

## Chapter 2 : The Tiger King

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Read and Find Out

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

Answer

Jilani Jung Jung Bahadur, the king of Pratibandapuram, is known as 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 the 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'.

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

Answer

The royal infant grew up to be the king of Pratibandapuram who was obsessed with the idea of killing one hundred tigers. He wanted to do so to disprove the prophecy which said that his death would come from the hundredth tiger. This made him kill all tigers of Pratibandapuram. He even married for the sake of this ambition. He came to be known as the Tiger King.

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

Answer

To get the required number of tigers to kill, the Maharaja asked his dewan to find a suitable girl for him to marry. A suitable girl for matrimonial alliance would be one who would not only come from a royal family but also belong to a state with a large tiger population. As Pratibandapuram had no more tigers left, a province that belonged to his father-in-law would certainly provide him with an opportunity to kill more tigers and reach his aim of killing one hundred tigers.

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

Answer

The Maharaja wanted to be extremely careful while dealing with the hundredth tiger which was supposed to be the reason for his death. On encountering the hundredth one, he took a careful aim at the tiger and shot it. When it fell in a crumpled heap, he was overcome with joy and left the place hastily.

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

## Answer

The astrologer dies before the king of Pratibandapuram gets an opportunity to kill one hundred tigers. Disproving his prophecy seems to be the sole reason for the king's existence. Except for killing hundred tigers, everything else takes a back-seat for the king.

The prophecy cannot to be indisputably disproved as the king was ultimately killed by a tiger, though neither by a real one nor by the hundredth one. Looking at the weak, old and almost lifeless tiger that was the hundredth one, no one would have thought that it would escape the king's bullet by fainting at the shock of the bullet whizzing past. It was the "tiny little wooden tiger" from the toy shop that caused the death of Tiger King.

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## Reading with Insight

1. 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

The story "The Tiger King" is a supreme example of dramatic irony. The character acts in a way grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances or expects the opposite of what fate holds in store for him'. Kalki has used a very dexterous use of dramatic irony in the story. After killing the first tiger the King flaunts its dead body before astrologer to show that he is more powerful than the tiger. However, the astrologer warns the king that he should be "careful with the hundredth tiger". The king

chooses to prove the astrologer wrong once again and makes frantic efforts to kill hundred tigers. Thus, having shot at the old tiger, the Tiger king believes he has killed the hundredth tiger. But the reader as well as the king's officers and minions soon come to know that the emaciated tiger does not get killed but only faints. The king gets happy of killing the tiger but in actual ignorant of this ironical fate the prediction proves to be right and mere sliver on wooden tiger's body causes his dramatic death. Quite ironically the hundredth tiger kills the king instead and astrologer's predictions stands vindicated.

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

Answer

Through this satirical story the author has rightly portrayed how human beings have subjected innocent animals to untold torture and death, merely to fulfill their own whims and fancies. The maharaja's indiscriminate killing of tigers led to their extinction in some states, but the maharaja was oblivious to the grave consequences his action was leading to. In order to prove an astrologer wrong the maharaja went on a killing spree proving his dominance over the hapless animals.

3. 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 subservient and sycophantic. Most of them were scared of Maharaja and tried to keep him in good humour by obeying his orders. They did not dare to disobey him as his displeasure could mean loss of their job or even loss of their lives.

The astrologer was afraid of predicting his death, till Maharaja told him to "speak without fear". Dewan who should have advised the king not to kill the tigers did not dare to go against his wishes and aided his marriage to a princess whose father's kingdom possessed a large number of tigers. Being afraid of losing his job, he presented an old tiger to satisfy the whims of his Maharaja. Likewise, the hunters chose not to inform him of the survival of the 100th tiger and instead killed it themselves fearing that they might lose their jobs. Even the shopkeeper, who sold the king a cheap wooden toy tiger, quoted a higher price lest he should be punished under the rules of emergency.

So, it is evident that the king's minions were driven by fear rather than any feelings of sincerity towards their ruler.

Today's political order is no different. We know too well that many of the people in power are not there because of their ability but because of their influence and power. Moreover, others pander to them for their own vested interests rather than for the good of the country.

4. 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?

Answer

There have been some instances of game hunting in the present times. Even the affluent have been involved in instances that illustrate the callousness of human beings towards wildlife.

Salman Khan – Black Buck poaching case.

Nawab Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi - Antelope case.