NCERT Solutions for Class 12 English Vistas Chapter 2

Question 1.
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?
Answer:
The story is a poignant satire on the abuse of power by the people in powerful positions. The Maharaja, fearing the prophecy that he would meet his death from the hundredth tiger, launched a feverish hunt in the name of “self-defence”.The state banned tiger hunting by anyone except the Maharaja. He declared that the property of the person, who dared to hunt a tiger, would be confiscated. The king was all set to realise his ambition. He vowed to attend to other matters only after killing of a hundred tigers. In the process, he came close to losing his throne when he refused permission to a high-ranking British officer to hunt tigers in his state.

When there were no more tigers left in his kingdom, he married a girl of a state with a large tiger population. With the passage of time, tigers had become extinct even in his father-in-law’s kingdom. On hearing the news of a tiger in a village of his kingdom, the Maharaja whimsically announced a three- year exemption from all taxes for that village and set out on the hunt at once.

When the tiger was not found, many officers lost their jobs. He put his whole kingdom through misery, threatening to take away jobs and double the taxes, until he was presented with the hundredth tiger. Ironically, in spite of his frenzied initiative to negate the prophecy, he met with his death at the hands of a wooden, toy tiger. In this way, the hundredth ‘toy tiger’ took its final revenge upon the Tiger King.

Dramatic irony is employed in the ironical twist in the tale— ninety-nine tigers were killed in vain, and the king came under threat from a wooden toy tiger. There is also a great deal of irony in how contrary to the ferociousness of tigers, the hundredth tiger was old and fainted from the shock of the bullet whizzing past. The tale is a satire on the pompous Maharaja, who heartlessly killed a hundred tigers, only to meet his nemesis in a toy.

Question 2.
What is the author’s indirect comment on subjecting innocent animals to the wilfulness of human beings?
Answer:
Through the story “The Tiger King”, the writer puts across his view of condemning the killing of animals. The Maharaja, the protagonist of the story, scared of a prophecy, killed tigers mercilessly. The author also raises a contemporary concern of the present times—the extinction of wildlife due to human activities. Asserting the “right” to kill

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animals is like asserting the right to steal, from future generations. The tiger population became extinct in the territories where he had an access to kill. The writer garbs it in the guise of a folklore, but addresses how merciless killing of animals leads to a depletion of natural resources. The sensitive environmental issue of certain species becoming extinct is beautifully and humorously conveyed.

Question 3.
How would you describe the behaviour of the Maharaja's minions towards him? Do you find them sincere towards him or are they driven by fear when they obey him? Do we find a similarity in today's political order?
Answer:
Since the Maharaja's existence revolved around killing a hundred tigers, his minions, driven by fear, obeyed him. Even the astrologer was afraid of predicting his death till the Maharaja told him to "speak without fear". Determined to fulfil his mission, the Maharaja threatened to confiscate the wealth and property of any person who dared to hurt a tiger.

Overtaken by the madness to kill hundred tigers, he unjustly levied taxes and threatened his subjects to take away their jobs. The minions seemed afraid of their whimsical monarch. They kept their opinions to themselves, and watched as their king drove the entire nation to risk for his personal agenda. In today's political order, we have such examples of autocratic rulers and dynastic monopolies throughout the world. In many countries we see that the role of money, crime, electoral manipulation and muscle power greatly influences political decisions. Sycophants prevent those in power from seeing the truth.

Question 4.
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?
Answer:
While not every medieval noble ever went off to war, they all, if physically able, went off to hunt on horseback. Hunting was the favourite pastime of the warrior class.However, in the recent past, when poaching has been made illegal, most hunters get away with murder in India. When Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi was apprehended for hunting down an endangered species of black buck, the ruthless, arrogant lifestyle of some Indians with inherited fortunes were exposed.

For years, animals—especially tigers and elephants—have been killed for their skins and organs. National parks, sanctuaries, and reserves have been virtually turned into hunting grounds by poachers. Armed with sophisticated weapons and vehicles, supported by corrupt officials and politicians, and glamorised by movie stars like Salman Khan, who was arrested for killing the black buck in Rajasthan, the poachers have ruled the jungles with little fear.

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All this has led to certain species becoming extinct due to encroachment and hunting by human beings. One such example is the Tibetan Antelope, which has been hunted down by poachers for its skin, used to make the Shahtoosh shawl. This antelope yields one of the finest and most expensive wools in the world—a prized possession of the rich. Pearl essence is obtained primarily from herring and is one of the many by-products of large-scale commercial fishing.

Question 5.
We need a new system of the age of ecology—a system that will take care of all people and of the earth and of all life upon it. Discuss.
Answer:
In our diverse and increasingly interdependent world, it is crucial that we, the people of earth, declare our responsibility to the greater community of life. The survival of our earth depends upon the consciousness that we should move beyond nationalism to more global concerns, for instance, to a sense of bio-regionalism. The well-being of people and the biosphere depends upon preserving clean air, pure waters, fertile soils, and a rich variety of plants, animals and ecosystems. The global environment with its finite resources is a primary concern of all humanity. The community of our planet stands at a defining moment. With science and technology have come great benefits and also great harm.

The dominant patterns of production and consumption are altering the climate, degrading the environment, depleting resources, and causing massive extinction of species. A dramatic rise in population has increased the pressures on ecological systems and has overburdened social systems. The challenges humanity faces can only be met if people everywhere acquire an awareness of global inter- dependence, identify themselves with the larger world, and decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility.

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