

CBSE TEST PAPER - 02
Class – 12 English Core (Aunt Jennifer's Tigers)

General Instruction:

- Question No. 1 to 3 carry four marks each.
 - Question No. 4 to 10 carry three marks each.
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1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Aunt Jennifer's fingers fluttering through her wool

Find even the ivory needle hard to pull.

The massive weight of Uncle's wedding band

Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand."

- a. Why do Aunt Jennifer's fingers flutter through her wool?
- b. Why does she find it hard to pull the ivory needle?
- c. Explain: 'massive weight of Uncle's wedding band'.
- d. How is Aunt Jennifer affected by the 'weight of matrimony'?

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. What does prancing tigers symbolize?
- b. Why are they referred to as 'denizens of a world of green'?
- c. What qualities of the 'tigers' are highlighted here?
- d. What are her tigers symbolic of?

3. Read the extract 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. Why are Aunt Jennifer's hands terrified?
- b. Why did she make the tigers?

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- c. What will happen to her tigers after her death?
 - d. How are Aunt Jennifer's tigers different from her?
4. What is Aunt Jennifer's death symbolic of?
 5. Explain: "terrified hands".
 6. What does 'ringed with ordeals' imply?
 7. What are the ordeals Aunt Jennifer is surrounded by? Why is it significant that the poet uses the word 'ringed'? What are the meanings of the word 'ringed' in the poem?
 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?
 9. Do you sympathize with Aunt Jennifer? Why/Why not?
 10. How do 'denizens' and 'chivalric' add to our understanding of the tiger's attitudes?

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Answers

1.
 - a. Aunt Jennifer lives in constant fear of her husband. She feels so nervous and terrified that her hands shake and flutter when she sits down to knit.
 - b. She finds it hard to pull the ivory needle more because of mental suppression than because of physical weakness. Due to constant fear that she confronts she has become a nervous wreck.
 - c. The expression is symbolic of male authority and power. Matrimony binds the woman physically as well as mentally. Likewise Aunt Jennifer is trapped in gender oppression and feels herself burdened by the authority of her husband. Hence, she is fettered with the massive weight of Uncle's wedding band.
 - d. Aunt Jennifer cannot do things freely. She tries to come up to the expectation of her husband. She seems to have lost her identity. The freedom that she dreams through her art, is itself symbolic of her oppressed self.
2.
 - a. Prancing tigers are a symbol of the spirit of freedom within Aunt Jennifer which remains subdued
 - b. The tigers are the dwellers of the green forest so they are referred to as denizens of a world of green.
 - c. Fearlessness and ferocity of the tigers are highlighted here. Aunt Jennifer's nervousness and timidity are in sharp contrast to wild ferocity of the tigers that are not afraid of hunting men. Unlike Aunt Jennifer, the tigers fear nothing.
 - d. Her tigers are symbolic of Aunt Jennifer's desire for freedom. They are also symbols of strength and self-confidence.
3.
 - a. Her hands are terrified, rather she is terrified, as she is passing through the very hard and bitter experience of married life. 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 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.

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4. Aunt Jennifer's death is symbolic of her complete submission to her suppression. Death may end her ordeal, it may put her frightened, shaking fingers to rest. But, even after death, the ring shall remain on her hand, which indicates that her husband's rule shall continue. Hence, even after death her desire of freedom and fearlessness shall remain alive in these tigers which she has embroidered.
 5. Aunt Jennifer is terrified by her dominating husband and hence her hands are shivering. Even after death, Aunt would carry the fear of her domineering husband as she would yet bear the burden of her wedding band on her finger. The ordeals faced by her in an oppressive marriage would continue to terrify her.
 6. 'Ringed with ordeal' implies to be surrounded by hardships and sufferings. Aunt Jennifer has been so victimized in her life that even after her death she remains trapped. We find her a victim of gender injustice and oppression.
 7. The word 'ringed' has a double association. It indicates not only the ring that 'sits heavily' on her hand, but the difficulties in her life that will continue to surround her. The last stanza of the poem gives us a surprisingly insightful look at the reality and end of Aunt Jennifer and women in her position all over the world. Aunt Jennifer never wins. The ring on her finger symbolizes the weight she must bear dead or alive. Just as she created and controlled her needlework, society and gender roles created and controlled her.
 8. Aunt Jennifer creates an alternative world of freedom, one which she could not inhabit other than imaginatively or aesthetically. The desolating effects of patriarchy are assumed and exposed, in three quatrains. She is totally victimized by the absent Uncle, represented only by his wedding band, the symbol here of the oppression by custom and law.
 9. Yes, we do sympathize with Aunt Jennifer as desired by the poet. She never got to see women standing strong and proud because they were simply women. She missed out on watching women become astronauts, businesswomen, artists, and policemen. This gives substantial reason to sympathize with her. In the end, poet Adrienne Rich has expressed her feminist concern by showing that Aunt Jennifer represented every woman of her time. Ironically enough, she rebels using the oppressor's own language to feel a sense of triumph.
 10. The word 'denizens', when associated with tiger, means that they are proud of their home, they feel safe there and have a feeling of belongingness attached to it. While the word 'chivalric' shows that they have a majestic and worthy position like knights.