

Aunt Jennifer's Tigers

–*Adrienne Rich*

Points to Remember

- Aunt Jennifer's tigers symbolise spirit of freedom which she herself is bereft of.
- The tigers are the dwellers of the green forest, are fearless and ferocious this is in stark contrast to the suppressed womanhood in aunt's personality.
- Uncle made her life very burdensome, the expression 'massive weight of uncle's wedding band' symbolises male dominance.
- 'Ringed' refers to the confines, constraints and the demands of marriage that bind a woman, within the vicious grip of her unhappy married life.
- Even after her death she would feel terrified by the trauma which she faced due to her dominating husband
- Aunt Jennifer's tigers will survive her. The tigers she knitted on the panel will remain fearless, brave and majestic.
- The aunt herself will remain alive through her art form.

Questions for Practice

1. 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.

Questions

- (a) Name the poem and the poet.

Ans. The poem 'Aunt Jennifer's Tiger's is written by Adrienne Rich.

- (b) What was Aunt Jennifer doing at that moment?

Ans. She was creating embroidered tigers on a piece of woollen cloth.

(c) What do tigers symbolise?

Ans. Tigers symbolise fearlessness, bravery and self confidence.

(d) What are the traits of tigers that are a contrast to the aunt?

Ans. The tigers are fearless and 'Chivalric' whereas the aunt's own married life has left her weak and timid.

2. 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.

Questions

(a) What is the status of the Aunt in her family in her lifetime?

(b) Why are Aunt's hands said to be terrified?

(c) Explain : 'Still ringed with ordeals'?

(d) What will happen to her tigers after her death?

Answer the following questions in about 30-40 words each :

1. Where do the tigers appear? Write two qualities of the tigers as depicted by the poet?

2. Why is the ivory needle hard to pull?

3. What is the significance of the wedding ring in Aunt Jennifer's life.

4. Do you sympathise with Aunt Jennifer. What is the attitude of the speakers towards Aunt Jennifer?

2. 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 are Aunt Jennifer's fingers fluttering?

(b) What is the result of fluttering?

(c) Explain : 'The massive weight of Uncle's Wedding band'?

(d) What is Aunt Jennifer's state of mind?