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Class-XII

English

Flamingo

Poem-5



Adrienne Rich

Aunt Jennifer's Tigers

Part - 2

Neha Rajvanshi

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SUMMARY

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Summary of The Poem

- Aunt Jennifer's Tigers prance and jump across a screen. They are bright coloured like the shining yellow topaz.
- She creates them through her own hands. They don't fear the men standing under the tree.

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- Aunt Jennifer's hands are moving about her wool because of the burdan of her married life.
- She still feels tied down by that weight.
- Her terrified hands will tell the whole story of her unhappy life even when aunt is dead.

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- Hardships and sufferings are the parts of her married life.
- These crushed her. She is in the grip of very tough life.
- But the tigers she has made in the panel will go on jumping ahead, proud and unafraid.

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Literary Devices Used in the Poem

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1. **Rhyme Scheme :** Rhyme scheme of the poem is AABB.

2. **Metaphor :** Comparison between two things having similar quality.

Example :

Bright topaz denizens

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3. Anaphora : Repetition of the same word at the beginning of the sentence.

Example :

They

They

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4. Hyperbole : The use of exaggeration for emphasis.

Example :

Massive weight of uncle's wedding band.

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5. Personification : To give human qualities to non human object.

Example :

Sits heavily



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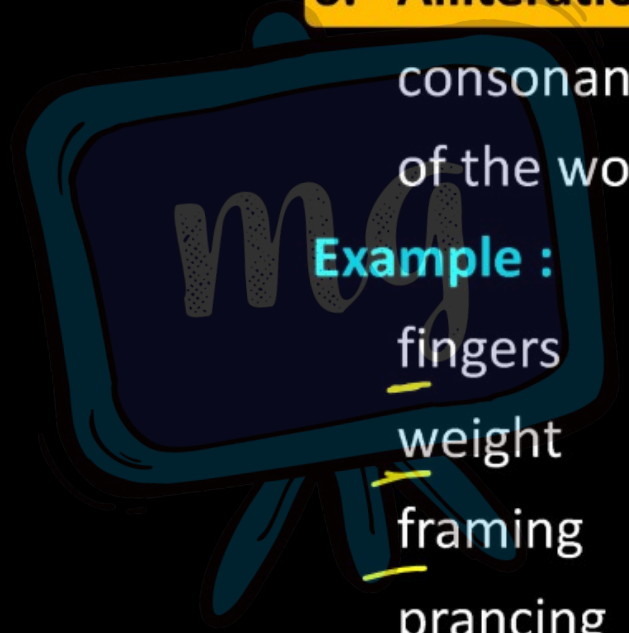

6. Alliteration : Repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of the words.

Example :

fingers — fluttering

weight — wedding

framing — front

prancing — proud

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7. Paradox : Having contradictory qualities.

Example :

Last stanza of the poem

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8. Symbolism : When something beyond the literal meaning is represented.

Example :

The tigers in the poem symbolise bravery and freedom. They also reflect Aunt jennifer's innermost desire to be fearless.

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COMPREHENSION

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Question 1. How do 'denizens' and 'chivalric' add to our understanding of the tiger's attitudes?

Answer : Like all beasts of prey, the tigers are the denizens of forest. They live far away from human settlements. They are called 'chivalric.' This indicates the majestic and honourable position that they occupy in the world of animals. So, the use of the words 'denizens' and 'chivalric' adds to our understanding of the tiger's attitudes.

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

Answer. Aunt Jennifer is weaving tigers on the panel. Her hands are moving about her wool. She is finding the needle quite hard to pull. The weight of years of her married life is lying heavy on her hand. This makes the pulling of the neddle so hard.

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Question 3. What is suggested by the image 'massive weight of uncle's wedding band'?

Answer. It suggests the weight of the harsh and tough experience of Aunt Jennifer's married life. The image is quite suggestive. The wedding band is symbolic. It represents the unbreakable bond of marriage between the husband and the wife.

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Question 4. Of what or whom is Aunt Jennifer terrified in the third stanza?

Answer. In the third stanza, the poet refers to Aunt Jennifer's 'terrified hands'. The old unhappy memories are still fresh in her mind. She had passed through the horrible times during her married life. These ordeals crushed and suppressed her. Their effect is still visible. So, she is still ringed with those ordeals that dominated her life.

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Question 5. 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?

Answer. The tigers are 'prancing'. They pace in 'sleek chivalric certainty'. They 'do not fear' the men beneath the tree. Thus, they are symbols of strength, fierceness and beauty.

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Aunt Jennifer, on the other hand, is weak and terrified. Her hands are finding it difficult to pull through her wool. The massive weight of the wedding band sits heavily on her hand. her terrified hands are still ringed by the ordeals of married life. The contrast heightens the intensity.

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Question 6. Interpret the symbols found in this poem.

Answer. Adrienne Rich's 'Aunt Jennifer's Tigers, is rich in symbolism. 'The massive weight of wedding band' symbolises ordeals, hardships and worries of married life. 'Terrified hands', and 'ringed with ordeals' also indicate those unpleasant experiences that are still clinging to Aunt Jennifer physically and mentally.

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Question 7. Do you sympathise with Aunt Jennifer? What is the attitude of the speaker towards Aunt Jennifer?

Answer. Yes, we do sympathise with Aunt Jennifer. She has experienced hardships and ordeals during her married life. The attitude of the speaker towards Aunt Jennifer is equally sympathetic.