

Chapter 9. The Tiger in the Tunnel

Passage 1

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Tembu, the boy, opened his eyes in the dark and wondered if his father was ready to leave the hut on his nightly errand. There was no moon that night, and the deathly stillness of the surrounding jungle was broken only occasionally by the shrill cry of a cicada. Sometimes from far off came the hollow hammering of a woodpecker, carried along on the faint breeze. Or the grunt of a wild boar could be heard as he dug up a favourite root. But these sounds were rare, and the silence of the forest always returned to swallow them up.

Baldeo, the watchman, was awake. He stretched himself slowly unwinding the heavy shawl that covered him. It was close on midnight and the chill air made him shiver. The station, a small shack backed by heavy jungle, was a station in name only; for trains only stopped there, if at all, for a few seconds before entering the deep cutting that led to the tunnel. Most trains merely slowed down before taking the sharp curve before cutting.

What errand did Tembu's father run every night?

Answer:

Tembu's father went out every night to check if the lamp was burning and to manually signal the upland mail and ensure that it had passed through the tunnel safely.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Tembu, the boy, opened his eyes in the dark and wondered if his father was ready to leave the hut on his nightly errand. There was no moon that night, and the deathly stillness of the surrounding jungle was broken only occasionally by the shrill cry of a cicada. Sometimes from far off came the hollow hammering of a woodpecker, carried along on the faint breeze. Or the grunt of a wild boar could be heard as he dug up a favourite root. But these sounds were rare, and the silence of the forest always returned to swallow them up.

Baldeo, the watchman, was awake. He stretched himself slowly unwinding the heavy shawl that covered him. It was close on midnight and the chill air made him shiver. The station, a small shack backed by heavy jungle, was a station in name only; for trains only stopped there, if at all, for a few seconds before entering the deep cutting that led to the tunnel. Most trains merely slowed down before taking the sharp curve before cutting.

Describe the night when Baldeo got ready to leave on his errand?

Answer:

It was a moonless night when Baldeo got ready to leave on his errand. There was deathly stillness around the jungle except for the occasional cry of the cicada, or a grunt of a wild boar, or the hammering of the woodpecker. It was close to midnight and the chilling air made Baldeo shiver.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Tembu, the boy, opened his eyes in the dark and wondered if his father was ready to leave the hut on his nightly errand. There was no moon that night, and the deathly stillness of the surrounding jungle was broken only occasionally by the shrill cry of a cicada. Sometimes from far off came the hollow hammering of a woodpecker, carried along on the faint breeze. Or the grunt of a wild boar could be heard as he dug up a favourite root. But these sounds were rare, and the silence of the forest always returned to swallow them up.

Baldeo, the watchman, was awake. He stretched himself slowly unwinding the heavy shawl that covered him. It was close on midnight and the chill air made him shiver. The station, a small shack backed by heavy jungle, was a station in name only; for trains only stopped there, if at all, for a few seconds before entering the deep cutting that led to the tunnel. Most trains merely slowed down before taking the sharp curve before cutting.

Why was the station said to be a station in name only?

Answer:

The station was said to be in name only because trains only stopped there if at all for a few seconds before entering the deep cutting that led to the tunnel. Most trains only slowed down before taking the sharp curve before the cutting.

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Tembu, the boy, opened his eyes in the dark and wondered if his father was ready to leave the hut on his nightly errand. There was no moon that night, and the deathly stillness of the surrounding jungle was broken only occasionally by the shrill cry of a cicada. Sometimes from far off came the hollow hammering of a woodpecker, carried along on the faint breeze. Or the grunt of a wild boar could be heard as he dug up a favourite root. But these sounds were rare, and the silence of the forest always returned to swallow them up.

Baldeo, the watchman, was awake. He stretched himself slowly unwinding the heavy shawl that covered him. It was close on midnight and the chill air made him shiver. The station, a small shack backed by heavy jungle, was a station in name only; for trains only stopped there, if at all, for a few seconds before entering the deep cutting that led to the tunnel. Most trains merely slowed down before taking the sharp curve before cutting.

Who was Tembu? Where did he live?

Answer:

Tembu was a 12 year-old tribal boy who lived in a tribal village with his mother and little sister on the outskirts of the forest. He would usually stay at home to help his mother and be with her as the village was three miles away from the station. They had a small rice field which barely provided them with a living. Baldeo took up the job of a khalasi at the station to help the family financially.

Passage 2

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Still drowsy, Baldeo groped for his lamp in darkness then fumbled about in search of matches. When he had produced a light he left the hut, closed the door behind him and set off along the permanent way. Tembu had fallen asleep again.

Why do you think Tembu wanted to accompany his father to the signal post?

Answer:

Tembu might have wanted to accompany his father to the signal post to avoid being left alone in the hut. It is also possible that Tembu wanted to give his father some company and help him at the signal post.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Still drowsy, Baldeo groped for his lamp in darkness then fumbled about in search of matches. When he had produced a light he left the hut, closed the door behind him and set off along the permanent way. Tembu had fallen asleep again.

What did Baldeo carry with him when he left for the signal post? Why?

Answer:

Baldeo carried with him a steel axe to protect himself from the wild animals lurking around in the dark near the tunnel.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Still drowsy, Baldeo groped for his lamp in darkness then fumbled about in search of matches. When he had produced a light he left the hut, closed the door behind him and set off along the permanent way. Tembu had fallen asleep again.

Why did Baldeo carry a shawl with him?

Answer:

It was very cold outside and Baldeo wrapped himself in his shawl to feel warm.

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Still drowsy, Baldeo groped for his lamp in darkness then fumbled about in search of matches. When he had produced a light he left the hut, closed the door behind him and set off along the permanent way. Tembu had fallen asleep again.

Why was Baldeo struggling about as he left the hut?

Answer:

It was close to midnight and Baldeo had forcefully woken up from his sleep to attend the signal post. He had joined as a khalasi just a month ago to earn more money for his family. During the daytime, he would work on his rice field. Baldeo was feeling tired and needed some sleep, but his work as a khalasi demanded that he remained awake throughout the night to guard the signal post. Tired and sleep deprived, Baldeo struggled about in his hut before leaving for the signal post.

Passage 3**Question 1.**

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

He had heard many tales of the famous tunnel tiger, a man-eater, which was supposed to frequent this spot; he hardly believed these stories for since his arrival at this place a month ago, he had not seen or even heard a tiger. There had, of course, been panthers, and only a few days ago the villagers had killed one with their spears and axes. Baldeo had occasionally heard the sawing of a panther calling to its mate, but they had not come near the tunnel or shed.

Why is the tiger referred to as the tunnel tiger?

Answer:

The tiger is referred to as the tunnel tiger as it would often enter the tunnel from the jungle and wreak havoc in the lives of the people.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

He had heard many tales of the famous tunnel tiger, a man-eater, which was supposed to frequent this spot; he hardly believed these stories for since his arrival at this place a month

ago, he had not seen or even heard a tiger. There had, of course, been panthers, and only a few days ago the villagers had killed one with their spears and axes. Baldeo had occasionally heard the sawing of a panther calling to its mate, but they had not come near the tunnel or shed.

Why didn't Baldeo believe in the stories about the tiger?

Answer:

Baldeo did not believe in the stories about the tiger in the tunnel because it had been a month since he had joined as the khalasi but had not once seen or even heard a tiger.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

He had heard many tales of the famous tunnel tiger, a man-eater, which was supposed to frequent this spot; he hardly believed these stories for since his arrival at this place a month ago, he had not seen or even heard a tiger. There had, of course, been panthers, and only a few days ago the villagers had killed one with their spears and axes. Baldeo had occasionally heard the sawing of a panther calling to its mate, but they had not come near the tunnel or shed.

Which animals had attacked the village recently?

Answer:

The village had been attacked by a panther a few days ago. The villagers killed the panther with their spears and axes.

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

He had heard many tales of the famous tunnel tiger, a man-eater, which was supposed to frequent this spot; he hardly believed these stories for since his arrival at this place a month ago, he had not seen or even heard a tiger. There had, of course, been panthers, and only a few days ago the villagers had killed one with their spears and axes. Baldeo had occasionally heard the sawing of a panther calling to its mate, but they had not come near the tunnel or shed.

How did the villagers describe the tiger?

Answer:

The villagers had many stories about the tiger. Most of them called the animal the tunnel tiger because he would come towards the village through the tunnel. The tiger was also called the maneater as he would attack and kill people from the village.

Passage 4

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

For some time there was only silence. Even the usual jungle noises seemed to have ceased altogether. Then a thump and the rattle of small stones announced that the tiger had sprung into the cutting. Baldeo, listening as he had never listened before, wondered if it was making for the tunnel or the opposite direction the direction of the hut, in which Tembu would be lying unprotected. He did not have to wonder for long.

How did Baldeo know that the tiger had entered the cutting?

Answer:

There was a thump and a rattle of small stones in the tunnel indicating that the tiger had entered the cutting.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

For some time there was only silence. Even the usual jungle noises seemed to have ceased altogether. Then a thump and the rattle of small stones announced that the tiger had sprung into the cutting. Baldeo, listening as he had never listened before, wondered if it was making for the tunnel or the opposite direction the direction of the hut, in which Tembu would be lying unprotected. He did not have to wonder for long.

Why was Baldeo intently listening to the sound coming from the cutting?

Answer:

Baldeo was intently listening to the sounds coming from the cutting in order to find out where the tiger was coming from. He also tried to figure out whether the tiger was making for the tunnel or the opposite direction, where the hut was in which his boy lay unprotected.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

For some time there was only silence. Even the usual jungle noises seemed to have ceased altogether. Then a thump and the rattle of small stones announced that the tiger had sprung into the cutting. Baldeo, listening as he had never listened before, wondered if it was making for the tunnel or the opposite direction the direction of the hut, in which Tembu would be lying unprotected. He did not have to wonder for long.

Why was there no point in running?

Answer:

The tiger would spot Baldeo sooner in the dark if he attempted to run away as animals can see in the dark better than humans. The tiger's eyes shone brilliantly in the light from the signal lamp. Also a tiger is faster than a man therefore Baldeo concluded that there was no point in running.

Passage 5

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

The tiger drew off and sat down licking his wounded leg, roaring every now and then with agony. He did not notice the faint rumble that shook the earth, followed by the distant puffing of an engine steadily climbing.

How did Baldeo position himself to fight the tiger?

Answer:

Baldeo stood with his back to the signal post, aware that the tiger was trotting in his direction. The beast was fearless, as it had been killing humans for a long time and knew the ways of men.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

The tiger drew off and sat down licking his wounded leg, roaring every now and then with agony. He did not notice the faint rumble that shook the earth, followed by the distant puffing of an engine steadily climbing.

What did the faint rumble indicate?

Answer:

The faint rumble was that of the arriving upland train which would soon enter the cutting and pass through the tunnel.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

The tiger drew off and sat down licking his wounded leg, roaring every now and then with agony. He did not notice the faint rumble that shook the earth, followed by the distant puffing of an engine steadily climbing.

Why did Baldeo decide to fight the tiger?

Answer:

It would have been very easy for Baldeo to run away from the scene. However, he chose to fight the tiger so as to stop him from moving towards the hut where his son Tembu was sleeping unprotected.

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

The tiger drew off and sat down licking his wounded leg, roaring every now and then with agony. He did not notice the faint rumble that shook the earth, followed by the distant puffing of an engine steadily climbing.

How did the tiger get wounded?

Answer:

Baldeo was ready for the tiger. He was a tribal man and knew the ways of the jungle. When the tiger struck out at Baldeo with its right paw, Baldeo avoided the attack with his agile leap and brought his axe down on the tiger's shoulder. He attacked the tiger fiercely with his steel axe and almost got the beast's leg. The axe remained stuck in the bone, wounding the beast grievously.

Passage 6

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

At the next station the driver slowed down and stopped his train to water the engine. He got down to stretch his legs and decided to examine the head-lamps. He received the surprise of his life...

What happened to Baldeo when the tiger attacked him?

Answer:

Although Baldeo injured the tiger, the beast sprang on him, tearing down his broken body. Baldeo was killed by the tiger's attack.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

At the next station the driver slowed down and stopped his train to water the engine. He got down to stretch his legs and decided to examine the head-lamps. He received the surprise of his life...

Why did the tiger feel trapped like a man?

Answer:

Although Baldeo succumbed to his injuries after the tiger attacked him, he had brought down his axe on the tiger injuring him badly. As the tiger sat licking his wound inside the tunnel, he heard the engine of the upland mail train approaching the tunnel. The wounded leg limited the animal's ability to run, and therefore, the tiger felt as if it were trapped like a man in the tunnel.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

At the next station the driver slowed down and stopped his train to water the engine. He got down to stretch his legs and decided to examine the head-lamps. He received the surprise of his life...

What surprised the engine driver?

Answer:

When the engine driver got down at the next station to stretch his legs, he decided to examine the head-lamps of the train. To his surprise, he saw the major portion of the tiger just above the cow-catcher, cut in half by the engine.

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

At the next station the driver slowed down and stopped his train to water the engine. He got down to stretch his legs and decided to examine the head-lamps. He received the surprise of his life...

Describe Baldeo's encounter with the tiger.

Answer:

Baldeo avoided the paw of the tiger with his marvellously agile leap when the tiger struck him. He brought his axe down on the animal's shoulder twice and on the second strike the axe got stuck to tiger's shoulder bone, almost severing its limb. Baldeo was left without a weapon with the axe stuck in the animal's shoulder. Taking advantage of this, the tiger sprang on Baldeo bringing him down and tearing his body. It was over in a few minutes and the night closed in on Baldeo forever.

Passage 7**Question 1.**

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

He sat down in the darkness to wait for the train, and sang softly to himself. There was nothing to be afraid of – his father had killed the tiger, the forest gods were pleased; and besides, he had the axe with him, his father's axe, and he now knew to use it.

What was the effect of Baldeo's death on his family?

Answer:

Baldeo was the only earning member of his family. After his death, Tembu, his mother, and his sister were plunged in grief for two whole days.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

He sat down in the darkness to wait for the train, and sang softly to himself. There was nothing to be afraid of – his father had killed the tiger, the forest gods were pleased; and besides, he had the axe with him, his father's axe, and he now knew to use it.

How was the atmosphere at the cutting different from that at the station?

Answer:

There was considerable excitement and conjecture at the station, as the driver had spotted a major portion of the tiger cut in half by the engine. However, back at the cutting there was no sound except for the sobs of Tembu who sat beside the body of his father. He sat there a long time guarding his father's body from jackals and hyenas until the first faint light of dawn brought with it the arrival of the relief-watchman.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

He sat down in the darkness to wait for the train, and sang softly to himself. There was nothing to be afraid of – his father had killed the tiger, the forest gods were pleased; and besides, he had the axe with him, his father's axe, and he now knew to use it.

What role did Tembu assume after Baldeo's death?

Answer:

Baldeo's family was plunged into grief for two whole days after Baldeo died in the tiger attack. However, life had to go on and the entire responsibility of supporting the family now fell on Tembu. Three nights later, he was at the cutting, lighting the signal-lamp for the overland mail. He sat down in the darkness to wait for the train, and sang softly to himself. He was not afraid of anything, for his father had killed the tiger, and he had his father's axe with him which he knew how to use.