



# Collegedunia NCERT Notes

*The Ultimate NCERT Revision Guide for Class 12 English – Vistas*

## **The Tiger King Class 12 Notes**

Chapter 2 · Vistas · by Kalki Krishnamurthy  
NCERT 2026-27 Syllabus · 12th CBSE Board

Also see for this chapter: [NCERT Solutions](#)

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## Introduction and Chapter Snapshot

*The Tiger King* by the Tamil writer Kalki Krishnamurthy is the second story in the Class 12 Vistas supplementary reader. It is a satire on royal arrogance and the futility of trying to defy fate. At the moment of his birth, astrologers predict that the Maharaja of Pratibandapuram – born under the hour of the Bull, whose enemy is the Tiger – will be killed by a tiger. The Maharaja vows to kill one hundred tigers to outwit the prophecy. He kills seventy in his own state until the tigers go extinct in Pratibandapuram, then marries a princess from a state with a large tiger population and kills twenty-nine more (five or six per visit to his father-in-law), bringing the tally to ninety-nine. The diwan secretly arranges the hundredth: an old tiger from the People’s Park in Madras, released for the Maharaja to shoot. The Maharaja shoots, presumes the tiger dead, and walks away. The story closes with the Maharaja being killed not by a real tiger but by an infected splinter from a cheap **wooden toy tiger** he gifts to his three-year-old son on his

birthday.

## 1.1 Author at a Glance

Kalki Krishnamurthy (1899–1954) was a Tamil short-story writer, novelist and journalist. He wrote under the pen-name *Kalki* for the magazine *Ananda Vikatan* and later founded his own weekly, *Kalki*. He is best known for his historical novels *Ponniyin Selvan* and *Sivakamiyin Sapatham*. *The Tiger King* is a translated short story originally written in Tamil; the English version in the Class 12 Vistas reader has been edited by NCERT for school readers.

### Why this chapter matters in Class 12

- Introduces satire as a literary mode within the Class 12 Vistas reader.
- Frequently asked across the Vistas 6-mark slot of the CBSE Class 12 English Core Board paper.
- Provides the strongest Indian-context value-based answer set in Vistas, useful for conservation and animal-rights themes.

## 1.2 Story in One Breath

A man tries to kill a hundred tigers to outwit a prophecy that he will be killed by one; he kills ninety-nine real tigers but presumes the hundredth dead when he has only wounded it; and is finally killed by a wooden toy tiger that pricks him with a sliver. Every theme, character and quotation in the chapter is anchored to that one ironic loop – the prophecy is fulfilled exactly because the Maharaja tried to defy it.

### Five-Word Anchor

**PROPHECY – HUNT – COUNT – TOY – SPLINTER.** If you remember these five words in order, you can reconstruct the entire chapter from the birth prophecy to the final operation theatre.

## 1.3 Setting at a Glance

The story is set in the fictional princely state of **Pratibandapuram** (in pre-Independence south India) and partly in the bride's home state where tigers are plentiful. The colonial-era taxidermy fashion (skin-as-trophy, jewellery-as-prize), the courtly sycophancy of the Maharaja's diwan, and the Emergency-era punishments for disobedience are the chapter's social backdrop. Kalki uses the princely state setting to satirise royal arrogance without naming any real ruler.

### Why a Tamil writer chose princely-state satire

Kalki wrote during the last decades of British India. Many of his stories used the device of a fictional princely state to satirise the excesses of the Indian princes and the colonial

taxidermy fashion they shared with the British. The fictional setting let him criticise both without naming names. The grandiose titles given to the Maharaja – *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., C.R.C.K.* – are themselves a satirical jab at the inflated honorifics handed out to princely-state rulers.

### The English upbringing of an Indian crown prince

The young prince *drank the milk of an English cow, was brought up by an English nanny, tutored in English by an Englishman, saw nothing but English films* – exactly as the crown princes of all the other Indian states did. Kalki uses this four-fold detail to satirise the colonial mimicry baked into the upbringing of every Indian royal of that era. It is no accident that the Maharaja later squanders three lakh of rupees on diamond rings to placate a British officer's wife: the colonised mindset is the Maharaja's, not just his rulers'.

## Plot Summary – Scene by Scene

The plot of *The Tiger King* happens in four ironic arcs: the prophecy at birth, the hunt to ninety-nine, the staged hundredth, and the toy tiger.

### 2.1 Scene 1: The Prophecy at Birth

The day the Maharaja of Pratibandapuram is born, astrologers gather to read his horoscope. The astonishment of the occasion is doubled because the ten-day-old infant himself joins the conversation. When the chief astrologer points out that the prince was born in the hour of the Bull – and the Bull and Tiger are enemies, therefore death comes from the Tiger – the infant speaks his immortal line: “*Let tigers beware!*” To outwit the prophecy, the Maharaja later vows that he will kill a hundred tigers.

#### Why the prophecy is the chapter's engine

The prophecy is not just a plot device; it is the chapter's structural argument. Every action the Maharaja takes is determined by this prophecy. The story's irony works because the Maharaja's effort to defy fate becomes the exact mechanism by which fate is fulfilled. Note that the astrologer himself later qualifies the prophecy – the Maharaja *may* kill ninety-nine tigers easily, but must be “very careful with the hundredth tiger.” This caveat is the seed of every later twist.

### 2.2 Scene 2: The Hunt to Ninety-Nine

The Maharaja begins killing tigers in his own state, having banned tiger-hunting by anyone else on pain of property confiscation. Within ten years he kills **seventy** tigers in Pratibandapuram, after which the tiger population goes extinct in his own state. To get the remaining thirty, he

hits on a stratagem: he sends a marriage proposal to a state with a large tiger population and marries a princess from there. Maharaja Jung Jung Bahadur then hunts in his father-in-law's state, killing five or six tigers per visit, and ninety-nine tiger skins eventually adorn the walls of the Pratibandapuram palace reception hall.

**Counting the tigers –  $70 + 29 + 1 = 100$**

**70** tigers in Pratibandapuram (state goes tiger-extinct) → marriage of state to a tiger-plentiful kingdom → **29** more from his father-in-law's forests (five or six per visit) → **99** tiger skins on the palace wall → the diwan stages the **100th**. CBSE markers reward the precise numbers; many students mis-write  $99 + 1$  or  $90 + 10$ .

### 2.3 Scene 3: The Staged Hundredth Tiger

The hundredth tiger is hard to find. Tigers have gone extinct in both states. When sheep begin to disappear from a hillside village, the Maharaja announces a three-year tax exemption for the village and rushes there – but the tiger eludes him for days. As the Maharaja's fury mounts, he orders the diwan to double the land tax; the diwan, terrified for his job, drives an old tiger brought from the **People's Park in Madras** from his house to the forest at midnight, his aged wife helping him shove the beast into the car seat. The next morning the half-starved zoo-tiger ambles up to the Maharaja, who takes careful aim and shoots. The tiger collapses. The Maharaja celebrates: the prophecy has been defied.

But there is a problem. The Maharaja's bullet has *missed entirely*; the tiger has merely fainted from the shock of the whizzing bullet. The hunters realise their jobs depend on hiding the truth. One of them takes aim from a distance of one foot and shoots the tiger dead. The Maharaja never learns that the hundredth tiger was killed by a hunter, not by himself.

#### Key Quotation – The Staged Kill

*“The men realised that the tiger was not dead; the bullet had missed it. It had fainted from the shock of the bullet whizzing past. . . . One of the hunters took aim from a distance of one foot and shot the tiger.”*

— Narrator | NCERT pages 15–16

### 2.4 Scene 4: The Wooden Toy Tiger

On the third birthday of his son – the king having previously given his entire mind to tiger-hunting and ignored the crown prince – the Maharaja searches every shop in Pratibandapuram and finally picks out a wooden toy tiger from a toyshop. The toy costs only **two annas and a quarter**, but the shopkeeper, terrified of being punished under the rules of the Emergency for quoting too low a price, demands **three hundred rupees** for it. The Maharaja agrees without blinking and carries it home. Father and son play with the rough toy; one of the tiny slivers of wood standing up like quills all over the unfinished surface pierces the Maharaja's right hand.

He pulls it out with his left hand and continues to play.

### Key Quotation – The Toy Tiger’s Bite

“One of those slivers pierced the Maharaja’s right hand. He pulled it out with his left hand and continued to play with the prince. The next day, infection flared in the Maharaja’s right hand. In four days, it developed into a suppurating sore which spread all over the arm.”

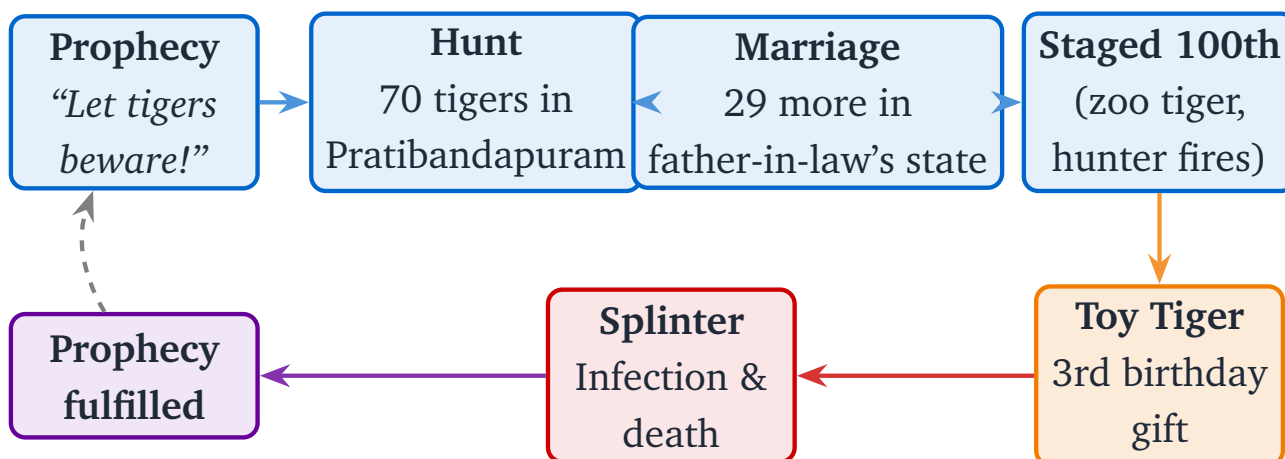
— Narrator | NCERT page 16

The next day infection flares in the Maharaja’s right hand. Within four days the wound becomes a suppurating sore that spreads across the arm. Three famous surgeons are summoned from Madras; after consultation they operate, and emerge from the theatre with the chapter’s mock-heroic closing line: “The operation was successful. The Maharaja is dead.” The narrator concludes: in this manner the hundredth tiger – the wooden one – took its final revenge upon the Tiger King.

### Plot Skeleton – the 5-S Hook

**PROPHECY** → **HUNT** → **COUNT** → **TOY** → **SPLINTER**. The prophecy sets the vow; the **hunt** reaches ninety-nine; the **count** stalls at the hundredth (the staged zoo-kill); the **toy** tiger arrives at the prince’s third birthday; the **splinter** delivers the prophecy on the operating table.

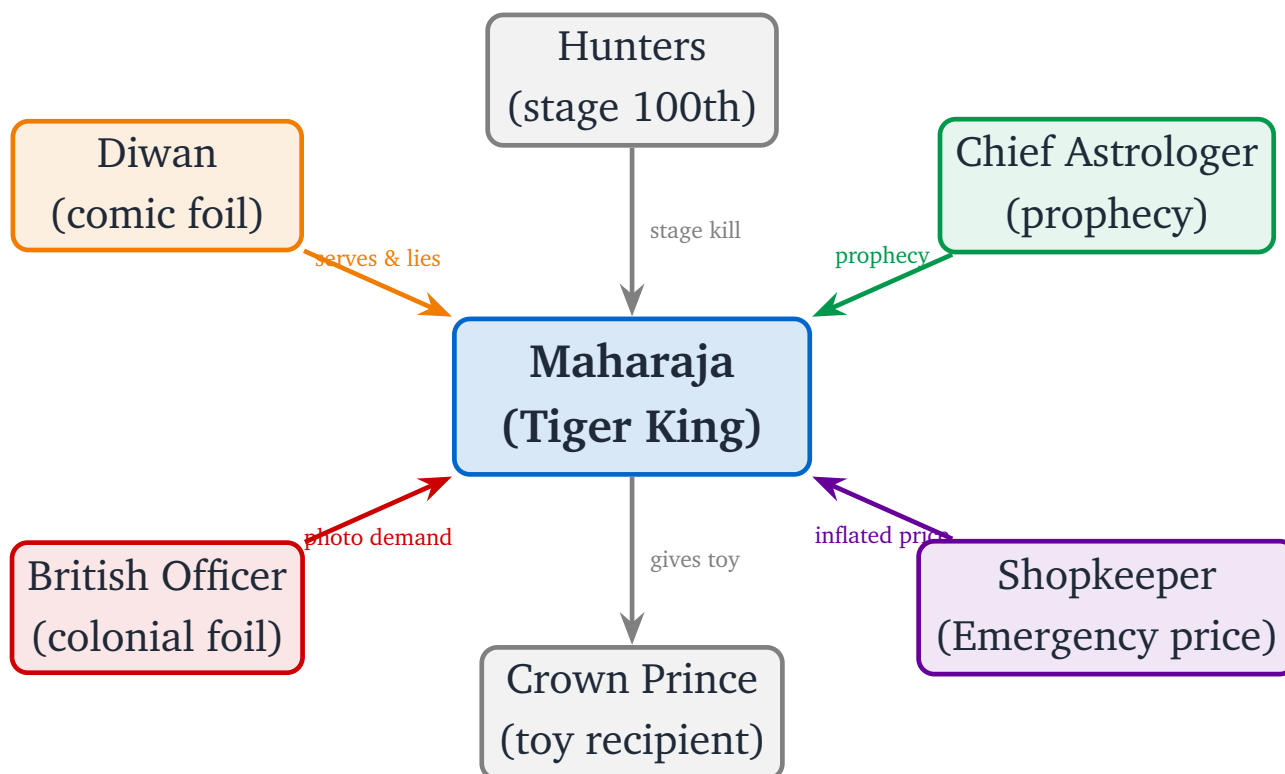
## 2.5 Visual Plot Arc – the Ironic Loop



## Character Sketches

The story is built around three figures – the Maharaja, the diwan, and the British officer – supported by a silent chorus of sycophantic courtiers and a shopkeeper terrified of the Emergency. Each carries a different stance towards power, so questions on characters always become questions on the chapter’s satire.

### 3.1 Character Constellation – Who Stands Where



### 3.2 The Maharaja of Pratibandapuram – the Tiger King

The Maharaja – whose full grandiose title runs *His Highness Jamedar-General, Khiledar-Major, Sata Vyaghra Samhari, Maharajadhiraja Visva Bhuvana Samrat, Sir Jilani Jung Jung Bahadur* – is the chapter’s protagonist and the central object of Kalki’s satire. He is brave in a literal sense (he does shoot tigers face to face, and once fights a tiger with his bare hands when the bullet misses) and absurd in a moral sense (he kills tigers only to defy a horoscope).

- **Brave-as-bravado.** The infant’s line “*Let tigers beware!*” sets the tone. The Maharaja’s bravery is performative; it is meant for the astrologers, not for the tigers.
- **Driven by superstition.** His entire adult life is structured by the prophecy. He marries a princess from a tiger-plentiful state, not for love but to complete the count.
- **Authoritarian.** He bans tiger-hunting by anyone else (on pain of property confiscation), has the diwan trembling at every glance of his gun, and orders the land tax doubled when the hundredth tiger eludes him.
- **Self-deluded.** He never learns that the hundredth tiger was killed by a hunter. His celebration of having outwitted fate is itself ironic.
- **Negligent father.** He had “*no time to spare for the crown prince*” until the third birthday; the toy he picks ends up killing him – a final irony.

### How the Maharaja's character serves the satire

(i) **Pride** (the infant's bravado) → (ii) **Obsession** (the hundred-tiger vow) → (iii) **Self-deception** (presuming the hundredth tiger dead) → (iv) **Defeat by an instrument so small he never notices it** (the wooden tiger's splinter).

### 3.3 The Diwan – the Comic Foil

The diwan is the Maharaja's minister and the chapter's comic foil. He is terrified of the Maharaja and will do anything to keep his job.

- **Sycophantic to the point of farce.** When the Maharaja runs out of tigers, the diwan arranges a marriage to a tiger-plentiful state; when the hundredth tiger eludes the king, the diwan and his aged wife drag a zoo-tiger from the People's Park in Madras into a car at midnight and drive it to the forest.
- **Cowardly courtier.** His babble at the Maharaja's announcement – "*Your Majesty, I have two wives already. If I marry you. . .*" – is the chapter's broadest piece of comic relief, designed to show his terror.
- **Practical.** He hides the truth of the hundredth tiger because the truth would endanger him more than the lie.
- **The chapter's mirror.** Kalki uses the diwan to satirise the entire culture of court sycophancy. Every Maharaja, Kalki implies, had a diwan willing to fake outcomes to preserve the royal pride.

#### Mini-character: the Toyshop Shopkeeper

The unnamed shopkeeper who sells the wooden tiger is a one-paragraph character with a huge satirical payoff. Knowing that quoting too low a price would invite punishment "*under the rules of the Emergency*", he inflates a two-and-a-quarter-anna toy to **three hundred rupees**. Kalki's point: the Emergency-era rules – intended to protect the prince's dignity – end up making everyone lie, sycophantic minister and ordinary shopkeeper alike.

### 3.4 The British Officer – the Colonial Foil

A high-ranking British officer once visits Pratibandapuram and asks to be photographed with a dead tiger that the Maharaja has shot. The Maharaja refuses – the *durai* need not even hold the gun, only stand beside the carcass for a photograph – because relenting once would mean a stream of British tiger-hunt requests. To smooth things over, the Maharaja despatches a telegram to a Calcutta jeweller for fifty diamond rings to be sent to the officer's wife (the *duraisani*); she sends back a polite thank-you note and keeps all fifty. The Maharaja pays a three-lakh-rupee bill and consoles himself that at least he has kept his kingdom.

### Why Kalki includes the British officer

The British officer scene allows Kalki to satirise three systems at once: the colonial habit of treating Indian princes as sources of trophy photographs, the colonial wives' habit of accepting "sample" jewellery they had no intention of returning, and the princely habit of buying favour with jewels (*three lakh of rupees* of them). The Maharaja's refusal is satirical too: it is not principled but superstitious – he cannot let the durai claim even a single tiger from his count of one hundred.

## Themes

The chapter packs four big ideas into a short story. The CBSE board paper, the sample papers, and the reference books all draw the Vistas 6-mark Long Answer from this set.

### 4.1 Satire on Royal Arrogance

The central theme of *The Tiger King* is the satire of royal arrogance and the absurdity of pride that thinks it can outwit fate. The Maharaja's whole life – the hundred-tiger vow, the diplomatic marriage, the zoo-tiger ruse, the wooden toy that kills him – is Kalki's exhibit of royal pride taking itself too seriously.

#### How the story argues this theme

- The infant's bravado ("*Let tigers beware!*") sets up the satire immediately.
- The marriage of state to a tiger-plentiful kingdom shows pride dictating personal life.
- The diwan's arrangement of the zoo-tiger shows pride being preserved by lies.
- The wooden toy tiger – a two-and-a-quarter-anna trinket sold for three hundred rupees – delivers fate's punchline.

### 4.2 Animal Cruelty and the Conservation Reading

Kalki published this story decades before *Project Tiger* (1973) or the Wildlife Protection Act (1972), but the conservation reading is the most modern and exam-popular. The Maharaja's slaughter of ninety-nine real tigers is not a heroic feat; it is a small ecological disaster wrapped in a horoscope. The narrator wryly notes the tiger population going extinct in Pratibandapuram and asks whether the tigers "*practised birth control or committed harakiri? Or simply ran away from the State because they desired to be shot by British hands alone?*" – a sentence that converts the satire into an environmental brief.

#### Common Misreading – "The Maharaja is brave"

Many students write that the Maharaja is brave because he hunts tigers face to face. This is the single most repeated error in board scripts. Read the chapter as a satire: the Maharaja's

bravery is performative, the bullet misses on the hundredth, and the real victims are the tigers, not the king.

### 4.3 Fate versus Free Will

The chapter's plot device is the prophecy. The Maharaja spends his entire life trying to defy fate. But Kalki's irony is that the Maharaja's effort to defy fate is the exact mechanism by which fate is fulfilled. He buys a wooden tiger to play with his son because tigers are now on his mind in a way they never would have been without the prophecy. The story is therefore also a quiet meditation on the limits of human will.

### 4.4 Sycophancy and Court Culture

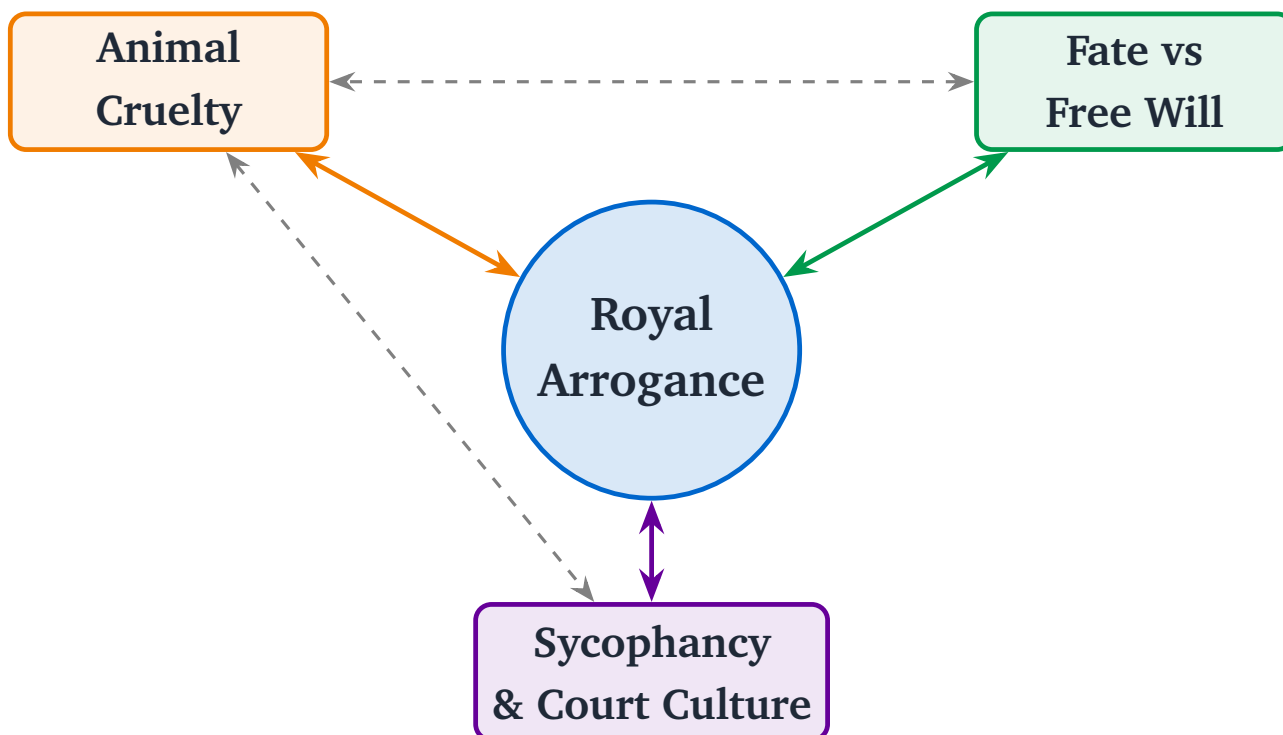
The chapter is one of the sharpest portraits of court culture in Class 12 literature. The diwan's terror at the Maharaja's every glance, the silent hunters who fake the hundredth tiger's death, the shopkeeper who inflates the toy's price to escape Emergency-rule punishment, the British officer's gift cycle – all of these are exhibits in Kalki's case that pre-Independence princely states ran on lies and gifts more than on rule.

#### Sycophancy answer hook

For questions on the diwan or court culture, the high-mark line is: *“Kalki's satire works because the diwan is not a villain but a survivor; the system rewards lying.”* Quote the People's Park zoo-tiger arrangement and the hunter's one-foot-distance shot as twin examples.

### 4.5 Themes Web – How the Four Ideas Interlock

The four themes do not sit side by side; they hold each other up. **Royal arrogance** is the central thread; **animal cruelty** is its consequence; **fate versus free will** is its philosophical irony; **sycophancy** is its supporting system.



## Literary Devices and Narrative Technique

*The Tiger King* is a model of how satire works in the short-story form. Kalki uses a small set of techniques to make the chapter's irony land.

### 5.1 Third-Person Narration with Ironic Distance

Unlike *The Third Level*, this chapter is narrated in the third person. The narrator opens by addressing the reader directly – “*I have come forward to tell you why he came to be known as Tiger King. . . Even the threat of a Stuka bomber will not throw me off track*” – and proceeds in a tone of mock-seriousness that quietly mocks every choice the Maharaja makes. The high-mark answer names this technique *ironic narration* or *mock-heroic narration*.

### 5.2 Hyperbole and Exaggeration

The infant's line “*Let tigers beware!*” – spoken at ten days old – is the chapter's most obvious hyperbole. The Maharaja's diplomatic marriage made specifically to find more tigers, the chief astrologer's vow to become an insurance agent if the hundredth tiger is killed, the two-and-a-quarter-anna wooden toy tiger inflated to three hundred rupees – each is a calibrated piece of exaggeration that the narrator delivers with a straight face.

### 5.3 Dramatic Irony

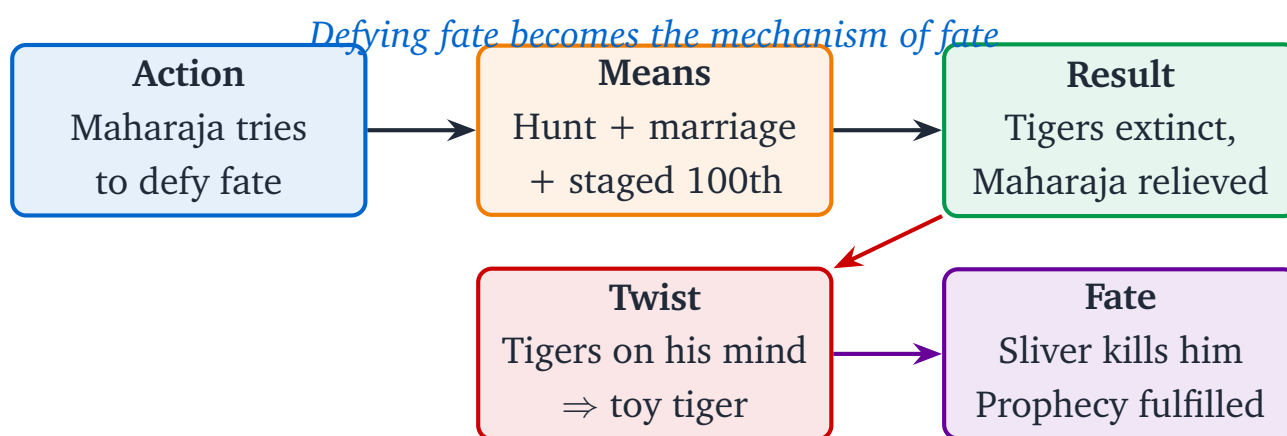
The reader knows things the Maharaja does not: the hunter killed the hundredth tiger, not the Maharaja; the toy tiger is the prophesied killer. Every late scene of the chapter is shadowed by what the reader knows and the Maharaja does not. The surgeons' closing line – “*The operation*

was successful. *The Maharaja is dead*” – is a piece of dramatic irony so dry it doubles as a punchline.

## 5.4 The Toy Tiger as Symbol

The wooden toy tiger is the chapter’s central symbol. It is cheap (two annas and a quarter), badly made (slivers stand up like quills), deliberately humble. Kalki’s choice of instrument is the satire’s punchline: the king who killed ninety-nine real tigers is killed by the worst tiger of all – a wooden one bought for three hundred inflated rupees.

## 5.5 How the Irony Engine Works – A Diagram



## 5.6 Mock-Heroic Diction and Pun

Kalki repeatedly drops mock-heroic phrases that puncture the king’s dignity at the moment of greatest seriousness. The diwan’s tiger “*launched its satyagraha*” when it refused to leave the car – a Gandhian noun applied to a captive beast. The tiger “*stood as if in humble supplication, ‘Master, what do you command of me?’*” – a courtly formula turned upside-down. The astrologer’s threat to “*cut off my tuft, crop my hair short and become an insurance agent*” is the chapter’s funniest line, deflating the gravitas of prophecy with a mundane modern profession.

### How to name a device in a board answer

When the prompt asks for a literary device, name it (e.g. *mock-heroic narration, dramatic irony, hyperbole, satirical symbolism*), give the text-anchor in one phrase, and finish with the effect on the reader. Markers reward this three-part shape over generic praise of Kalki’s “humour”.

## 5.7 The Four Strands of Satire – a Quadrant

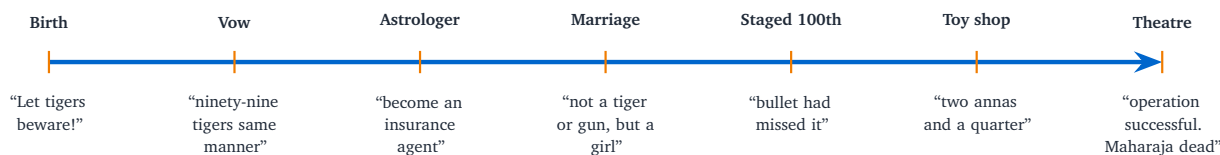
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Royal pride</b> “Let tigers beware!” Hundred-tiger vow</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Colonial mimicry</b> English nanny, films Three lakh in rings</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sycophancy</b> Diwan, hunters, shopkeeper</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ecological loss</b> Pratibandapuram extinction</p>

## Important Quotations and Their Significance

### Top-mark quotation set for *The Tiger King*

- **“Let tigers beware!”** – the infant’s bravado; sets up the satire.
- **“You may kill even a cow in self-defence”** – the old saying the Maharaja invokes to start the hunt; his moral cover.
- **“I shall cut off my tuft, crop my hair short and become an insurance agent”** – the chief astrologer’s deflating vow if the hundredth tiger is killed.
- **“It had fainted from the shock of the bullet whizzing past. . . One of the hunters took aim from a distance of one foot and shot the tiger”** – the moment the Maharaja’s pride is preserved by a lie.
- **“Tiny slivers of wood stood up like quills all over it. One of those slivers pierced the Maharaja’s right hand”** – the toy tiger fulfils the prophecy.
- **“The operation was successful. The Maharaja is dead”** – the chapter’s mock-heroic closing line.
- **“In this manner the hundredth tiger took its final revenge upon the Tiger King”** – the narrator’s final pun: a wooden tiger *is* the hundredth tiger.

### 6.1 Quotation Timeline – Where Each Famous Line Falls



### Value Points and Indian Extensions

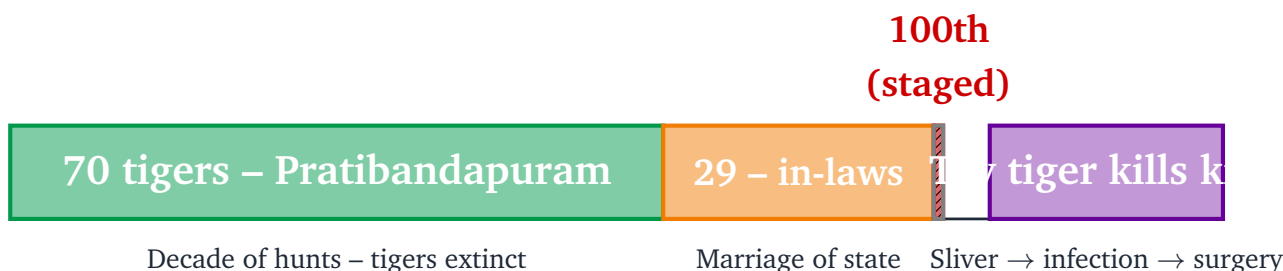
For value-based Long Answers, the high-mark response weaves the chapter’s satire with Indian conservation and animal-rights parallels.

- **Indian conservation.** *Project Tiger* (1973), the Wildlife Protection Act (1972), the establishment of tiger reserves (Corbett, Kanha, Ranthambore, Bandipur), the recent doubling of the tiger population since 2006.
- **Animal rights.** Article 51A(g) of the Constitution – the fundamental duty to protect wildlife. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.
- **Modern parallels.** Trophy hunting in Africa, the campaign against shark-fin soup, the recent global ban on ivory trade.
- **Satire’s afterlife.** R K Narayan’s *A Tiger for Malgudi*, Vikram Seth’s *A Suitable Boy* (the maharaja-tiger scene), Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger* – the tiger as a recurring symbol of Indian power.

#### Why “Reading with Insight” Q5 matters

The fifth NCERT question – “We need a new system for the age of ecology – a system which is embedded in the care of all people and also in the care of the Earth and all life upon it” – is the most likely board prompt going forward. The high-mark answer ties the Tiger King’s slaughter to the IUCN Red List, the Living Planet Index decline of 69% since 1970, and India’s tiger-recovery story (1,411 tigers in 2006 → 3,682 in 2022, the largest national recovery for any wild big cat).

### 7.1 Tiger Count – Visual Bar



## Common Mistakes Students Make

### The seven most-repeated errors in CBSE Vistas Chapter 2 scripts

1. Praising the Maharaja's bravery. Read the chapter as satire; bravery is performative and the bullet misses on the hundredth.
2. Missing the fact that the hundredth tiger was killed by a hunter at one-foot range, not the Maharaja.
3. Treating the toy tiger as an accident rather than the prophecy's deliberate instrument.
4. Confusing the diwan with a villain. He is a comic foil and a survivor of the system.
5. Getting the toy's price wrong. The original price is **two annas and a quarter**; the shopkeeper inflates it to **three hundred rupees**. Many scripts write "two and a half annas" – which is incorrect.
6. Mis-counting the tigers. The Maharaja kills **70 in Pratibandapuram + 29 in his father-in-law's state = 99**, then the diwan stages the 100th. Do not write  $99 + 10$  or  $90 + 9$ .
7. Reading the British officer episode as a side-plot. It is part of the satire of pride and gift-giving.

### Quotation accuracy – the trap

Students often paraphrase the closing line as "the operation was successful but the king died". The exact text reads "*The operation was successful. The Maharaja is dead*" – the two short sentences, full stop between, are the source of the irony. Examiners check for the punctuation.

## CBSE Previous Year Question Mapping

Year-wise CBSE focus areas for *The Tiger King*. The 6-mark Vistas Long Answer rotates predictably between satire, animal-cruelty, sycophancy, and the toy-tiger irony.

Year	Long Answer Focus	Marks
2025	The story as a satire on royal arrogance (Q1)	6
2024	The author's comment on senseless slaughter of innocent animals (Q2)	6
2023	The behaviour of the Maharaja's minions; "yes-man" culture (Q3)	6
2022	Contemporary game-hunting parallels; callousness towards wildlife (Q4)	6
2021	Humorous and ironic eye on past events (Q6)	5

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## Sample Answer – 6-Mark Long Answer on Q1

**Q1. The story is a satire on the conceit of those in power. Discuss.**

**Answer.** Yes, *The Tiger King* reads most coherently as a sustained satire on the conceit of those in power. The chapter is built around a single ironic loop: the Maharaja of Pratibandapuram tries to defy a prophecy that he will be killed by a tiger, and his very effort to defy fate becomes the mechanism by which fate is fulfilled. From the infant's line "*Let tigers beware!*" to the wooden toy that kills him, every scene is Kalki's exhibit of pride taking itself too seriously.

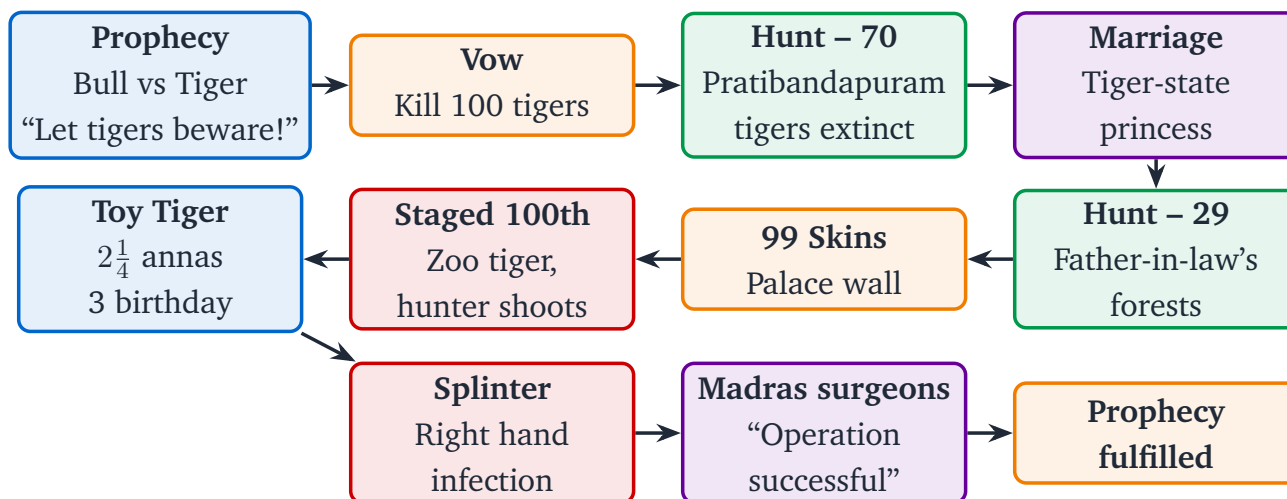
The Maharaja's conceit shows up in three ways. First, he reserves all tiger-hunting for himself and bans others on pain of property confiscation. Second, when he runs out of tigers in his own state (seventy in Pratibandapuram, then extinction), he sends a marriage proposal to a state of plentiful tigers and treats his wedding as a tactical move in the hunt, killing five or six per father-in-law visit until ninety-nine skins line his palace wall. Third, when the hundredth tiger is hard to find, the diwan drags an old beast from the People's Park in Madras into a car at midnight; the Maharaja shoots and misses entirely, the tiger only faints, and a hunter must finish the job at one-foot range. The Maharaja never learns this, and his pride is preserved by a small lie at the heart of the system. Kalki's punchline is the wooden toy tiger – a two-and-a-quarter-anna trinket inflated to three hundred rupees – that kills the king with a splinter, the surgeons emerging from the operating theatre with the chapter's mock-heroic closing line: "*The operation was successful. The Maharaja is dead.*" The conceit of those in power, Kalki argues, is mocked by the smallness of the instrument that defeats it. The story is a satire because it does not need to denounce the Maharaja; the plot itself does the denouncing.

### Why this answer scores top marks

Position statement in line one; four text-grounded anchors (the prophecy and infant's line, the marriage of state, the staged hundredth, the wooden toy); a closing sentence that

re-states the position. This is the exact shape CBSE markers reward.

## Quick Revision – One-Page Diagram



## NCERT “Reading with Insight” – Five-Question Walkthrough

The Vistas Chapter 2 textbook lists five *Reading with Insight* questions at the end of the chapter. Each is summarised below with a one-paragraph answer hook keyed to the satire reading.

### 12.1 Q1 – Satire as Dramatic Irony

**Prompt.** 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?

**Hook.** Dramatic irony works because the reader knows what the Maharaja does not. The reader knows the hundredth tiger only fainted and a hunter finished it; the Maharaja celebrates having defied fate. The reader knows the toy tiger is the prophesied killer; the Maharaja pulls out the splinter with his left hand and continues playing. The closing line – “*The operation was successful. The Maharaja is dead*” – crystallises the irony: success and death in the same sentence.

### 12.2 Q2 – Innocent Animals at Human Will

**Prompt.** What is the author’s indirect comment on subjecting innocent animals to the willfulness of human beings?

**Hook.** The narrator never directly condemns the Maharaja’s slaughter, but the satire is built into the data: ninety-nine tigers killed for a horoscope, the Pratibandapuram tiger population driven to extinction within a decade, the diwan reduced to smuggling an old zoo-tiger from the People’s Park in Madras because no wild ones remain. The wry narrator-question – “*Who knows whether the tigers practised birth control or committed harakiri?*” – is the comment.

### 12.3 Q3 – Behaviour of the Maharaja’s Minions

**Prompt.** How would you describe the behaviour of the Maharaja’s minions towards him? Do you find them truly sincere or are they driven by fear?

**Hook.** Every minion in the chapter acts from fear, not loyalty. The diwan smuggles a zoo-tiger at midnight because failing to deliver the hundredth would cost him his post. The hunters finish the tiger at one-foot range because the truth would cost them their jobs. The shopkeeper inflates a two-and-a-quarter-anna toy to three hundred rupees because Emergency rules punish low quotations to the prince. The pattern is the same as in modern political “yes-man” cultures.

### 12.4 Q4 – Game-Hunting Today

**Prompt.** 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?

**Hook.** Cite contemporary trophy-hunting controversies (the 2015 killing of Cecil the lion in Zimbabwe), high-profile celebrity blackbuck cases in India, the shark-fin and ivory trades, and the canned-hunting industry in South Africa. The thread is Kalki’s: power treats wildlife as decoration, the diwan-equivalent (guide, lobbyist, lawyer) makes the kill possible, and the headline-equivalent (Instagram trophy photo) replaces the colonial *durai*’s photograph.

### 12.5 Q5 – A New System for the Age of Ecology

**Prompt.** We need a new system for the age of ecology – a system embedded in the care of all people and also in the care of the Earth and all life upon it. Discuss.

**Hook.** A new system reverses three things the Tiger King embodies: (i) extractive use of wildlife (replaced by Project Tiger’s protected reserves and India’s 3,682-tiger 2022 census), (ii) top-down power that overrides ecological limits (replaced by community-managed conservation and the Forest Rights Act), and (iii) sycophancy that hides ecological damage (replaced by independent EIAs and citizen science). End with the IUCN line: “the rate of species loss is now 100 to 1,000 times the natural background rate.”

## How Collegedunia’s Notes Help You Score

- The five-word anchor (PROPHECY, HUNT, COUNT, TOY, SPLINTER) gives a fixed mental sequence to apply on any Vistas Chapter 2 prompt.
- Every theme is paired with the exact textual phrase (*Let tigers beware!*; the bullet whizzing past; the two-and-a-quarter-anna toy; *The operation was successful. The Maharaja is dead*) that triggers full mark recall.
- The character arcs of the Maharaja, the diwan, and the toy-shopkeeper are written as three-marker arcs – exactly the shape a 6-mark CBSE Vistas Long Answer expects.
- The conservation reading is built into the value-points section, ready for CBSE’s animal-rights prompt.

- The five Reading with Insight questions are mapped to themes so you know which theme to lean on for each prompt.

### Related Collegedunia Resources

#### Same chapter — other resources:

- [NCERT Solutions](#)
- [NCERT Book PDF](#)
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#### Continue learning:

- [Ch 1: The Third Level](#)
- [Ch 3: Journey to the End of the Earth](#)
- [Class 12 English Vistas — All Chapters](#)