

AUNT JENNIFER'S TIGERS

Extract Based Questions (4 Marks)

Question.1. Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will lie
Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by
The tigers in the panel that she made
Will go on prancing, proud and unafraid

- (a) Who is the aunt mentioned here?
 - (b) Why is she "ringed with ordeals"?
 - (c) What is the difference between her and the tigers?
 - (d) Why has Aunt Jennifer created the tigers so different from her own character?
- or
- (a) Why are Aunt Jennifer's hands terrified?
 - (b) Why did she make the tigers?
 - (c) What will happen to her tigers after her death?
 - (d) How are Aunt Jennifer's tigers different from her?

Answer.(a) The aunt mentioned here is Aunt Jennifer, the protagonist of Adrienne Rich's poem 'Aunt Jennifer's Tigers'; she is a woman going through unpleasant experiences in her married , life.

(b) The 'ring' here refers to her wedding band or ring, which has brought with it a host of family responsibilities. She feels so surrounded (i.e. ringed) by her marital constraints that it seems like an ordeal to her.

(c) Aunt Jennifer is quite weak and submissive, whereas the tigers are strong, bold and powerful. She is bound by the constraints of her married life, while the tigers are free to move about in the green woods.

(d) The tigers created by Aunt Jennifer are an expression of her desire to free herself from the constraints of her married life. She wants to be bold and fearless like her tigers.

or

(a) Her hands are 'terrified' (actually she is terrified) as she is passing through the very hard and bitter experience of married life. Here the poet has used her hands to represent her.

(b) She made the tigers because they are beasts of prey. They are chivalric and confident and do not fear men, which is totally contrasting with her own nature.

(c) The tigers will still keep prancing over the panel even when Aunt is dead. They will outlive her.

(d) Aunt Jennifer's tigers provide a striking contrast to her. The old lady is weak and- scared of men, whereas the tigers symbolise strength, power and fearlessness.

Question.2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

Aunt Jennifer's tigers prance across a screen,
Bright topaz denizens of a world of green
They do not fear the men beneath the tree,
They pace in sleek chivalric certainty

- (a) How are Aunt Jennifer's tigers described?
- (b) Why are they described as denizens of a world of green?
- (c) Why are they not afraid of the men?
- (d) What are her tigers symbolic of?

- Answer. (a) Aunt Jennifer's tigers have been described as golden yellow in colour. The prance fearlessly across a screen in sleek chivalric certainty.
- (b) They have been called as denizens of a world of green because they are the natives of dense green forests.
- (c) They are not afraid of men because they are brave, strong, fearless and full of confidence.
- (d) Her tigers are symbolic of Aunt Jennifer's desire for freedom. They are also symbols of strength and self-confidence.

Short Answer Type Questions (3 Marks, 30-40 words)

Question.1. What are the difficulties that Aunt Jennifer faced in her life?
or

What are the ordeals that Aunt Jennifer faced in her life?

Answer. Aunt Jennifer was probably a victim of oppression at the hands of the patriarchal society. She was subjugated by her husband and the weight of the wedding band i.e. her wedding ring, felt heavy on her hand. She was so terrified that her hands fluttered even when she carried something so light as wool.

Question.2. How are Aunt Jennifer's tigers different from her?
or

How are the tigers different from her?

Answer. Aunt Jennifer's tigers are created by her on the tapestry. However, they present a sharp contrast to their creator. While the Aunt is weak, meek and submissive and is scared of expressing her feelings openly, the tigers are strong, fearless and confident. They are bold creatures and are scared of no one. The aunt is in bonded in matrimony and faces several restrictions. On the other hand, the tigers move about freely.

Question.3. How does Aunt Jennifer express her bitterness and anger against male dominance?

Answer. Aunt Jennifer is too terrified to openly resist the oppression that she is victim of. She expresses her bitterness and anger against male dominance silently through her art. She creates tigers on her tapestry; animals that are symbolic of bravery, fearlessness and strength. Besides, she portrays these tigers as creatures unafraid of the men around them. The tigers she creates are wild and free from any kind of bondage.

Question.4. What will happen to Aunt Jennifer's tigers when she is dead?

Answer. The tigers created by Aunt Jennifer are eternal. They will keep on prancing even after her death. She probably wants to convey that the tigers which represent the Aunt's inner sense of freedom will stay forever.

Question.5. What lies heavily on Aunt Jennifer's hand? How is it associated with her husband?
or

What is the weight that lies heavy on Aunt Jennifer's hand? How is it associated with her husband?

Answer. The weight that lies heavy on Aunt Jennifer's hand is the wedding band, which symbolises the weight of her married life. Probably, the weight has burdened her so much that she feels subjugated. Aunt Jennifer had a troubled married life with a dominating and oppressive husband.

Question.6. Why did Aunt Jennifer choose to embroider tigers on the panel?

Answer. Aunt Jennifer chose to embroider tigers on the panel because for her, the tigers were the symbols of bravery, fearlessness and strength. These creatures are not afraid of the men around them. Her embroidering the tigers is perhaps an expression of her own bitterness and anger against male dominance.

Question.7. How do the words, 'denizens' and 'chivalric' add to our understanding of Aunt Jennifer's tigers?

or

How do 'denizens' and 'chivalric' add to our understanding of the tiger's attitudes?

Answer. 'Denizens' denotes occupants or citizens and 'chivalric' points to fearlessness, honour, bravery and majesty. Tigers are very possessive about their territory. They live on their own terms and fear none, as they regard themselves superior in their own domain, The poet finds similarities between the propensity-of tigers and men.

Question.8. Why do you think Aunt Jennifer created animals that are so different from her own character? What might the poet be suggesting through this difference?

Answer. Aunt Jennifer is a weak and terrified person who, all through her life, was suppressed by the constraints of marriage. The animals that she is creating in her panel are very different, as they are chivalric and do not fear men. They are a symbol of strength, fierceness and beauty. They represent Aunt Jennifer's suppressed desire to become bold and fearless, and free from oppression. The poet wants to emphasise the spirit and desire for freedom which is innate in all human beings.

Question.9. How does the poet describe Aunt Jennifer's tigers?

or

Describe the tigers created by Aunt Jennifer.

Answer. According to the poet, Aunt Jennifer's tigers are golden-yellow in colour. He describes them as prancing across the screen. They are denizens of a world of green. The tigers are sleek, chivalric, majestic and elegant. Also, they are brave and fearless.