

padhai | Class X

English

Notes



**Full
Explanations**



**Character
Sketch**



**Word
Meanings**



**Tone, Central
idea, devices....**

First Flight

HOW TO TELL WILD ANIMALS

— CAROLYN WELLS

Explanation:

The poem adopts a **humorous** approach by pretending to offer guidance on identifying dangerous wild animals in a jungle. Through exaggerated and unrealistic situations, the poet creates a strong **comic effect**.

At the opening of the poem, the poet explains how one might recognise an **Asian lion**. If a large, yellowish-brown creature approaches and roars while one is in the process of being killed, then one can conclude that it is a lion. The humour lies in the situational irony that such identification occurs only when it is **already too late** for the victim.

The poet then moves on to describe a **tiger**. If an animal with black stripes on a yellow body approaches and devours a person, it can be identified as a tiger. Once again, the poet uses exaggerated imagery and dark humour to suggest that recognition happens only during a **deadly encounter**.

The next animal described is the **leopard**, identifiable by its spotted skin. However, the poet humorously remarks that if the leopard leaps upon a person, crying out will be useless because the attack will continue. The deliberate use of **unusual spellings** such as “lep” and “lept” maintains rhyme and enhances the playful rhythm of the poem.

The poet then turns to the **bear**. If a creature embraces a person tightly, it must be a bear. This description humorously refers to the phrase “**bear hug**,” which normally suggests affection but here implies a dangerous and possibly fatal grip.

Further, the poet introduces the **hyena** and the **crocodile**. Hyenas are described as appearing with smiling faces, while crocodiles seem to shed tears. This connects to the familiar expression “**crocodile tears**,” which refers to false expressions of sorrow.

In the final part, the poet describes the **chameleon**, a small reptile without wings or ears. The poet humorously suggests that if one looks at a tree and sees nothing at all, it is likely that a chameleon is present, since it can blend completely with its surroundings.

Overall, the poem employs **exaggeration, irony**, playful diction, and absurd instructions to generate humour. Through these amusing descriptions, the poet subtly mocks the idea that dangerous wild animals can be identified through simple or casual rules.

Poetic Device Explanations

Humour and Irony

The dominant technique in the poem is humour arising from irony. The methods suggested for identifying animals are absurd because recognition occurs only at the moment of danger or death.

Hyperbole (Exaggeration)

The poet deliberately exaggerates situations, such as being crushed in a bear's embrace or eaten by a tiger. These extreme depictions heighten the comic impact.

Imagery

The poem creates clear visual images, such as the tiger with "black stripes on a yellow ground" and the leopard with spotted skin, enabling readers to picture the animals vividly.

Alliteration

Alliteration is present in expressions like "novice might nonplus," where repetition of the 'n' sound produces rhythm and emphasis.

Wordplay and Comic Language

The poet uses playful language and intentional misspellings like "lep" and "lept" to preserve rhyme and rhythm, contributing to the light-hearted tone.

Symbolic Expressions

Phrases such as "crocodile tears" and "bear hug" link the poem to commonly known idiomatic expressions associated with animals.

Central Message

The primary aim of the poem is to amuse the reader through satire and humour. By presenting unrealistic and exaggerated ways of identifying animals, the poet demonstrates how imagination and language can produce comic effects. At the same time, the poem indirectly reminds readers that wild animals are dangerous and should not be treated casually.

Poet's Tone

The tone of the poem is light-hearted, playful, and ironic.

Through exaggeration, humour, and wordplay, the poet creates an entertaining and amusing atmosphere.

Word Meanings

discern – to recognise or identify

hide – the skin of an animal

peppered – covered with spots

caress – a gentle touch

novice – a beginner or inexperienced person

nonplus – to confuse or puzzle someone

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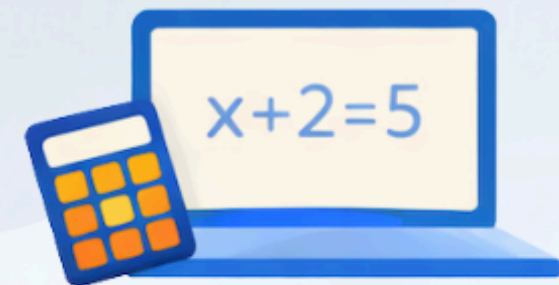
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