

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is the literary technique of giving clues to coming events in a story.

As you read the stories, complete the chart below by noting things you think might be important later on. Try to solve the mystery before the beast's identity is revealed.

Page	Clue (event or item)	Could have something to do with—

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The Beast of Berkshire

1 In enormous, bold letters, the front page of the newspaper screamed, “BEAST OF BERKSHIRE ON THE LOOSE!” Below that, a second headline proclaimed, “Dozens of Prize Vegetable Gardens Gone in an Instant!” Shelly rolled her eyes at the ridiculous headlines just as her younger brother Wilber burst through the front door.

2 “I told you we saw a monster last night!” Wilber shouted.

3 “I thought you didn’t see it,” Shelly said.

4 “Well, I didn’t see it,” Wilber admitted, “but Mrs. Mulligan did, and now she’s quoted in the newspaper, so it’s undeniable! She saw the dreaded Beast of Berkshire!”

5 “There is no Beast of Berkshire, and I’m prepared to prove it,” Shelly said as she slid from her stool.

6 “How are you going to do that?”

7 “Everything can be explained through simple deduction and observation, my dear Wilber.”

8 “If you want to be devoured by the Beast, be my guest,” Wilber said.

9 Shelly pondered her first move. “First, we need to investigate the location of the crime.”

10 “We? What if the Beast comes back?” Wilber asked, but Shelly just rolled her eyes again and headed toward the door.

11 Shelly and Wilber stood in the middle of Mrs. Mulligan’s ravaged vegetable garden. All the cabbage and cauliflower had been eaten, with only little bits left scattered about. Half the garden was trampled flat, and strange footprints were everywhere.

12 “By simple deduction and observation, I’d say a Beast is definitely responsible for this catastrophe. Case closed,” Wilber announced as he started to walk away.

13 “Not quite,” Shelly said as she pointed toward a small clump of silver hair.

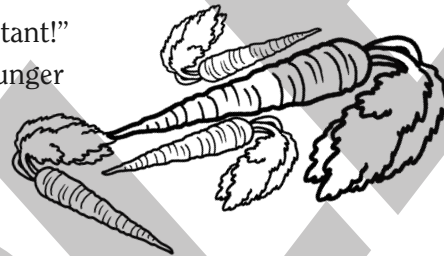
14 “The Beast has silver hair?” Wilber asked.

15 “Exactly,” Mrs. Mulligan said, adjusting her thick glasses. “The Beast of Berkshire is as gray as I am and as quiet as a mouse. I only heard its thumping feet when it ran away!”

16 “Thumping feet? Silver, shedding hair? Hmmm,” Shelly mused. “Mrs. Mulligan, do you mind if we observe your garden tonight?”

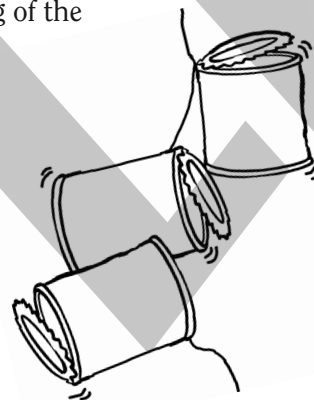
17 When Mrs. Mulligan agreed to Shelly’s plan, Wilber’s eyes grew wide and fearful, and he shivered just the slightest bit.

18 The night air was chilly for early September in Berkshire. Shelly sat in the dark and stared out into the bushes and trees, every now and then elbowing Wilber to stop his fidgeting. After an hour of waiting, Wilber sighed and stood up.



19 “This is boring. Let’s go home.” Then a rustle in the shrubs made him scramble behind his sister. “Did you hear that?”

20 Shelly shushed Wilber and watched as a creeping shadow made its way toward the carrot patch. Shelly waited, and waited, and then she heard it—the clattering of the tin cans she had strung up with twine. Three massive mounds of gray hair leapt into the air and vanished into the shrubs.



21 “There are three Beasts of Berkshire!” Wilber exclaimed. He paused for a second. “You know, if we captured one, we would be heroes. Come on, let’s catch one!”

22 “You’re pretty brave for someone who was hiding behind his sister just a minute ago.”

23 “Anything for fame,” Wilber smiled.

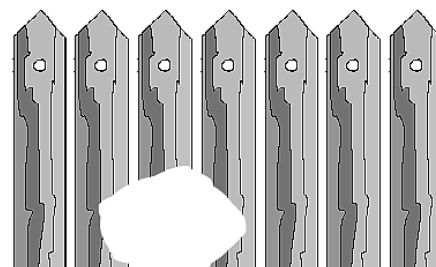
24 “You might just get your wish,” Shelly said. “Come on, I have an idea.”

25 “Why in the world are we here?” Wilber asked as he and his sister climbed out of their father’s truck. Their father also wondered why he had driven them to Mr. Moriarty’s farm, but he knew his daughter would reveal her reasoning only when she was ready. Shelly knocked on Mr. Moriarty’s door. When he opened the door, she said, “Mr. Moriarty, I believe your fence needs repair.”

26 “That can’t be, Shelly,” Mr. Moriarty said. “I just repaired that fence for the third time this year.”

27 “Maybe you should check it again, Mr. Moriarty.”

28 Mr. Moriarty reluctantly agreed to take a look. As they neared his back fence, his flashlight danced around a hole big enough for Wilber to walk through. Clumps of silver hair were scattered around on the ground.



29 “Incredible,” Mr. Moriarty laughed and shook his head. “Those big fellas got loose again.”

30 Wilber looked up, “Big fellas?”

31 Mr. Moriarty led Shelly and Wilber back to his barn and opened a side door to let them into his rabbit pen. Wilber walked in, shrieked, and jumped into Shelly’s arms. Mr. Moriarty’s rabbits were colossal, even bigger than Wilber’s cocker spaniel at home.

32 “I grow ’em big, and they win awards every year,” Mr. Moriarty said. “They may be big, but they’re really quiet, gentle giants.”

33 “How did you know that Mr. Moriarty’s rabbits were the culprits?” Wilber asked Shelly.

34 “Elementary, my dear Wilber. For starters, Mrs. Mulligan has poor vision. She squints behind her thick glasses, even during the day, so she couldn’t see much better at night,” Shelly noted. “Plus, rabbits shed their hair every three months, and they love vegetables. The only rabbits big enough to destroy an entire garden in one night are specially bred giant rabbits, like the ones Mr. Moriarty raises here on his farm.”

35 “So it wasn’t a beast after all, huh?” Wilber asked.

36 “I wouldn’t be too sure about that,” Mr. Moriarty said. “Meet Benny the Beast, weighing in at more than 20 pounds!” The massive rabbit loped over to Wilber, sat on its hind legs, and extended its ears. Benny was easily as tall as Wilber.

37 “I guess we were both right, Shelly,” Wilber laughed. “There really is a Beast of Berkshire, and his name is Benny!”



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Headlines

If this passage were a news story, it might have this headline:

Shelly and Wilber Find Beast of Berkshire

On the line below, write a headline of your own about the passage.

BEAST OF BERKSHIRE ON THE LOOSE!

Dozens of Prize Vegetable Gardens Gone in an Instant!

- 1 For three nights in a row, Berkshire residents have awoken to find their gardens in ruins. Giant feet had squashed the squash, and teeth marks turned up in the turnips. The lettuce, tomatoes, and radishes looked like a tossed salad at the end of a meal.
- 2 According to Mrs. Mary Mulligan, “The Beast of Berkshire ate my cabbage and cauliflower. I was going to enter them into the competition next week. Now all I have are little bits of my vegetables scattered around the garden. It’s horrible.”
- 3 Investigators took plaster impressions of the footprints to try to identify the beast. They collected samples of the gray hair for analysis. When asked what she saw, Mrs. Mulligan gave the investigators more information.
- 4 “It was rather dark when I saw the beast retreating from my yard. But I can tell you that it was big, at least as big as a dog, or a small wolf. It was so heavy, it actually thumped when it ran away from me.” From the footprints, the investigators estimate that the beast weighs over 20 pounds.
- 5 Police Chief Marilyn Bequith says, “This is very perplexing. We’ve never seen tracks like this before. We are doing all we can to assist the residents.”
- 6 Local businesses have banded together to help the gardeners of Berkshire. The First National Bank is offering a \$500 reward for the capture of the Beast of Berkshire. Central Hardware is offering free fencing to the first 15 customers who have been affected by the ravaging animal. Dr. Michael Adams, the town veterinarian, recommends keeping small pets inside until the creature is captured.
- 7 Dr. Adams says, “If it runs out of vegetables, we don’t know if it will begin to attack cats and dogs.”
- 8 If you have any information about the Beast of Berkshire, please contact the Berkshire Police Department immediately.
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Headlines

On the line below, write another headline for this passage.

Connections

How did Shelly solve the mystery?

Did you solve the mystery before the rabbit's identity was revealed? If so, how?

Was it a good idea to hide in the dark to wait for the beast? Why or why not?

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