands of King and King was killed by an artificial tiger. The prophecy was not disproved as the king met his death with the infection caused by the sliver of a wooden tiger.

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Reading with insight

Que. 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. This is a wonderful story written by Kalki which keeps the readers attached from beginning to end. This is also sarcasm on the people sitting in power because they consider God and nature to be the power of their hands. Something similar happened with the Maharaja of Pratibhapuram when he was born, about whom predictions were made and he left no stone unturned to prove the astrologer wrong when he grew up. Being a great warrior or mighty king, victory in the war was possible, but nothing was possible without the will of God. When the Maharaja was born, the cause of his death was predicted, but he refused to believe it and warned God with his actions. King's death was due to the hundredth tiger only, but the way it was supposed to happen, it remains a thrilling experience for the readers.

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

Ans. The author has written in sarcasm that King was killing Tigers fast for his ambitions. It is illegal to kill wild animals, whoever they are. But King kept on killing tigers to show his power and prove astrologer wrong until he reached the 100 mark. Tigers were almost on the verge of extinction in Pratibandapuram by killing them, so Dewan had to bring hundredth tiger from Madras. This is a matter when India was a colony under British rule, if this had happened somewhere today, then the king or minister has to follow strict law in the tiger's hunting from government's side not for 100th killing but in very first hunting itself.

Que. 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. There was nothing unusual about the King of Pratibandapuram and his group of ministers or the general public. The same thing happened that had been going on for centuries. All those who worked under the king were not loyal to him but were afraid of him. Dewan, fearing to lose his job or life, also brings a girl to the king and a tiger from Madras to fulfill his ambitions. He did not try to stop the king even once or to convince him. The fear of Maharaja was so much in advisors and secretaries that even if astrologer had predicted a killing of 100 men, Dewan would have happily brought humans for their King. This is story is about the time when those who opposed the king's words were punished to death. Death however is not given in today's era, but following orders continues in the same way as it used to be. This directly involves the personal interest of those working below political or administrative officers.

Que. 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?

The Tiger King

Ans. Human beings have been hunting wildlife animals for several decades now for commercial use or hobby. Thousands of whales are killed annually for sale in the international market. There are number of purposes for which animals are killed which may include food and medicine, clothing, ornaments, research etc. Run by dangerous international networks, wildlife and animal parts are trafficked much like illegal drugs and arms. Some examples of illegal wildlife trade are well known, such as poaching of elephants for ivory and tigers for their skins and bones. However, countless other species are similarly overexploited, from marine turtles to timber trees. Illegal wildlife trade is driven by high profit margins and, in many cases, the high prices paid for rare species. Those from developed countries may act as brokers or middlemen facilitating the import or export of animals from poorer developing countries where locals are primarily responsible for the collection of the animals.

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

Ans. India and the rest of the world have taken many such steps in the last decade which are helpful in conserving wildlife. A campaign “Save Our Tigers” was initiated and the campaign soon reached over 100 million people worldwide and generated INR 95 million in funding for tiger conservation. Support has poured in from all corners – the Chief Ministers of various states and celebrities including Amitabh Bachchan and Mahendra Singh Dhoni have appeared on television to voice their support for the campaign. Lakhs of children have participated in rallies, calling for the protection of India’s national animal. The Save Our Tigers campaign has been an unprecedented success, bringing tiger conservation to the forefront of India’s consciousness. The good news is we’ve also seen what’s working. WWF (World Wildlife Fund) has been part of successful wildlife recovery stories ranging from southern Africa’s black rhino to black bucks in the Himalayas. And this, in turn, is helping to protect rich and varied ecosystems while ensuring people continue to benefit from nature. People engaged in protecting animals and environments have been working for them for a long time and their work is commendable.