

Chapter Review

- "How to Tell Wild Animals" is a humorous poem by Carolyn Wells. It gives funny, absurd advice on how to identify dangerous animals when you meet them.
- If you meet a large, tawny beast in the East that roars and eats you, it is an Asian Lion. If a noble beast with black stripes on a yellow coat greets you, it is a Bengal Tiger.
- If you are chased by a creature that leaps and leaps (in the poet's spelling 'lept' and 'lep'), it is a leopard. A leopard's spots help you recognise it.
- If a beast that hugs you tight (a bearhug) is around, then it is a bear. If you see a hyena, it seems to laugh but doesn't mean it. A crocodile weeps while swallowing you.
- The joke is that you can only tell them apart when it is too late, as you are being eaten. The word 'dyin' is rhymed with 'lion' in a funny way.
- The humour comes from the playful rhyming, the wrong spellings, and the dark, silly situations.

Key Terms

Tawny – Brownish-yellow.

Dyin' – Dying, said to rhyme with 'lion'.

Nonplus – To confuse or puzzle someone.

Novice – A beginner.

Bearhug – A tight, strong hug.

Crocodile tears – False sorrow.

Poetic licence – Freedom to break language rules for effect.

Humour – The quality of being funny.

Diagrams / Flowcharts

How to Tell: Clues in the Poem

Animal and Clue

- Asian Lion: roars, tawny, in the East
- Bengal Tiger: black stripes on yellow coat
- Leopard: leaps and leaps, spotted
- Bear: tight bearhug
- Hyena: seems to laugh, crocodile: seems to weep

Real Joke

- You recognise them only when attacked
- Wrong spellings for rhyme
- Tone is calm, situation is deadly

About the Poet

- Carolyn Wells (1862-1942) was an American writer known for humorous verse and limericks.

Poetic Devices

- Humour and irony: calm advice about deadly encounters.
- Poetic licence: 'lept', 'lep' and 'nonplus' are used to keep the rhyme and rhythm.
- Rhyme: dyin' and lion, thus and nonplus.
- Repetition: 'lep and lep again' makes the leopard funny.
- Exaggeration: the joke is that the 'identification' happens only as you are eaten.

Message

- The poem entertains and plays with language. It also gently reminds us that wild animals are dangerous and must be avoided.

Textbook Exercise Questions

Q.1 Does 'dyin' really rhyme with 'lion'? Can you say it so that it does?

Ans. No. If 'lion' is pronounced as 'lying' it would rhyme with 'dyin'.

Q.2 How does the poet suggest we identify the lion and the tiger? When can we do so?

Ans. A large tawny beast that roams the jungle in the East and roars at you is an Asian Lion. A noble beast with black stripes on a yellow coat is a Bengal Tiger. The lion roars loudly when it attacks, but the tiger attacks silently.

Q.3 Are 'lept' and 'lep' spelt correctly? Why does the poet spell them so?

Ans. No. The right spellings are 'leapt' and 'leap'. The poet spells them like this to keep the rhythm and rhyme and to add humour, stressing the word 'leopard'.

Q.4 What is a 'bearhug'? Are there similar popular ideas about animals?

Ans. A bearhug is a very tight embrace, as a bear gives while attacking. Similar ideas: hyenas seem to laugh, crocodiles shed tears (crocodile tears) while swallowing victims.

Q.5 "A novice might nonplus" - how would you write it correctly? Why is the poet's line better?

Ans. Correctly: 'A novice might be nonplussed'. The poet's line keeps the rhythm and rhymes with 'thus', so it is better for the poem.

Q.6 Other examples of poets taking liberties with language?

Ans. Ogden Nash in 'The Tale of Custard the Dragon' uses 'realio, trulio' for 'really and truly'. This is called poetic licence.

Board Exam Questions (Important)

Q.1 What makes this poem humorous? (4-5 lines)

Ans. The humour comes from absurd advice that helps only when it is too late, wrong spellings made to rhyme, and the calm tone used for a dangerous situation. Lines like 'He'll only lep and lep again' are funny.

Q.2 Reference to context: "A novice might nonplus" - who is a novice and why?

Ans. A novice is a beginner who has little knowledge of wild animals. He may be confused or helpless on meeting them, so the poet is advising him.

Q.3 Value-based: What can we learn from this poem?

Ans. We should keep a safe distance from wild animals, and we can enjoy language and humour even while learning about nature.

