**POEM - A TIGER IN THE ZOO**

**Read the extracts and answer the following questions**

1. **He stalks in his vivid stripes**

 **The few steps of his cage,**

 **On pads of velvet quiet,**

 **In his quiet rage**.

Questions :

(a) Who is ‘he’ here? How does ‘he’ walk?

Here ‘he’ is the tiger. ‘He’ walks with pride

(b) What emotion does ‘he’ show?

‘He’ shows anger coupled.

(c) What does ‘pads of velvet’ mean?

Pads of velvet’ means this animal’s soft soles.

(d) Name the poem and the poet.

Poem: A Tiger in the Zoo. Poet: Leslie Norris.

(e) Which words rhyme in this stanza?

The rhyming words are cage – rage

 **2. He should be lurking in shadow,**

 **Sliding through long grass**

 **Near the water hole**

 **Where plump deer pass.**

Questions :

(a) How should the tiger walk through the grass?

The tiger should slide through the grass.

(b) Why should the tiger lurk in the shadow?

The tiger should lurk in the shadow to hunt for food

(c) Who passes near the water hole?

The fat deer pass near the water hole.

(d) Where should the tiger hide to himself?

 The tiger should hide to himself near the water hole.

(e) Which are the rhyming words in this stanza?

The rhyming words are grass-pass.

 **3. He should be snarling around houses**

 **At the jungle’s edge.**

 **Baring his white fangs, his claws,**

 **Terrorising the village!**

Questions :

(a) What should he be doing near the houses?

He should be snarling near the houses.

(b) Where are these houses situated?

These houses are at the edge of the jungle.

(c) How would he terrorise the villagers?

He would terrorise the villagers by showing his fangs and claws.

(d) Who does ‘he’ refer to in this stanza?

‘He’ refers to the tiger.

(e) Which are the rhyming words in this stanza?

The rhyming words are edge-village.

 **4. But he locked in a concrete cell,**

 **His strength behind bars,**

 **Stalking the length of his cage,**

 **Ignoring visitors.**

Questions :

(a) in what kind of a cell is he locked?

He is locked in a concrete cell.

(b) Whose strength is behind bars?

The strength of the locked animal is behind bars.

(c) How does he react to the visitors?

He ignores the visitors.

 **5. He hears the last voice at night,**

 **The patrolling cars,**

 **And stares with his brilliant eyes**

 **At the brilliant stars.**

Questions :

(a) What sound does the tiger hear at night?

The tiger hears the sound of the patrolling cars at night.

(b) How do his eyes look?

His eyes look brilliant.

(c) At what does he look at night?

He looks at the shining stars at night.

(d) Which word in the stanza means ‘looks intently’?

 Stare

 **6. He stalks in his vivid stripes**

 **The few steps of his cage,**

 **On pads of velvet quiet,**

 **In his quiet rage.**

Questions:

(a) What can be said about the stripes on his body?

The stripes on his body are clearly visible.

(b) What are pads of velvet?

The heels of the tiger are soft like the pads of velvet.

(c) Where is the tiger now?

The tiger is bound in his cage.

(d) Why is he in his ‘quiet rage’?

He is unhappy and angry but controls his rage quietly.

**What message does the poet want to convey through the poem—Tiger in the Zoo’?**

**Ans**. **The poet wants to convey that it is cruel to keep the wild animals in small enclosures of the zoo, away from their natural habitat. They feel angry, helpless and unhappy and remember their life and environment in the forest.**

**The tiger in the poem is feeling miserable in a concrete cell. Does it not amount to cruelty? Express your opinion about keeping wild animals in zoos. Is there any lesson for humans?**

**Ans**. The tiger in the poem is wretched in its cage. It longs for freedom. It may be well looked after, but the fact of the matter is that unless one is free, one is not alive. Confinement brings bondage, and bondage is cruelty. One may argue that at least this way they all will not be killed and become extinct. However, taking away one’s freedom to keep one alive kill the desire to live anyhow. Even humans throughout the world oppose the chains of slavery and oppression. How are other living creatures any different? Humans have encroached on their space, and sheltering them in zoos is truly inhuman. Humans must learn to respect nature, for humans exist only due to nature.