

POEM-4

HOW TO TELL WILD ANIMALS

QUESTION AND ANSWERS

Q1. Does ‘dying’ really rhyme with ‘lion’? Can you say it in such a way that it does?

Answer-

No, ‘dying’ does not rhyme with ‘lion’. It is for this reason that the poet has used ‘dyin’ so that when we pronounce it, it rhymes with ‘lion’.

Q2. How does the poet suggest that you identify the lion and the tiger? When can you do so, according to him?

Answer-

The poet suggests that if a large and tawny beast in the jungle in the east advances towards us, then it is an Asian lion. We can identify it when it roars at us while we are dying with fear. When while roaming we come across a wild beast that is yellow in colour with black stripes, it is a Bengal tiger. We can identify it when it eats us.

Q3. Do you think the words ‘lept’ and ‘lep’ in the third stanza are spelt correctly? Why does the poet spell them like this?

Answer-

No, the words ‘lept’ and ‘lep’ are spelt incorrectly. The poet has spelled them like this in order to maintain the rhythm of the poem. When spelled this way, they rhyme with the first part of ‘leopard’, thus giving emphasis to ‘leopard’ in each line.

Q4. Do you know what a ‘bearhug’ is? It’s a friendly and strong hug — such as bears are thought to give, as they attack you! Again, hyenas are thought to laugh, and crocodiles to weep (‘crocodile tears’) as they swallow their victims. Are there similar expressions and popular ideas about wild animals in your own language(s)?

Answer-

A ‘bearhug’ is the bear’s tight embrace. Hyenas never laugh. But their faces look like that. Crocodiles do not weep but tears come when they swallow their victims.

Q5. Look at the line “A novice might nonplus”. How would you write this ‘correctly’? Why is the poet’s ‘incorrect’ line better in the poem?

Answer-

The line “A novice might nonplus” can be correctly written as “A novice might be nonplussed”. The poet’s incorrect line is better in the poem as

it maintains the rhyme scheme of the poem. By writing it incorrectly, 'nonplus' rhymes with 'thus'.

Q6. Can you find other examples of poets taking liberties with language, either in English or in your own language(s)? Can you find examples of humorous poems in your own language(s)?

Answer-

Yes, many poets take such liberties to create proper rhyming. These are for example : Kirk is used for 'church' to rhyme with 'work'. Ken is used for 'see' to rhyme with 'pen'.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS:-

Q.1.'Many animals can be identified according to the poets' suggestion. Name the animals. Which ones would you like to identify? Are there any lessons for us from this poem?

Ans. The poet has listed down the ways of identifying seven animals in the poem, viz., and the lion, the Bengal Tiger, the leopard, the bear, the hyena, crocodiles and chameleons. As for me, I would like to identify the bear, the Bengal Tiger and the leopard. However, putting my life on the line just to identify the tiger and the leopard doesn't seem worth the risk! So if I see a noble beast with black stripes on yellow, I'll know the tiger, and the peppered spots will reveal the leopard. The bear hug, I wouldn't mind! The poetess, using humour, seems to warn readers against venturing too close to these animals.

Q.2. The poet has successfully used humour to be able to 'tell' or identify 'Wild Animals'. How do you think we need lots of it in our daily life?

Ans. Humour is the fuel of life. Without it, it would become difficult to continue living. Today, the life of the common man is typically mired in stress, tension, problems and sadness. It is amazing how the smallest problems may take on epic proportions for a common person. In such a situation, it becomes necessary to have a little humour in life. It gives us the much-needed respite from our monotonous routine and helps us face life more positively. Thus, the poetess' successful use of humour helps live in our minds and brings a smile on our faces.

Q.3. Every animal is unique and has some special characteristics. What tricks does the poet adopt in distinguishing various wild animals?

Ans. No doubt, every animal is unique. Every wild animal has his own special trait, colour, size and characteristics. The Asian Lion is found in the jungles of the eastern regions. It is a huge and mighty creature with brownish hide. His roar is enough to terrorise a person to death. The Bengal Tiger is a 'noble' and impressive wild animals. He has yellowish hide and black stripes all over it. The Leopard has dark spots all over his body. He is very agile. The moment he sees its prey, he pounces upon it without showing any mercy. The bear is known by his strong and tight hug. It becomes rather difficult for a novice to distinguish among wild animals. However, hyenas and crocodiles can be easily recognised. Hyenas come smiling merrily while crocodiles appear to be weeping. The chameleon is a small creature like a lizard. He has no ears and doesn't have even a single wing. You can find him sitting on a tree.

Q.4. Carolyn Wells takes liberties with language and employs humour to describe the wild animals. Give some examples of humorous descriptions in the poem.

Ans. It depends on the subject matter what style a poet chooses to adopt while writing a poem. The poem describes wild animals and how to distinguish them. To avoid oversimplification and monotony, the poet uses 'humour' as an effective weapon. The 'humour' used in the poem is suggestive and mild. It is not biting or scratching in effect. If the Asian Lion "roars at you as you're dying". The Bengal Tiger is a 'noble' wild beast that "greet you" when you are roaming around in the jungle. The unsparing Leopard will show no mercy and it will "do no good to roar with pain." If you have any doubts, the bear will "give you just one more caress." The poet uses subtle humour when he says: "Hyenas come with merry smiles; But if they weep they're Crocodiles".