

Poetry - 12.

Ajamil and the Tigers

UNDERSTANDING THE POEM

Q. 1 The poem has a literal level and a figurative level. Why has the poet chosen 'tigers' and 'sheep' to convey his message?

Answer:

1) This poem is a satire on the modern politics where people are sheep, warriors are sheep dogs, politicians are compared with Ajamil and the tigers are the countries that try to attack our nation.

2) Poet has chosen sheep to say the innocence of the people and the tigers to show the cruelty of other nations that are trying to harm our nation.

Q. 2 What facet of political life does the behavior of Ajamil illustrate?

Answer:

In this poem, when the brave dog brought all the tigers as the prisoners of war, Ajamil, instead of punishing them he signed a treaty friendship with them.

This indicates that the lack of confidence of the politicians in the army which is the reason why many of the prisoners are being getting a great hospitality instead of a severe punishment.

They feel that, if there is a war then whole of the nation will be lost at once, so it's better to sacrifice some and protect the rest.

Q. 3 Why have the words, 'pretended' and 'seemed' been used in the lines?

...pretended to believe every single word of what the tiger king said.

And seemed to be taken in by all the lies.

How does the sense of these lines connect with the line ‘Ajamil wasn’t a fool’?

Answer:

Ajamil knows that the treaty that he signed is not a permanent one and he was also sure that the tigers are going to attack them again one day. Still he wanted to sign the treaty for a temporary peace.

Hence the words ‘pretended’ and ‘seemed’ are used to express Ajamil’s feeling that he didn’t trust those tigers.

Q. 4 Why did Ajamil refuse to meet the sheepdog’s eyes?

Answer:

1) Sheep dog is a brave warrior and is capable of winning the war against all the tigers.

2) So Ajamil knows that the sheep dog wouldn’t be happy to sign a treaty with those tigers.

3) Hence he refused to meet the sheepdog’s eyes as he didn’t want to change his decision of making peace with the tigers.

Q. 5 ‘He is free to play a flute all day as well fed tigers and fat sheep drink from the same pond with a full stomach for a common bond.’ What do the phrases ‘play the flute all day’ and ‘a common bond’ refer to?

Answer:

The peace that established between the tigers and the sheep was a temporary one. So Ajamil can have some relaxation, at least for some days, which is referred by the phrase ‘play flute all day’.

No matter how strong or weak an animal is the all live on the same land and drink same water and live for a common good, this was explained by the phrase ‘a common bond’.

Q. 6 The poem is a satire against the present political class. How effectively does it convey the anger and anguish of the common man trapped in the system?

Answer:

In the game of war and peace, common man is the one who is affected the most. He is the one who is losing his property, health and sometimes lives even. Yet in the process of making good for most of the people, he is failing to get justice.

He is getting trapped in this system and turning helpless. The only thing that he can do is to hold his sorrow in his heart and bear in until his last breath.

This poem shows the anger and pain that a common man trapped in the system.

TRY THIS OUT

Q. 1 Find out the difference between these literary forms

(a) fable (b) allegory (c) satire

Answer:

- fable: A short typical story with animals as characters.
- allegory: A story or a poem or a picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning.
- satire: The use of humor to comment on a particular thing or process mostly against it.