



**INDIAN SCHOOL DARSAIT
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**



Subject : English Lesson : Aunt Jennifer's Tigers

Date of Worksheet : May 2019

Name of the Student : _____ Date: _____ Class & Div : XII Roll Number :

Summary

The poet is a feminist and she addresses the difficulties of a married woman. She spends good amount of time in embroidering panel of tigers prancing across the screen. The tigers are fearless creatures pacing elegantly and majestically. They symbolize the spirit of freedom. Aunt is a victim of male chauvinism (male domination). Aunt Jennifer is so oppressed and terrified that she finds it hard to pull the ivory needle. The "weight of Uncle's wedding band" expresses how victimized and oppressed she is. It implies that Aunt Jennifer has to work hard to meet his expectation. She spends her life in fear but she embroiders on the panel the fearless tigers to express her secret longing for a life of freedom and confidence. Even her death does not end the problem and torture which a married woman experiences.

I Read the extract and answer the questions that follow:

1. **"Aunt Jennifer's tigers prance across a screen,....They pace in sleek chivalric certainty."** 4
- a) What does the expression 'Aunt Jennifer's tigers' imply?
Aunt Jennifer was embroidering a panel of prancing tigers. The poet refers to the tigers as Aunt Jennifer's tigers because they are her creation, her work of art.
- b) What does 'prancing tigers' symbolize?
Prancing tigers are a symbol of the spirit of freedom within Aunt Jennifer which remains subdued. They also symbolize her fear of her male counterpart.
- c) Why are they referred to as 'denizens of a world of green' ?
The tigers are the dwellers of the green forest so they are referred to as denizens.
- d) What qualities of the 'tigers' are highlighted here?
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 who are not afraid of hunting men. Unlike Aunt Jennifer, the tigers fear nothing.
2. **"Aunt Jennifer's fingers fluttering through her wool... upon Aunt Jennifer's hand."** 4
- a) Why do Aunt Jennifer's fingers flutter through her wool?
Aunt Jennifer lives in constant fear of her chauvinist husband. She feels so nervous and terrified that her hands shake and flutter when she sits down to knit.
- b) Why does she find it hard to pull the ivory needle?
Confronting constant fear and bearing the constraints of married life, she has become a nervous wreck. She finds it difficult to pull the ivory needle through the tapestry more because of mental suppression than because of physical weakness.
- c) Explain: 'massive weight of Uncle's wedding band'.
The expression is symbolic of male authority and power. Matrimony binds the woman physically as well as mentally, clipping her of her freedom of expression and independence. Likewise Aunt Jennifer is trapped in gender oppression and feels herself burdened by the authority of her husband.

d) How is Aunt Jennifer affected by the ‘weight of matrimony’?

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 of through her art is itself symbolic of her oppressed self.

3. **”When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will lie...on prancing, proud and unafraid.”**

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a) What is Aunt Jennifer’s death symbolic of?

Aunt Jennifer’s death is symbolic of her complete submission to her suppression.

b) What does ‘ringed with ordeals’ imply?

Aunt Jennifer has been so victimized in her life that even after death she remains trapped in the struggles of the spirit. Though we do not know what terrors Aunt Jennifer had to live with, we find her a victim of gender injustice and oppression.

c) Is the society in any way affected by Aunt Jennifer’s death?

Since the society is male dominated, it shows no concern for Aunt’s suffering, even her death. The loss of her freedom is her individual loss. The society is not affected by it and the state of women still remains the same.

d) Explain: “the tigers in the panel...will go on prancing, proud and unafraid”.

The expression is symbolic of the dispassionate and unconcerned attitude of the male towards the desire for freedom among women. Even after her death, the social milieu remains unaffected, arrogant and ferocious.

II Answer the following questions in 30-40 words.

1. What do the tigers made by the Aunt symbolize?

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The tigers made by Aunt Jennifer symbolize the spirit of courage, strength and fearlessness Aunt Jennifer, a victim of male oppression, expresses her crushed feelings in the form of art. So, the tigers are symbolic of the fear of male domination with which Aunt Jennifer suffers.

2. Why do you think Aunt Jennifer’s hands are fluttering through her wool? Why is she finding the needle so hard to pull?

Aunt Jennifer is victimized by the overbearing and dominant nature of her husband. Her life has become a torture due to her suppression by her atrocious husband. The fear of her authoritative husband has gone so deep into her being that she seems to have lost all strength and energy. Thus her hands shake and flutter so much that she is not even able to pull the needle through the tapestry.

3. Explain ‘The tigers in the panel-----proud and unafraid.’

Here the tigers symbolize the unquestioned authority of man enjoyed by him over his woman counterpart. The lines suggest the dispassionate and unconcerned attitude of the male towards the desire for freedom among women. Here, Aunt Jennifer tries to find an escape in her art but ends up portraying an image of her own suppression. While woman can never free herself from the oppressive authority of her male counterpart, the male, on the other hand will go on enjoying his authoritative arrogance and ferocity without any fear of regrets.

