

VISTAS

L-1: The Tiger King

— -Kalki

About the author



Ramaswamy Aiyer Krishnamurthy
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Pen name 'Kalki'

Ramaswamy Aiyer Krishnamurthy was a Tamil writer, journalist, poet, critic and Indian Independence activist. He penned 120 short stories, 10 novelettes, 5 novels, 3 historical romances, editorial and political writings and hundreds of film and music reviews.

POINTS TO REMEMBER-

1. Maharaja of Pratibandhpuram born as an extraordinary child.
2. Prediction of his death due to a tiger.
3. Ten days old child surprises all by his his intelligent questions.
4. The child is brought up like an English child.
5. The Prince grows up and becomes a great king.

6. The king decides to kill a tiger.
7. But the chief astrologer warns him that he will be killed by the hundredth tiger.
8. He started killing tigers and thus killed seventy tigers.
9. He marries a princess whose kingdom boasted of tigers.
10. He killed ninety nine tigers.
11. But he was unable to find one more tiger.
12. The Dewan brought an old and feeble tiger from the zoo.
13. The tiger king aimed at it but it fainted. The king thought that he killed hundred tigers.
14. After the king went away the tiger opened its eyes.
15. One of the hunters killed it.
16. The tiger was honoured and taken in a procession.
17. The king purchased a wooden tiger for his son.
18. Its silver pierced the hand of the king.
19. The king died.

SHORT QUESTIONS

(2 marks)

- **Q1. How did the ten-day-old baby (the future Tiger King) react to the prediction about his future?**

Value points:

- Said all those who are born will one day have to die.
- They did not require the predictions of the astrologers for that.
- It would be some sense if the astrologers could tell the manner of the death.
- Said let tigers beware.

Q2. When he was only ten days old, a prediction was made about the future of the Tiger King. What was ironic about it?

Value points:

- He would die - irony- ten day old infant speaking/ everyone who is born has to die.
- Killed by the tiger (100th) – irony death by a toy/ wooden tiger's silver.

Q3. Why did the Maharaja ban tiger hunting in the state?

Value points:

- Wanted to hunt and kill 100 tigers to fulfil his vow/ wanted to prove the astrologer's prediction wrong / he had only a limited population of tigers in his kingdom/ did not want anyone to hunt or kill tiger.

Q4. Why did the Tiger King decide to get married?

Value points:

- To reach his aim of killing hundred tigers.
- Only seventy tigers had been killed, no tiger left in his forest.
- Wanted to marry a princess from a kingdom with many tigers.

Q5. How did the Tiger King's Dewan prove to be resourceful?

Value points:

- Was brought by Dewan from people's Park in Chennai/ released near the king's camp near the forest.

Q6. The manner of his (the king's) death is a matter of extraordinary interest. Comment.

Value points:

- Vows to kill hundred tigers to ensure his longevity/ as soon as he was born, astrologers had foretold that one day one day the Tiger King would be killed by a tiger.

Q7. Who killed the 100th tiger? Why?

Value points:

- If the real tiger was the hundredth tiger – king misses the mark/ this fact hidden from King./ tiger killed by the hunters/ if wooden tiger considered as hundredth tiger – it caused the death of the king.

Q8. How did the hundredth tiger take its revenge upon the king?

Value points:

- Tiger made by unskilled carpenter, had silver sticking out/ silver pierced maharaja's right hand/ caused infection, suppurating sore/ needed operation/ Maharaja died in operation.

TITLE

"The Tiger King" is a very appropriate title for the story for several reasons. First of all, the king is crazy about tiger hunting so much that he marries a princess whose father's kingdom has a sizeable tiger population. He kills one hundred tigers just to fulfil his vow. Secondly, the king with all his frenzy, anger and ruthlessness is as ferocious as a tiger. Thirdly, he dies of a silver prick received from a wooden toy tiger. Finally, the prediction that a tiger would cause the king's death also comes true. Since the story revolves round a king and the hundred tigers that he kills, it could not be better titled that "The Tiger King".

MESSAGE

The message Kalki hands out in the story "The Tiger King" is pertinently relevant in the modern times when the tiger appears to be on the brink of extinction in the land of its origin. The story makes a frantic call for the protection of the tiger, indeed all flora and fauna. The death of the king is a result of the nemesis that follows his thoughtless killing of one hundred tigers just to disprove an astrological prediction about his own death. No wonder when the king dies, the surgeons announce, "The operation was successful, the Maharaja is dead." Thus, natural justice does take place albeit a little too late. In his inimitable style, the author seems to suggest to his readers to follow the dictum, "Live and Let Live". Killing for one's whims or pleasure is the gravest of sins.

-Sanjukta Sengupta