

Chapter- 1

The Tiger King

About the author

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. Tiger King, Otrai Roja.

Introduction

The story 'The Tiger King' is a satire on the pride and stubbornness of those in power. The writer takes us to the days of autocratic and eccentric kings. These kings lived under the thumb rule of British, hence they fear them. Most of the time the rulers were not interested in serving the people and working for the welfare of the public; instead, they spent their time in foolish pursuits. They flouted all laws and bent them to suit their selfish interests. The Maharaja of Pratibandapuram tried to belie what was written in his fate. The chief astrologer had predicted that the cause of his death would be a tiger. The King tried his best to belie the prediction. His campaign of tiger-hunting was very successful. All his strategies and wise plans worked until he killed 99 tigers. But the hundredth tiger eluded him till his death. The irony of fate brings quite an unexpected end of the Maharaja. The hero who killed ninety-nine tigers couldn't kill the only one that was left. The last tiger he thought to be dead survived. The King's bullet had missed its mark. Ironically, the hundredth tiger which caused his death was not a ferocious beast of blood and flesh. It was a wooden tiger. One of the slivers of wood pierced his right hand and caused infection and a suppurating sore. It ultimately led to his death.

Theme

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 beast of prey is wiped out. Each species, howsoever fierce, deadly, ferocious or poisonous has its role in maintaining the ecological balance in nature.

Sub – concepts

- Selfish interest
- Follies of autocracy
- Astrologer’s prophecy
- Inevitability of destiny
- Utility of humour
- Inescapability from death
- The inhuman, callous attitude of the people towards wildlife

Characters

1. The Tiger King: a hero of the story, the Maharaja of Pratibandhpuram, also known 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.
2. Crown prince: a ten-day-old baby who later became the Maharaja of Pratibandhpuram.
3. Chief astrologer: a royal foreteller of the state.
4. Durai: means “chief, leader” in Tamil.
5. A British high ranking officer & his secretary
6. Dewan: a chief administrative office of the Maharaja.
7. Duraisani: the wife of the high ranking British officer, a greedy woman who takes all the 50 or so diamond rings for herself.

Summary

The Maharaja Sir Jilani Jung Jung Bhadur was called “Tiger King”. When he was just 10 days old, he asked intelligent questions to the astrologers and was told that he would be killed by a tiger. He uttered, “Let tigers beware!” No other miracle took place, the child grew like any other Royal child drinking white cow’s milk. He was taught by an English tutor and looked after by an English nanny. He watched English films. When he was 20, he was crowned as king. It was then the prediction of his death by the tiger reached the Maharaja’s ear and him, in turn, to safe guard himself killed a tiger and being thrilled he told the astrologer who replied that he can kill 99 tigers but should be careful with the 100th. He pledged that all other affairs of the state would be attended after killing a hundred tigers. Then he started killing tigers. None except Maharaja was allowed to hunt tigers. A high-ranking British officer visited the state that was fond of hunting tigers and his wish was declined. The officer requested for getting a photograph

with a tiger killed by Maharaja and this request was rejected. So to please the officer's wife, he sent 50 diamond rings expecting that she would take one or two, instead, she kept all the rings costing 3 lakh rupees and sent 'thanks' to the Maharaja. But his state was secured. In 10 years, he killed 70 tigers and didn't find any in Pratibandapuram so he decided to marry a girl from the royal state which had more tigers to complete his target. Whenever he visited his in-laws, he killed 5-6 tigers. So he killed 99 tigers and was feverishly anxious to kill the 100th but couldn't find. News about the presence of a tiger near a village proved disappointing. He asked his Dewan to find the tiger otherwise face his anger. Now the Dewan was afraid of losing his job so he visited 'People's Park in Madras' and brought an old tiger and placed it in the forest and informed the Maharaja. The Maharaja took great care and shot the tiger and left the place with great triumph. The bullet did not hit the tiger but out of fear, the tiger had collapsed. Now the staff killed the tiger and brought it in a grand procession. It was the third birthday of the Maharaja's son and he wanted to buy a present from the toyshop. He bought a wooden tiger which was poorly carved. While the Maharaja was playing with the prince, a tiny sliver of the wooden tiger pierced his right hand which later on caused his death. Thus the hundredth tiger takes his final revenge upon the "Tiger King".

The gist of the lesson:

- The Maharaja Sir Jilani Jung Jung Bhadur was called "Tiger King"
 - When he was just 10 days old he asked intelligent questions to the astrologers and was told that he would be killed by a tiger. He uttered, "Let tigers beware!"
- No other miracle took place, the child grew like any other Royal child drinking white cow's milk, taught by an English tutor, looked after by an English nanny and watched English films.
- When he was 20, he was crowned as king. It was then the prediction of his death by the tiger reached the Maharaja's ear and him, in turn, to safe guard himself killed a tiger and being thrilled he told the astrologer who replied that he can kill 99 tigers but should be careful with the 100th.
- From then on he started killing a tiger and none was allowed to hunt tigers. A high-ranking British officer visited the state that was fond of hunting tiger and his wish was declined.
- The officer requested for getting a photograph with a tiger killed by Maharaja and this request was rejected.

- So to please the officer's wife he sent 50 diamond rings expecting that she would take 1 or 2 instead she kept all the rings costing 3 lakh rupees and sent 'thanks' to the Maharaja. But his state was secured.
- In 10 years he killed 70 tigers and didn't find any in Pratibandapuram so he decided to marry a girl from the royal state which had more tigers to complete his target whenever he visited his in-laws he killed 5-6 tigers. So he killed 99 tigers and was feverishly anxious to kill the 100th but couldn't find news about the presence of a tiger near a village proved disappointing.
- Now the Dewan was warned of his danger so he visited 'People's Park in Madras' and brought an old tiger and placed it in the forest and informed the Maharaja.
- The Maharaja took great care and shot the tiger and left the place with great triumph the bullet did not hit the tiger but out of fear the tiger had collapsed. Now the staff killed the tiger and brought it in grand procession it was the 3rd birthday of the Maharaja's son and he wanted to buy a present from the toyshop. He bought a wooden tiger which was poorly carved. 97
- While the Maharaja was playing with the prince a tiny sliver of the wooden tiger pierced his right hand which later on caused his death. Thus the hundredth tiger takes his final revenge upon the "Tiger King".

Vocabulary

- Pretending: behaving to make it appear that something is the case when in fact it is not
- Strategic: calculated
- Stuka bomber: a German bomber aircraft that was used in the second world war
- Indomitable: undefeatable
- Final abode: refers to the final residence of the soul – the heaven.
- Demise: death
- Foretold: predicted
- Transfixed: cause (someone) to become motionless with horror, wonder, or astonishment.
- Stupefaction: shock
- Enunciated: say or pronounce clearly.
- Incredible: unbelievable
- Rumour: a currently circulating story or report of uncertain or doubtful truth.
- Rife: widespread, prevalent
- Hindsight: to understand an event or situation only after it has happened
- Court of wards: The Court of Wards was a legal body created by the East India Company. Its purpose was to protect heirs and their estates when the heir was deemed to be a minor and therefore incapable of acting independently.
- Tuft: a bunch or collection of threads, grass, hair, etc., held or growing together at the base.

- Incoherent: unclear, confused
- Proclamation: a public or official announcement
- Fling: throw
- Confiscated: taken with authority
- Ambition: a strong desire to do or achieve something.
- Bare: here, unarmed
- Firm: determined
- Resolve: decision
- Boar: pig
- Durai: Tamil word meaning chief or leader
- Carcass: the dead body of an animal.
- Relented: relaxed his decision
- Deliberations: discussions
- Dispatched: sent
- Unforeseen: unplanned, accidental
- Hurdle: problem
- Standstill: stop
- Extinct: having no living members.
- Hara-kiri: a ritual of suicide practised in Japan.
- Brandishing: waving as a threat or in anger or excitement
- Shuddering: tremble with fear
- Summoned: called
- Babble: to talk or say something in a quick, confused, excited, or silly way
- Investigate: find out
- Adorned: decorated
- Fever pitch: extreme
- Anxiety: curiosity
- Tally: count, total
- Savage: uncontrolled
- Wary: be cautious
- Gloom: sadness
- Dispelled: removed
- Exemption: freedom
- Wantonly: carelessly
- Flout: to go against something or someone
- Fury: anger
- Obstinacy: firmness
- Mounted: increased

- Rage: anger
- Discontented: unhappy
- Catastrophic: causing sudden great damage or suffering
- Haul: pull or drag with effort or force
- Supplication: pray
- Elation: joy
- Procession: parade
- Bafflement: confusion
- Annas: currency used in the olden times. 1 anna = 1/16 rupee
- Slivers: shavings
- Suppurating: a wound full of pus
- Sore: painful inflammation

