

Animal Imagery

Throughout the novel the narrator, John, uses a lot of animal imagery. Firstly identify what he is referring to in each of the following extracts and the context:

1. ... waiting for him to pet you like a dog or stroke you like a cat

2. It is actually a giant frog.

3. I believe it is a monitor lizard.

4. He could be an armadillo, which is a kind of anteater that lives in the front of the dictionary. He could be a sloth, which is a tailless mammal that eats, sleeps, and travels upside down.

5. ...because he's stroking you the way he would stroke a cat and I'll bet you're purring.

6. Tiger Jones has just broken the nose of Vinny the Fox.

7. ... my dead fish gaze.

8. But then, suddenly, ... flew into our homeroom like a giant horsefly, buzzing around from desk to desk.

9. It is no longer the sound of a wolf cub in a snow cave. It is the sound of a ravenous polar bear in a penguin sanctuary

10. He smells like a dog, acts like a dog, and has the loyalty of a dog.

11. ... his big hairy stomach hangs out over the elastic band of his shorts like a kangaroo pup trying to climb out of its mother's pouch.

12. Put in analogy form: a note to a goat is like a hot dog to a human.

13. ... as if it is so overcome with the poignancy of the moment that it is tempted to slither off his face and hide in the collar of his starched white shirt.

14. He looks back at Mrs. Moonface for mercy, with eyes that are as big and panicked and pleading as a deer's suddenly caught in a sixteen-wheeler's headlights.

Once you have identified what John is referring to in each of these examples explain why you think the image Klass, the author, creates is effective.

Now try to think of some animal imagery of your own for ordinary occurrences. Use the following to help you get started:

- students lining up for a class;
- people laughing;
- the noise of a lorry or truck;
- one person walking along a street in the dark.

Teacher's answers:

1. The man who isn't his father sitting on the sofa beside his mother. (p.2)
2. John's tuba. (p.15)
3. Violent Hayes' saxophone. (p.19)
4. Bill Beanman/Billy Beezer. (p.9)
5. The man who isn't his father sitting on the sofa beside his mother. (p.3)
6. Boxing on television. (p.50)
7. Staring back at Mrs Moonface so that he isn't asked a maths question. (p.100)
8. A rumour – Billy Beezer has been grounded. (p.65)
9. The sound of Billy Beezer's stomach. (p.39)
10. John's dog, Sprocket. (p.53)
11. His step-father's stomach whilst he is asleep. (p.83)
12. Describing Glory Hallelujah's reaction to his note. (p.79)
13. Mr Steenwilly's moustache when he is preparing to conduct the school band. (p.257)
14. Norman Cough's reaction when asked a question in maths class. (p.101)