

The Club-Tailed Glyptodont

by Patricia Lauber



49

- 1 The club-tailed glyptodont is the most fearsome beast in the western part of the United States. That's what the cowboys say. And they should know! Not many other people
- 2 have ever seen a club-tailed glyptodont. If you're riding through a canyon and you meet one, just move aside. Don't argue about the right of way.

Adapted from *Curious Critters* (Garrard Publishing Co.) by Patricia Lauber. Copyright 1969 by Patricia Lauber. Reprinted by permission of the author.

© 1990, 1973, Science Research Associates, Inc.
Printed in the United States of America.
All rights reserved.

Fiction

49

Give the glyptodont the whole trail. Above all, don't ride up and stare at it. Glyptodonts don't like being stared at.

- 3 You'll be sure to know a glyptodont if you meet one. On all fours it is about the size of a horse. But most of the time it is not on all fours. It likes to hop along on its hind legs and tail like a kangaroo. The tail is big and flat and springy. The glyptodont can jump over brush. Sometimes it leaps from a cliff. It lands on its tail and bounces away. Its tail also comes in handy when a glyptodont is angry. And it gets angry when people spy on it with field glasses or try to take its picture.
- 4 One time a Mr. C. C. Crump of Maine wanted to go after a glyptodont with a moving-picture camera. Everyone warned him not to. But Mr. Crump was a very stubborn man, so he went ahead anyhow. He set up his camera on one side of a canyon and began filming a glyptodont on the far side. At first all went well. Then the glyptodont noticed Mr. Crump. It stood still. It stared across

the canyon for two full minutes.

- 5 There is not much point in making a film of a glyptodont standing still. So Mr. Crump hoped it would start moving again. Sure enough, it did. It started digging in the ground with its tail. Soon it scooped out a rock. Carrying this big rock on its tail, the glyptodont slowly backed up. It placed this rock on top of an even bigger rock.
- 6 The glyptodont walked around the rocks. Then it squatted beside them and started to whirl. Round and round it went, faster and faster. Then it let down its tail. The tail hit the top rock. The rock shot through the air as if fired from a cannon.
- 7 Mr. Crump ran for his life. He hasn't been seen in the West since. The camera, of course, was smashed. It was smashed into such small pieces that no one ever found any of them.
- 8 And that's why you've never seen films of a club-tailed glyptodont. But if you're riding through a canyon, take a look around. You're sure to see places where a glyptodont has been batting rocks just for the fun of it.

How Well Did You Understand?

- A** Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.
- 1 A club-tailed glyptodont is an animal
 - a you might see out West
 - b you can only imagine
 - c found only in zoos
 - 2 A glyptodont is called "club-tailed" because
 - a it swings its tail like a club or baseball bat
 - b it has a real club on the end of its tail
 - c it belongs to the same club as other tailed animals
 - 3 When a cowboy sees a glyptodont, he most likely
 - a tries to rope and catch it
 - b tries to take a picture of it
 - c quickly gets out of its way
 - 4 Mr. Crump would have been wise to
 - a throw rocks at the glyptodont
 - b listen to other people's warnings
 - c ride up and stare at the glyptodont
 - 5 A glyptodont would have fun in
 - a a country with lots of kangaroos
 - b a canyon with lots of people
 - c a canyon with lots of rocks

Learn about Words

- B** Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Directions: Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- 1 frightful; causing fear (1)
- 2 path; road (2)
- 3 back; rear (3)
- 4 headstrong; unwilling to change his mind (4)
- 5 advised; cautioned (4)
- 6 crouched; sat with knees bent (6)
- 7 spin; turn around (6)
- 8 broken; shattered (7)

- C** too = also
 two = the number after one

Homonyms are words that *sound* the same but aren't spelled the same and don't mean the same thing. *Too* and *two* are homonyms.

Directions: Look at each word in **heavy type** below. Note the paragraph number. Look at the paragraph and find the homonym. Which of the two words fits the blank in the sentence? Write the word.

- 9 tale** (3)

This ____ has been told for many years.

- 10 your** (8)

I think ____ going to like this story.

Think about It

D A **fact** is something that can be proved. It is a true statement. An **opinion** is what someone thinks. It cannot be proved.

Fact: Cowboys live in the West.

Opinion: Glyptodonts are strange.

Directions: Read each sentence. If it can be proved, write *fact*. If it cannot be proved and is what someone thinks, write *opinion*.

- 1 Cowboys are the smartest people in the West.
- 2 There are canyons in the western part of the United States.
- 3 Field glasses are sometimes used for spying.
- 4 Maine is a state in the eastern part of the United States.
- 5 Mr. Crump should not have tried to take a picture of a glyptodont.

E Most verbs add *ed* to show that something happened in the past.

ask + ed = asked

When a word ends in *e*, you drop that *e* before adding *ed*.

like~~e~~ + ed = liked

When a word ends in *y*, you usually change the *y* to *i* before adding *ed*.

carry + ed = carried

Directions: Each sentence below has a verb that tells about the past. Write the underlined verb to tell about now. Drop the *ed* ending. If you read *shared*, you would write *share*.

- 6 People warned Mr. Crump not to take pictures.
- 7 Mr. Crump tried to take pictures.
- 8 The glyptodont stared at him.
- 9 Mr. Crump hoped to get good pictures.
- 10 Mr. Crump hurried back home.

Find Out about It

There really was such a thing as a glyptodont. It lived in South America. Go to the library and find a book about South American animals. How was the real glyptodont like the one in this story? Tell your class about it.