

ENGLISH

HOW TO TELL WILD ANIMALS

~Summary~

-by Carolyn Wells

Stanza- 1

If ever you should go by chance
To jungles in the east;
And if there should to you advance
A large and tawny beast,
If he roars at you as you're dyin'
You'll know it is the Asian Lion...

Explanation: The poet here cautions the readers against the wild beasts found in the jungle. He says that if by chance you happen to go to any forest in the East, you are likely to encounter a huge and terrible animal moving forward towards you. You will notice that it is brownish-yellow in colour. And if that beast roars loudly at you and you feel that you are going to die due to fear then you will come to know that it is the Asian Lion.

Stanza- 2

Or if some time when roaming round,
A noble wild beast greets you,
With black stripes on a yellow ground,
Just notice if he eats you.
This simple rule may help you learn
The Bengal Tiger to discern.

Explanation: The poet says that it is very likely that while roaming in the forest, you are greeted by a wild beast. This wild animal is very impressive in size and his majestic body is covered with black stripes on a yellow hide. The poet cautions that if the readers notice this beast and that if he eats them, then this simple rule will teach them that it is a 'Bengal Tiger'.

Stanza- 3

If strolling forth, a beast you view,
Whose hide with spots is peppered,
As soon as he has leapt on you,
You'll know it is the Leopard.
Twill do no good to roar with pain,
He'll only leap and leap again.

Explanation: The poet here helps the readers to identify a leopard. He says that if you happen to walk in the forest, you might encounter a beast with spots on his skin. When this wild beast will jump at you, you will understand that it is a leopard as he will keep jumping on you and will tear you apart. Moreover, it will be of no use then to shout or cry with pain because he will continue pouncing on you. So, be careful and don't allow it to leap on you.

Stanza- 4

If when you're walking round your yard
You meet a creature there,
Who hugs you very, very hard,
Be sure it is a Bear.
If you have any doubts, I guess
He'll give you just one more caress.

Explanation: The poet says that while you are walking in your yard, you may encounter a creature there. When this creature hugs you very very tightly, then believe that it is a bear. Bears are thought to be good wrestlers and can give a really tight hug. Although a friendly hug is referred to as bear hug, if a real bear hugs you, then it may not feel friendly at all. The bear hugs a man to kill him. The poet further says that in case of any doubt you will find that the bear will embrace you once again till death.

Stanza- 5

Though to distinguish beasts of prey
A novice might nonplus,
The Crocodile you always may
Tell from the Hyena thus:
Hyenas come with merry smiles;
But if they weep they're Crocodiles.

Explanation: The poet here says that a novice (a beginner) may be puzzled and confused and thus might not be able to distinguish between the different wild animals. Hence, the poet helps to differentiate the crocodile from the hyena. He says that a hyena always laughs as it swallows its victim. A laughing hyena's voice resembles human's laughing sound. A crocodile on the other hand, is said to shed tears while eating its prey. The poet, thus, warns the readers to not wait for a hyena to laugh or for a crocodile to weep.

Stanza- 6

The true Chameleon is small,
A lizard sort of things;
He hasn't any ears at all,
And not a single wing.

If there is nothing on the tree,
Tis the Chameleon you see.

Explanation: The poet describes a chameleon in this stanza. He says a chameleon is a small garden lizard. It doesn't have ears or wings. The poet, further, says that if you are unable to see a thing on the tree, then chances are that a chameleon is sitting there. A chameleon is an expert at camouflage. It changes colour as per its surroundings and is Therefore difficult to see. This capacity of camouflage helps the lizard in saving it from hunters.

Conclusion of How to Tell Wild Animals

This poem is beautifully introducing the wild animals in a different way analogous to the hidden human beings.