

# English Notes



## Vistas Chapter-2

### The Tiger King

Author: Kalki Krishnamurthy

#### About the Author

Kalki Krishnamurthy was a famous Tamil writer, journalist, and critic. He wrote historical novels, short stories, and satirical works. His writings often contained humour and sharp criticism of social and political systems. *The Tiger King* is a satirical story that criticizes the arrogance and irresponsibility of rulers.

#### Summary

*The Tiger King* is a humorous yet satirical story about the Maharaja of Pratibandapuram, whose life revolves around a prophecy made at the time of his birth.

When the Maharaja was only **ten days old**, astrologers predicted that he would grow up to become a brave king but would eventually **die because of a tiger**. Surprisingly, the infant prince spoke and challenged the prediction by saying, “**Let tigers beware!**” This strange incident shocked everyone.

The prince grew up like any other royal child. He was **brought up under British influence**, drank cow’s milk, was educated by an English tutor, looked after by an English nanny, and watched English movies.

When he turned **twenty years old**, he became the king of Pratibandapuram. Soon after his coronation, he came to know about the astrologer’s prophecy that he would die because of a tiger. Determined to defeat fate, the Maharaja decided to **kill every tiger in his kingdom**.

He killed his **first tiger** and proudly showed it to the royal astrologer. The astrologer warned him that he could kill **ninety-nine tigers safely**, but he should be extremely careful with the **hundredth tiger**.

From that day onwards, the Maharaja started hunting tigers aggressively. He even passed an order that **no one except the king was allowed to hunt tigers** in the state. Anyone who violated this rule would be severely punished.

Once, a **British officer** who was fond of tiger hunting visited the kingdom and wanted to hunt a tiger. The Maharaja refused because he wanted all the tigers for himself. The officer then requested that he should at least take a **photograph with a tiger killed by the Maharaja**, but even this request was rejected.

The British officer’s wife became angry, and the Maharaja feared political trouble. To please her, he sent **fifty expensive diamond rings**. He expected that she would keep one or two rings and return the rest. However, she kept **all the rings**, which cost about **three lakh rupees**, and simply sent a thank-you note. Even though the king suffered financial loss, he was relieved because his kingdom remained politically safe.

Within **ten years**, the Maharaja killed **seventy tigers** in his kingdom. Gradually, tigers

became extinct in Pratibandapuram. To complete his target of killing one hundred tigers, he decided to **marry a princess from another kingdom where many tigers still existed.**

Whenever he visited his **in-laws' kingdom**, he went on hunting expeditions and killed **five or six tigers each time.** Eventually, he succeeded in killing **ninety-nine tigers.** Now he became extremely anxious to find and kill the **hundredth tiger.**

However, no tiger could be found anywhere. The king became angry and even threatened the **Dewan (chief minister)** that if the hundredth tiger was not found soon, serious consequences would follow.

To save himself from punishment, the Dewan secretly arranged an **old tiger from the People's Park in Madras** and released it in the forest for the Maharaja to hunt.

The Maharaja shot the tiger and believed that he had killed it. However, **the bullet actually missed the tiger.** The tiger had simply collapsed due to fear. The king left the place proudly, believing he had killed the hundredth tiger. Later, the royal hunters secretly **killed the tiger and arranged a grand procession** to celebrate the king's success.

Some days later, it was the **third birthday of the Maharaja's son.** The king went to a toy shop to buy a present for him. He chose a **wooden tiger toy** that was poorly carved.

While playing with the toy, a **tiny wooden splinter pierced the king's hand.** The wound became infected and led to serious illness. Despite medical treatment, the infection spread and **the Maharaja eventually died.**

Thus, the astrologer's prophecy finally came true. Although the king killed ninety-nine real tigers and believed he had killed the hundredth one, he was ultimately killed by a **wooden tiger toy.**

### Central Idea

The story is a **satirical criticism of arrogance, blind faith in astrology, and misuse of power by rulers.** It shows that no one can escape destiny, no matter how powerful they are.

### Themes

#### 1. Fate vs Human Effort

The Maharaja tries to defeat destiny by killing tigers, but fate ultimately proves stronger.

#### 2. Abuse of Power

The king uses his authority selfishly and imposes strict rules on his people.

#### 3. Satire on Royalty

The story humorously criticizes the foolish pride and arrogance of rulers.

#### 4. Colonial Influence

The British officer episode shows the political pressure faced by Indian rulers during British rule.

## Key Characters

### The Tiger King (Maharaja)

Arrogant, stubborn, and obsessed with killing tigers to defeat the prophecy.

### The Astrologer

Predicts the king's death and warns him about the hundredth tiger.

### The Dewan

A clever minister who arranges a tiger secretly to save himself from the king's anger.

### British Officer

Represents colonial power and arrogance.

## Important Message

The story teaches that **destiny cannot be escaped**. Pride and overconfidence often lead to one's downfall.

## Detailed Summary

"The Tiger King" is a story of an arrogant King who disproved the prophecy of the astrologer, but destiny proved to be powerful and the prediction which was made when the king was ten days old comes out to be true. The Maharaja Sir Jilani Jung Jung Bahadur 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 turned 20, he was crowned as the king. It was then the prediction of his death by the tiger reached the Maharaja's ear and he 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 tiger and none was allowed to hunt tigers.

A high-ranking British officer visited the state. He was fond of hunting tiger but his wish was declined. The officer requested for getting a photograph with a tiger killed by Maharaja and this request too 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 tiger and didn't find any in his own region so he decided to marry a girl from 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 this 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 toy shop. He bought a wooden tiger which was poorly carved. While the Maharaja was playing with the prince, a tiny sliver of the wooden tiger pierces his right hand which later on causes his death. Thus, the hundredth tiger takes his final revenge upon the “Tiger King”.

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- From then on he started killing tiger and none was allowed to hunt tigers. A highranking 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 tiger and didn’t find any in Pratibandapuram so he decided to marry a girl from 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.
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- 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.
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## Important Questions – *A Roadside Stand*

### Very Short Answer Questions (1–2 Marks)

1. Why did the poor rural people set up a roadside stand?
2. What goods were displayed at the roadside stand?
3. What is meant by the phrase "**polished traffic passed with a mind ahead**"?
4. Why did the passing cars stop occasionally at the roadside stand?
5. What does the poet mean by "**greedy good-doers**"?
6. What does the poet want to do for the rural poor?
7. Why do the villagers hope for help from the government or city people?
8. What kind of life do the rural people dream of?
9. Why are the rural people disappointed?
10. What does the poet feel when he thinks about the suffering of the rural poor?

### Short Answer Questions (3–4 Marks)

1. Why did the rural people build a roadside stand? What was their hope?
2. Why do the city people dislike the roadside stand?
3. What does Frost mean by "**greedy good-doers**"?
4. What does the poet want to do to end the suffering of the rural poor?
5. How does the poet highlight the difference between rural and urban life?
6. Why do the villagers wait for cars to stop at their stand?
7. Why are the villagers disappointed again and again?
8. Explain the poet's sympathy for the rural people.
9. What do the rural people expect from the government?
10. How are the rural people exploited in the name of development?

### Long Answer Questions (5–6 Marks)

1. Describe the hardships faced by the rural people in the poem "A Roadside Stand."
2. How does Robert Frost show the contrast between the lives of city people and rural people?
3. The poem is a criticism of modern society. Explain.
4. What message does the poet convey through the poem "A Roadside Stand"?
5. How does the poet express sympathy for the poor rural people?
6. Why does the poet feel angry about the treatment of rural people by the rich and powerful?
7. Explain the theme of poverty and exploitation in the poem.
8. How does the poet criticize the government and social reformers?

## Extract-Based Questions (Very Important for Boards)

### Extract 1

**“The little old house was out with a little new shed  
In front at the edge of the road...”**

Questions:

1. What was built in front of the house?
2. Why was the shed built?
3. What were they trying to sell?
4. What does the shed symbolize?

### Extract 2

**“The polished traffic passed with a mind ahead...”**

Questions:

1. Who are referred to as “polished traffic”?
2. What does this phrase suggest about city people?
3. Why do they ignore the roadside stand?
4. What contrast is shown here?

### Extract 3

**“The sorrow that lurks near the open window there...”**

Questions:

1. What sorrow is being referred to?
2. Why do the villagers wait near the window?
3. What is the poet’s reaction to their suffering?

## Value-Based / Analytical Questions (Common in Boards)

1. What does the poem teach us about social inequality?
2. How does the poem highlight the neglect of rural India?
3. What responsibility do city people have towards rural communities?
4. Do you think development should focus more on villages? Why?