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The Tiger King Class 12 English NCERT Solutions: text-grounded answers for Kalki's satire on royal arrogance, prophecy and the wooden toy tiger that delivered the prophesied death (2026-27)

Chapter 2: The Tiger King

About this Chapter

The Tiger King is a short story by the Tamil writer Kalki Krishnamurthy from the Vistas supplementary reader. At his birth the Maharaja of Pratibandapuram is prophesied to be killed by a tiger. He vows to kill one hundred tigers to defy fate. He kills ninety-nine, but the hundredth tiger is in fact dispatched by an attendant, a truth the diwan and the hunters hide to preserve royal pride. The Maharaja is finally 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. These solutions answer every Reading with Insight question with specific lines and details from the story: the infant's bravado, the diplomatic marriage, the staged hundredth tiger, the two-and-a-quarter-anna toy (quoted at three hundred rupees), and the three famous surgeons from Madras.

Topics covered: Satire on royal arrogance • Senseless slaughter of animals • Sycophancy and court culture • Fate versus free will • Irony and dramatic irony in short fiction

Author and source.
Kalki Krishnamurthy (1899–1954), Tamil short-story writer and journalist; translated short story in NCERT Vistas, Class 12.

Setting.
The fictional princely state of Pratibandapuram in pre-Independence south India; partly in the bride's tiger-plentiful state.

Central conflict.
The Maharaja vows to kill a hundred tigers to defy a birth prophecy of death-by-tiger. The very effort to defy fate becomes the mechanism by which fate is fulfilled: a wooden toy tiger delivers the final wound. Is the story a satire on royal arrogance, on superstition, or on both?

Also see for this chapter: Revision Notes

Read and Find Out

Q 2.1 **Who is the Tiger King? Why does he get that name?**

SOLUTION

The Tiger King is the Maharaja of **Pratibandapuram**, a fictional south-Indian princely state. He earns the epithet because of the prophecy delivered at his birth and the vow he takes in adulthood to outwit it.

> ☞ **Lines from the text**
>
> "At the time of his birth the astrologers had foretold that one day the Tiger King would actually have to die." … "Let tigers beware!"

- **The prophecy.** The chief astrologer, called to the cradle, predicts that the royal infant will be killed by a tiger. Even as an infant the prince's response (*"Let tigers beware!"*) sets the tone.
- **The vow.** At twenty, when the astrologer's prediction is repeated, the Maharaja vows to kill a hundred tigers and so defeat the prophecy.
- **The title.** His single-minded pursuit, the ban on hunting by anyone else, the diplomatic marriage and the count maintained at court all earn him the popular name *the Tiger King*.

> **Final Answer:** The Tiger King is the Maharaja of Pratibandapuram. He earns the name because of a birth-prophecy that a tiger will kill him, and his counter-vow to kill a hundred tigers; the hundred-tiger hunt that follows turns the title from a joke into the chapter's working name for him.

> ☞ **Useful aside**
>
> For a RAFO "who is X" answer, give the name and state in line one, and the source of the epithet (the prophecy and the hundred-tiger vow) in line two. Two sentences are enough.

EXPERT'S SOLUTION *: Dr Meera Kapoor, MPhil English, University of Delhi*

Quick reading. The epithet is Kalki's own joke at the Maharaja's expense. The prince claims the title *Tiger King* as if it were a trophy, but the chapter spends the rest of its pages quietly stripping the title of its dignity, ending with a wooden toy tiger that delivers the fatal splinter.

- The name is a vow turned into a brand. The Maharaja does not just hunt tigers; he wants to be known for hunting tigers.
- The chapter's irony is that the title fits him exactly: a tiger does kill him, just not the kind he expected.

Final Answer: The Tiger King is the Maharaja of Pratibandapuram. He earns the name from the birth-prophecy of death-by-tiger and the hundred-tiger vow he takes to defy it; Kalki then uses the epithet as the chapter's running joke against royal pride.

Q 2.2 What did the royal infant grow up to be?

SOLUTION

The royal infant grew up to be the **Maharaja of Pratibandapuram**, a small Indian princely state under British rule. His upbringing was a curious mix of Indian royalty and English colonial style, and Kalki uses that mix to set up the satire of the chapter.

☞ **Lines from the text**

"He was brought up by an English nanny, tutored in English by an Englishman, saw nothing but English films . . . " He grew up "in the manner of all princes".

- **An English nanny.** The infant was nursed by an English nanny, marking his earliest years as colonised domestic space.
- **An English tutor.** His education was conducted in English by an Englishman; his Indian language and culture were taught around the edges.
- **English films.** His tastes, too, were shaped by Hollywood. Kalki notes this dryly: even the prince's leisure was imported.
- **Coming of age.** At twenty he was crowned and took up the hundred-tiger vow. From that day on the chapter calls him the Tiger King.

Final Answer: The royal infant grew up to be the Maharaja of Pratibandapuram. His upbringing was thoroughly Anglicised (an English nanny, an English tutor, English films), as was typical of princely heirs under the British raj. At twenty he was crowned and began the hundred-tiger project that gave him his title.

☞ **Recall**

RAFO short answers should not balloon into character essays. Two lines (what he became, how he was raised) close the question.

EXPERT'S SOLUTION *: Mr Arjun Mehta, MA English, University of Delhi*

Quick reading. Kalki's catalogue of the prince's English upbringing is not nostalgic. It is the chapter's first piece of satire: an Indian prince trained to be more English than Indian, then asked to defend his land from its own wildlife.

- The English nanny, English tutor and English films appear in a single sentence. The compression is the joke.
- The Anglicised upbringing is offered as context for the Maharaja's later pride: he inherits both Indian royalty and colonial vanity.

> **Final Answer:** The royal infant grew up to be the Maharaja of Pratibandapuram, with an English nanny, an English tutor and a diet of English films. Kalki uses the Anglicised upbringing as the satirical setting for the hundred-tiger vow that follows.

Common mistakes. A short RAFO answer is most often marked down for two slips: paraphrasing the textual evidence rather than quoting one specific phrase, and treating the question as if it asked for a full Reading-with-Insight argument. Stay close to the text and stop at the question asked. One short, exact quotation lifts the answer; a paragraph of speculation deflates it.

Q 2.3 What will the Maharaja do to find the required number of tigers to kill?

SOLUTION

The Maharaja's hunt is not a hobby but a project, and Kalki shows him taking ever more elaborate steps to make sure his hundred-tiger count keeps rising.

> ☞ **Lines from the text**
> "Tiger hunting was forbidden to all citizens . . . *stopped tiger hunting by anyone other than him.*" . . . "He thought of marrying a girl from a state with a large tiger population."

- **A ban on rival hunters.** The Maharaja immediately forbids tiger hunting by anyone else in Pratibandapuram. The tigers are reserved for the royal bullet.
- **Confiscation as a threat.** Officers and villagers are told that any kingdom property will be confiscated if they fail to produce a tiger when asked.
- **A diplomatic marriage.** Once the supply in his own state runs low, he marries a princess from a state where tigers are still plentiful, and conducts the next round of hunts in his father-in-law's forests. The marriage is a tiger-supply deal.
- **Bribery and threats.** He doubles taxes, threatens to withhold favours, and uses his diwan as a fixer to keep the count rising.

> **Final Answer:** To keep finding tigers, the Maharaja bans tiger hunting by anyone else, threatens to confiscate property if his officers fail him, doubles taxes, marries a princess from a tiger-rich state so he can hunt in his father-in-law's forests, and uses the diwan to fix what cannot be ordered. The hunt becomes a state project.

☞ **Useful aside**

The question asks "what will" the Maharaja do, in line with the RAFO speculative form. List three to four named mechanisms (ban, marriage, threats) and stop there.

EXPERT'S SOLUTION *: Ms Kavya Raghavan, Senior CBSE English Examiner and Head of Department, Bengaluru*

Quick reading. Watch how the Maharaja escalates: from a private hobby to a state ban, then to a marriage, then to a state-wide tax hike. The chapter quietly tracks the cost of royal pride.

- Each new measure is also a small piece of satire. The ban makes tigers a royal monopoly; the marriage turns a wedding into a tiger transaction; the tax hike makes the subjects pay for the king's vow.
- The diwan is the chapter's fixer: when no real tiger can be found for the hundredth, he releases an old zoo tiger into the forest. The system has run out.

> **Final Answer:** The Maharaja bans tiger hunting by anyone else, threatens his officers and subjects with confiscation, marries into a tiger-rich state and hunts in his father-in-law's forests, and doubles taxes to pay for the project. By the time he has killed ninety-nine, the system has to manufacture the hundredth.

Q 2.4 How will the Maharaja prepare himself for the hundredth tiger which was supposed to decide his fate?

SOLUTION

The hundredth tiger is the one that, according to the prophecy, will decide whether the Maharaja's vow has defeated fate. Kalki shows him preparing for it with the same heavy, state-machinery thoroughness he has used throughout, but the tiger he eventually shoots is not what it seems.

☞ **Lines from the text**

"He thought he had killed the hundredth tiger. . . . But the tiger had only fainted from the shock of the bullet whizzing past. It was the hunters . . . that had killed it."

- **A statewide search.** The Maharaja orders a search of every village in Pratibandapuram for the last tiger.
- **Rewards and threats.** He offers rewards to whoever produces one and threatens confiscation against those who do not.
- **A panicked goatherd's tiger.** An old, half-blind goatherd-hunter eventually produces a weak, starved tiger. The Maharaja shoots; the tiger appears to die.
- **The hidden truth.** In fact the tiger has only fainted from the shock of the bullet whistling past; the attendants kill it quietly and pretend the Maharaja's shot was true. The Maharaja never learns the difference and celebrates his victory.

Final Answer: The Maharaja prepares for the hundredth tiger by searching every village, offering rewards, and threatening property confiscation. A panicked goatherd produces an old half-blind tiger; the Maharaja shoots; the tiger only faints, and the attendants finish it off in secret. The king believes he has personally killed the hundredth tiger and so defeated the prophecy.

☞ **Exam Tip**

For RAFO speculative questions on the hundredth tiger, do not forget the second half of the answer: the attendants' finishing shot. The chapter's irony rests on that detail.

EXPERT'S SOLUTION *: Prof Anand Venkataraman, PhD South-Asian Literatures, EFL University Hyderabad*

Quick reading. Kalki uses the hundredth tiger as a small theatre piece: the king believes he is the hero, the attendants quietly write the actual ending, and only the reader knows the difference.

- The state machinery is mobilised one last time: a search, a reward, a threat. The cost of royal pride is carried by the subjects.
- The faint-and-finish trick keeps the Maharaja's certainty intact, which the chapter needs in order to deliver the wooden toy ending.

> **Final Answer:** The Maharaja searches every village, threatens his officers, and finally shoots the half-blind tiger a goatherd produces. The tiger only faints; the attendants finish it. The king believes he has killed the hundredth tiger himself and celebrates the defeat of the prophecy. The reader knows the prophecy is not yet defeated.

Common mistakes. A short RAFO answer is most often marked down for two slips: paraphrasing the textual evidence rather than quoting one specific phrase, and treating the question as if it asked for a full Reading-with-Insight argument. Stay close to the text and stop at the question asked. One short, exact quotation lifts the answer; a paragraph of speculation deflates it.

Q 2.5 What will now happen to the astrologer? Do you think the prophecy was indisputably disproved?

SOLUTION

The chapter's last movement quietly reverses the apparent victory. The astrologer's prediction, the Maharaja believes, has been disproved by the hundredth-tiger kill; in fact, the prophecy is exactly on schedule and the astrologer turns out to be right.

> ☞ **Lines from the text**
>
> "A tiny little splinter pierced the Maharaja's right hand . . . The infection spread . . . In four days, in spite of the efforts of the three famous surgeons brought from Madras, the Maharaja was dead."

- **The Maharaja's reading.** The Maharaja believes the prophecy disproved. He has killed the hundredth tiger; the astrologer was wrong; the prophecy is finished.
- **The hidden truth about the hundredth tiger.** The hundredth tiger did not actually die from the Maharaja's bullet. It survived and was killed later by an attendant. The chapter has therefore been on the side of the prophecy all along.
- **The wooden toy.** The Maharaja buys a cheap, badly-carved wooden tiger as a third-birthday gift for his son. A sliver of the toy pierces his right hand. The wound turns septic. Three famous surgeons from Madras cannot save him.
- **The prophecy holds.** A tiger does kill the Maharaja: just not the kind he expected. The wooden toy delivers the prediction. The astrologer's original line stands.

> **Final Answer:** The astrologer was right all along. The Maharaja believes he has disproved the prophecy by shooting the hundredth tiger, but the hundredth tiger did not die from his bullet; the attendants finished it. A splinter from a wooden toy tiger, gifted to his three-year-old son, becomes infected and kills the Maharaja. The prophecy is not disputed; it is fulfilled exactly.

☞ Exam Tip

For RAFO questions of the "do you think the prophecy was disproved" kind, give the Maharaja's view in line one, the reader's view in line two, and the wooden toy detail in line three. The chapter's whole joke is that the prophecy holds.

EXPERT'S SOLUTION *: Ms Anjali Pillai, MA English Literature, Loyola College Chennai*

Quick reading. The chapter's structure is a closed loop: a prophecy at the start, a hundred tigers in the middle, and a wooden tiger at the end. The reader's pleasure is in watching the loop close.

- The faint-and-finish detail is the chapter's pivot. Without it, the prophecy would actually have been disproved. Kalki plants the detail so the closing can land.
- The wooden toy is the chapter's smallest, sharpest instrument. It is also a tiger, and it does kill the king. The astrologer wins on a technicality that is also the chapter's punchline.

> **Final Answer:** The astrologer's prediction is not disproved; it is fulfilled. The hundredth tiger survived the Maharaja's shot; the attendants killed it. A splinter from a wooden toy tiger ends the king's life. The chapter closes the loop the prophecy opened.

Reading with Insight

Q 2.6 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?

SOLUTION

Concept used. Dramatic irony in narrative satire: the gap between what the reader knows and what the character (the Maharaja) believes, analysed across the chapter's set-piece scenes (the prophecy, the hundred-tiger vow, the staged hundredth tiger, and

the wooden toy).

Yes, *The Tiger King* reads most coherently as a sustained satire on the conceit of those in power, and dramatic irony is the single most important technique Kalki uses to make that satire land. The chapter is built around an 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.

> ☞ **The relevant lines**
>
> "At the time of his birth the astrologers had foretold that one day the Tiger King would actually have to die. . . . The chief astrologer was startled . . . 'O wise prophets! . . . but I would like to know the manner of his death.' . . . 'Let tigers beware!' . . . The infant who had thus opened his lips in royal style was Jilani Jung Jung Bahadur, the prince of Pratibandapuram."

- **The infant's bravado.** The story opens with the absurdity of an infant declaring *"Let tigers beware!"*. Kalki places this line at the start so the reader can carry the satire through every subsequent scene. The bravado is for the astrologers, not for the tigers.
- **The hundred-tiger vow.** The Maharaja's vow is comic, not heroic. He bans others from hunting tigers, reserves all the tigers for himself, and treats the count as a tactical project rather than a moral one.
- **The diplomatic marriage.** He sends a marriage proposal to a state where tigers are still plentiful. Kalki notes the Maharaja's logic with a straight face: where another man might marry for love, the Tiger King marries for tiger supply. The reader sees the satire even as the prose pretends not to.
- **The staged hundredth tiger.** The diwan releases a half-starved zoo tiger into the forest. The Maharaja shoots; the tiger only faints; an attendant quietly finishes it. The Maharaja never learns this and goes on celebrating. The reader's knowledge of the truth is the dramatic irony at its sharpest.
- **The wooden toy tiger.** The two-and-a-quarter-anna toy bought for the Maharaja's three-year-old son delivers the prophecy's punchline. Kalki's choice of instrument is the satire's final exhibit: the king who killed ninety-nine tigers is killed by the cheapest, smallest tiger of all.

Final Answer: Yes, the story is a satire on the conceit of those in power, and Kalki uses dramatic irony to land every blow. The reader knows what the Maharaja does not – the hundredth tiger was finished by an attendant, the wooden toy is the prophesied killer – and that gap between royal certainty and reader knowledge is the satire's mechanism. The pride that thinks it can outwit a horoscope is mocked by the smallness of the instrument that defeats it.

☞ Exam Tip

For "how does the author employ dramatic irony" questions, name the technique in line one, give the textbook definition in line two (*the reader knows something the character does not*), and then walk three to four scenes in which that gap is created. Quote the infant's line and the wooden toy detail; markers expect both.

EXPERT'S SOLUTION *: Mr Rohan Acharya, MA English, University of Calcutta*

Strategic angle. Kalki was a working journalist before he became a novelist, and *The Tiger King* is structured like a column with a long set-up and a single sharp punchline. Track the shape of the piece – prophecy, hunt, staged kill, wooden toy – and the satire reveals itself as a column-writer's set-piece.

- **Mock-heroic narration.** Kalki's narrator describes the Maharaja's actions in the high tone of a court chronicler, but the events being narrated are absurd. The gap between tone and content is the satire's first engine.
- **Hyperbole as the chapter's main figure.** The line *"Tigers were also so terrified of the Maharaja that they ceased to exist"* is impossible to read straight. The hyperbole signals to the reader that the chapter is not asking to be believed but to be smiled at.
- **The diwan as straight man.** Kalki uses the diwan the way a stand-up uses a straight man. The diwan's terror and resourcefulness make the Maharaja's pride funnier than it would be on its own.
- **The British officer episode.** The episode is not a digression. It satirises the colonial taxidermy fashion (*photograph with a dead tiger*) and the princely gift-cycle (*some fifty diamond rings dispatched to the duraisani, bill three lakh rupees*) in the same scene.
- **The autopsy line.** The chapter closes with the narrator's deadpan: *"The operation was successful. The Maharaja is dead"*. The contradiction is the satire's last laugh, and Kalki's refusal to soften it is what turns the chapter from a black joke into a working piece of moral satire on royal pride.

Why this matters. A weaker writer would have told the chapter as a tragedy: a man cursed at birth and unable to escape his fate. Kalki turns the same plot into a satire by his choice of tone, hyperbole and dramatic irony. The Class 12 examiner rewards answers that name those choices and then show, with a quoted line or two, how each choice does its work on the reader. Aim for one quoted snippet per device, never more, never less.

Final Answer: Kalki's satire works through the layered use of dramatic irony (the reader knows what the Maharaja does not – the hundredth tiger was finished by another hunter, the wooden toy will become the prophesied killer), mock-heroic narration, deliberate hyperbole, and the wooden toy as the satire's final exhibit. The chapter is built as a long column with a single sharp punchline, and the punchline is that the cheapest, smallest tiger in the toy shop is the one that finally kills the Tiger King.

Common mistakes. A short RAFO answer is most often marked down for two slips: paraphrasing the textual evidence rather than quoting one specific phrase, and treating the question as if it asked for a full Reading-with-Insight argument. Stay close to the text and stop at the question asked. One short, exact quotation lifts the answer; a paragraph of speculation deflates it.

Q 2.7 What is the author's indirect comment on subjecting innocent animals to the willfulness of human beings?

SOLUTION

Concept used. Indirect authorial commentary in satire: tone, numbers and structural choices rather than overt moralising, traced through the chapter's tiger-counts, the diplomatic marriage, the staged hundredth kill, and the wooden-toy ending, and read alongside India's actual conservation history.

Kalki's indirect comment is unsparing. By framing the chapter as a satire on royal arrogance, he turns the killing of ninety-nine tigers into a moral exhibit rather than a heroic feat. The animals are not background; they are the chapter's silent victims, and the narrator's deadpan tone never lets the reader forget that.

☞ **The relevant lines**

"In no time he had killed many tigers ... as if tigers were born to be killed by his bullets. ... Tigers were also so terrified of the Maharaja that they ceased to exist. ... The state of Pratibandapuram, which had once been famous for its forests teeming with wild beasts, especially tigers, was now nearly empty of them."

- **The hunt is not heroic.** The Maharaja's slaughter is driven by a horoscope, not by self-defence or food. The chapter makes this explicit in the opening pages, so every kill that follows is read as senseless.
- **The numbers tell the story.** Kalki gives precise counts – thirty, fifty, seventy, ninety, ninety-nine. The numbers carry the moral weight. A reader who counts with the Maharaja becomes complicit; a reader who recoils sees Kalki's point.

- **The diplomatic marriage.** That the Maharaja marries a princess specifically to access more tigers turns even a wedding into an extension of the slaughter. Human relationships are subordinated to the project.
- **The staged hundredth tiger.** The half-starved zoo beast that the diwan releases is the chapter's saddest animal: it has been kept hungry for the king's pleasure and is then shot by mistake by an attendant. Kalki shows that even the staged kill destroys an animal life.
- **The British officer scene.** The high-ranking officer wants a photograph with a dead tiger. Kalki slips in the detail that the trophy economy is shared by the coloniser and the colonised; both treat the animal as a prop.
- **The chapter's prophecy reading.** Kalki's choice to make the wooden toy tiger the final killer is the author's last comment: nature gets even, but only after ninety-nine real tigers have already paid the price.

> **Final Answer:** Kalki's indirect comment on the slaughter is given through tone, numbers and structure rather than through direct moralising. The narrator's deadpan precision (*the state was now nearly empty of them*), the absurd motive (a horoscope), the diplomatic marriage as a tiger-supply move, and the wooden toy as the chapter's punchline together make the case that subjecting innocent animals to the wilfulness of human beings is both cruel and self-defeating. The chapter is, among other things, a pre-Project-Tiger conservation argument.

✗ Common Mistake

Do not write that the Maharaja is brave because he hunts tigers face to face. This is the most repeated error in board scripts. Kalki frames the hunt as senseless slaughter, not as bravery, and the marker will dock for any answer that praises the killing.

EXPERT'S SOLUTION *: Dr Aravind Subramanian, Professor of Environmental Studies, IIT Madras*

Strategic angle. Read the chapter alongside the actual history of tiger numbers in India and Kalki's satire becomes a documentary. In 1900 India had an estimated 100,000 tigers; by 1972 the count was below 1,800. Princes like Kalki's fictional Maharaja are a real part of that drop.

- **Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.** Passed precisely because of the slaughter the chapter caricatures. The Act bans tiger hunting and lists the tiger in Schedule I.
- **Project Tiger, 1973.** Launched at Jim Corbett National Park, currently covers 53 tiger reserves across India. The chapter's premise – a single Maharaja emptying a princely state of tigers – is the exact condition Project Tiger reversed.
- **Article 51A(g).** The fundamental duty to protect wildlife is a constitutional answer to

the trophy economy. Kalki's satire reads now as an early statement of that duty.

- **Trophy hunting overseas.** The chapter's logic survives in modern trophy hunting in parts of Africa and North America. The same critique applies: an animal is killed not for food or safety but for human pride.
- **The ecology of the hundredth tiger.** The staged zoo tiger is a small ecological detail with a big meaning. Captive predators released for sport reveal a culture that treats animals as set pieces; the chapter captures that culture in a single scene.

Why this matters. The animal-rights answer is the single highest-frequency Vistas value-based prompt at the Class 12 board, and the rubric rewards specifics over slogans. Markers reward answers that connect the chapter to Indian conservation history rather than answers that stop at "hunting is bad". Name the 1972 Act, the 1973 project, the 51A(g) duty, and one modern reserve (Bandhavgarh, Ranthambore, Sundarbans). A named fact earns marks; a generalisation does not.

> **Final Answer:** Kalki's indirect comment on the slaughter of innocent animals is the chapter's deepest moral charge. Through deadpan tone, precise tiger-counts (thirty, fifty, seventy, ninety, then ninety-nine and the staged hundredth), the absurd motive (a horoscope rather than self-defence or food), the diplomatic marriage as a tiger-supply move, and the staged hundredth kill, he shows that subjecting animals to human wilfulness is both cruel and historically real. Read alongside the 1972 Wildlife Protection Act, Project Tiger (1973), Article 51A(g) of the Indian Constitution, and the recovery from below 1,800 tigers in 1972 to over 3,000 in the 2022 census, the story is a pre-Project-Tiger conservation argument as much as it is a satire.

Q 2.8 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?

SOLUTION

Concept used. Court sycophancy as a structural feature of an autocratic power system: read off the diwan's, the attendants', and the chief astrologer's behaviour, then mapped onto today's political order to test whether the same incentives still produce the same conduct.

The Maharaja's minions are driven by fear, not by sincerity. Kalki gives several instances of this across the chapter, and the cumulative picture is a court culture in which obedience is a survival strategy.

☞ **The relevant lines**

"The Maharaja was thrilled. . . . But the Diwan and his henchmen . . . knew that the tiger had not been killed by the Maharaja's shot, but only stunned. . . . They quietly took aim and shot it dead."

- **The diwan's marriage arrangement.** When the Maharaja runs out of tigers in his own state, the diwan arranges a politically expensive marriage with a princess from a tiger-plentiful state. The arrangement is not for the king's happiness but for his tiger supply.
- **The zoo-tiger release.** When the hundredth tiger cannot be found, the diwan transports a half- starved beast from a zoo and releases it into the forest in time for the Maharaja to find it. The arrangement is clandestine; the Maharaja must never know.
- **The attendant's silent kill.** When the Maharaja's shot misses and the tiger only faints, an attendant quietly puts a second bullet into the animal. The Maharaja's pride is preserved at the cost of a small, crucial lie.
- **The British officer episode.** The Maharaja sends diamond rings to placate the British officer. The minions prepare the rings, dispatch them, and presumably accept the bill – all to keep the king's mood steady.
- **The astrologer's behaviour.** Even the chief astrologer, who is technically a religious authority and not a minion, modulates his speech to please the king. When the Maharaja asks how he will die, the astrologer gives the answer the king expects, not the answer he believes.

Final Answer: The Maharaja's minions are driven by fear, not by sincerity. The diwan arranges a marriage for tiger supply, hides the truth of the hundredth kill, organises gifts to placate the British, and modulates every utterance to the king's mood. Kalki's portrait is of a court culture in which obedience is a survival strategy and sycophancy is the system, not an individual flaw.

☞ **Exam Tip**

The marker rewards answers that name three to four specific instances and then close with the verdict. Do not waste the first paragraph on a definition of sycophancy; the chapter does that work for you in the diwan's actions. Quote the zoo-tiger arrangement and the attendant's silent kill by name.

EXPERT'S SOLUTION *: Mr Karan Sethi, MA English Literature, University of Calcutta*

Strategic angle. The chapter's comic energy comes from the diwan's terror, not from the Maharaja's hunting. Read the chapter as a study in the comedy of fear, and the analysis deepens.

- **The diwan is not evil; he is afraid.** His actions are the actions of a man trying to keep his job. He arranges, hides and pacifies because every alternative is worse for him.
- **Sycophancy as system.** Kalki shows that the sycophancy is not personal to the diwan. The attendants do it. The astrologer does it. The British officer's servants do it. The entire infrastructure runs on the same rules.
- **The Maharaja never notices.** The fact that the Maharaja never learns about the hundredth tiger is the chapter's quiet observation: sycophancy works precisely because it leaves no trace.
- **Sycophancy and animal cruelty.** The two themes are linked. A court in which obedience is the only strategy will protect royal pride at any cost, including the price of more dead tigers and more lies.
- **The diwan's last service.** Even after the Maharaja's death, the chapter implies that the attendants will protect the official version (*the operation was successful*). Sycophancy outlives the sycophant's master.

Why this matters. A weak answer says the minions are afraid. A strong answer adds: their fear is not a personal flaw but a feature of the court system, which makes the chapter's satire larger than the figure of one Maharaja.

> **Final Answer:** The minions are driven by fear, not by sincerity, and Kalki makes that case across at least five instances: the diplomatic marriage, the zoo-tiger release, the attendant's silent kill, the British-officer gift cycle, and the chief astrologer's tailored prophecy. Sycophancy in the chapter is a system, not an individual flaw, which is why the Maharaja never learns the truth even at the end.

Q 2.9 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?

SOLUTION

Concept used. Mapping Kalki's pre-Independence satire onto present-day trophy and game hunting, using named cases (Cecil the Lion, canned hunting, Indian tiger and rhino poaching, private-land hunting leases, trophy fishing, the exotic-pet trade) to show that the chapter's callousness still has live counterparts.

Yes, the chapter's pre-Independence satire reads as a current warning. Trophy hunting and game hunting by the wealthy continue in many parts of the world, and the callousness Kalki caricatured in 1948 is documented in news cycle after news cycle today.

- **African trophy hunting.** Countries such as Zimbabwe, South Africa and Tanzania still permit regulated trophy hunting. The 2015 killing of Cecil the Lion by an American dentist in Hwange National Park sparked global outrage; it is the present-day equivalent of Kalki's diwan-arranged zoo tiger.
- **Canned hunting.** Lions and cheetahs are bred in captivity to be released for paying hunters. The practice mirrors the staged hundredth tiger in the chapter – a beast raised for the bullet.
- **Indian poaching of tigers and rhinos.** Even after the Wildlife Protection Act, organised poaching continues for tiger bones and rhino horn. The 2010s decade saw multiple high-profile cases in Madhya Pradesh and Assam.
- **Game hunting in the United States.** Hunting leases on private land allow wealthy clients to shoot captive elk, bison and deer. The economics is the same as the Maharaja's: the buyer pays for the certainty of a kill, not for the skill of a hunt.
- **Trophy fishing.** Marlin and tuna tournaments compensate the largest fish with cash prizes. The fish is often discarded after the photograph. Kalki's observation that the trophy economy treats animals as props for human pride is unchanged.
- **Black-market exotic-pet trade.** Many wealthy owners keep tigers, leopards and primates as private attractions. The trade is illegal in most countries but remains active.

> **Final Answer:** Yes. Modern parallels are easy to find – African trophy hunting (Cecil the Lion, 2015), canned hunting in southern Africa, Indian tiger and rhino poaching despite the 1972 Act, private-land hunting leases in the United States, trophy fishing tournaments, and the exotic-pet black market. Kalki's chapter becomes a contemporary essay rather than a period piece: the callousness of human beings towards wildlife outlives the princely state.

☞ Exam Tip

The marker on this question rewards specifics. Name at least three present-day instances with country and (ideally) a year. "Hunting is still bad" is not a 6-mark answer. Two or three named events plus a closing line earn full marks.

EXPERT'S SOLUTION *: Ms Ritu Banerjee, Conservation Journalist, formerly Sanctuary Asia*

Strategic angle. The cleanest way to score this question is to map Kalki's chapter onto the modern landscape: which scene of the story has a present-day counterpart, and what does the counterpart show? Treat the answer as a map, not a list.

- **The hundred-tiger vow → trophy hunting.** The modern trophy hunter is a small-scale Maharaja; the difference is the count, not the motive.
- **The diwan's zoo tiger → canned hunting.** Both produce a guaranteed kill. Both turn the animal into a prop.
- **The British officer's diamond rings → political donations.** The trophy economy still buys favour with the state, only the currency has changed.
- **The diplomatic marriage → hunting leases.** The Maharaja sought tiger supply; the modern client leases a ranch. The transaction is identical in shape.
- **The wooden toy tiger → the price of callousness.** The chapter ends with nature getting even. The modern parallel is climate feedback: the callousness that ignores the small animal eventually runs into the small consequence (the splinter).

Why this matters. The Board increasingly favours value based answers that move between the literary text and current events. Markers reward answers that show the chapter is not a museum exhibit but a current essay. The cleanest way to land this answer is to pair each named present-day case with its exact analogue in Kalki's chapter: Cecil with the staged hundredth tiger, canned hunting with the half-starved zoo beast, hunting leases with the diplomatic marriage, and the exotic-pet trade with the trophy economy that runs through the British-officer episode.

> **Final Answer:** Modern game-hunting parallels are abundant. The 2015 killing of Cecil the Lion at Hwange National Park, the canned-hunting industry in southern Africa, organised Indian poaching of tigers and rhinos in Madhya Pradesh and Assam despite the 1972 Act, private US hunting leases on ranches in Texas and Montana, marlin-and-tuna trophy-fishing tournaments and the exotic-pet black market all illustrate the callousness the chapter caricatures. Mapping Kalki's scenes onto these modern parallels turns the answer from a list of crimes into a structural argument: the trophy economy is older than the Maharaja and survives him.

Q 2.10 **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. Discuss.**

SOLUTION

Concept used. Reading Kalki's chapter as an early ecological brief, then articulating a six-point policy agenda for an ecology-aware system: reframed moral centre, stronger conservation law, polluter-pays pricing, on-site youth education, protection of original carer-communities, and active restoration.

Kalki's chapter is, among other things, an early ecological manifesto. The Maharaja's hundred-tiger vow is the kind of private appetite for which the planet now pays publicly. A new system for the age of ecology has to start, as the chapter implies, with the recognition that animals, forests, ice sheets and oceans are not props for human ambition.

- **Move the moral centre from the human to the ecosystem.** Kalki's narrator never says this directly; the satire does the work. A new system would make it explicit: the test of a policy is not what it does for the king but what it does for the forest.
- **Build conservation into the law.** India's 1972 Wildlife Protection Act is one model. Other countries have similar Acts. A new system would tighten these and add habitat-corridor protection between reserves.
- **Tie ecological cost to the polluter.** The polluter-pays principle (Indian Supreme Court, Vellore Citizens case, 1996) is one form. Carbon taxes are another. The Maharaja paid nothing for the lost tigers; a new system would price that loss.
- **Educate the future generation, not just the current one.** Geoff Green's *Students on Ice* programme (see Chapter 3 *Journey to the End of the Earth*) is a model: teach high-school students on site, not in a lecture hall.
- **Care of all people, not all consumers.** Kalki's chapter shows that royal arrogance is also class arrogance. A new system would protect the rights of forest-dwelling communities, the original carers of Indian ecosystems.
- **Restore what has been lost.** *Project Tiger* (1973), the Bishnoi tradition in Rajasthan, the Chipko movement (1973), and the modern doubling of the Indian tiger population are concrete evidence that restoration is possible.

> **Final Answer:** Yes, a new ecological system must move the moral centre from the human to the ecosystem, tighten conservation law, price ecological cost into the polluter, educate the future generation on site, protect forest-dwelling communities as the original carers, and pursue restoration through programmes like Project Tiger and the Bishnoi and Chipko traditions. Kalki's chapter, read as a critique of one Maharaja's private appetite, is also a brief for that larger system.

♥ Why This Matters

This is one of CBSE's favourite value-based prompts. The high-mark answer combines Kalki's chapter with at least three named Indian ecological precedents (Wildlife Protection

Act, Project Tiger, Chipko, Bishnoi, Vellore Citizens) and one international model (Students on Ice, IPCC, Paris Agreement). Naming earns marks; generalising does not.

EXPERT'S SOLUTION *: Dr Priya Iyer, Associate Professor of Environmental Policy, TERI School of Advanced Studies*

Strategic angle. Frame the answer as a six-point policy agenda rather than as a moral essay. The agenda is easier to write under time pressure, and the marker can see the answer's shape at a glance.

- **Reframe the moral centre.** From king to ecosystem.
- **Strengthen conservation law.** Wildlife Protection Act, Project Tiger, Forest Rights Act, Coastal Regulation Zone.
- **Use the polluter-pays principle.** Vellore Citizens (1996); carbon taxes; environmental impact assessment.
- **Teach the future generation on site.** Students on Ice (Chapter 3); the National Service Scheme's climate fellowships.
- **Protect the original carers.** Forest-dwelling communities; Article 51A(g) of the Constitution; the Niyamgiri verdict.
- **Restore.** Project Tiger; Chipko; Bishnoi; the recent doubling of Indian tiger numbers (2006-2022).

Why this matters. The Board increasingly looks for answers that turn a literary text into a policy proposal. The chapter is the trigger; the policy agenda is the answer. The six-point structure is easy to write under time pressure and easy to grade at a glance, which is exactly the combination the marker is hoping for. Name an Act, a project, a verdict, and a date in each point, and the answer turns into a board-paper case study rather than a moral essay. The chapter then serves as the spine of a contemporary argument, not just a literary text.

> **Final Answer:** A new ecological system needs six moves: reframe the moral centre from king to ecosystem, strengthen conservation law, apply polluter-pays, teach the next generation on site, protect the original carer-communities, and restore what has been lost. Kalki's chapter – read as a critique of one private appetite – becomes a brief for that larger system.

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