



2020

### Beyond Words—What Elephants and Whales Think and Feel

Leah Christopher

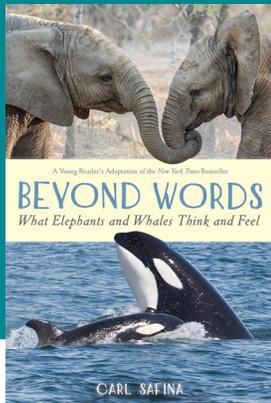
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## Book Review

# Beyond Words—What Elephants and Whales Think and Feel

### Author

Carl Safina

### Reviewer

Leah Christopher

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### Rating

Excellent

### Level

Intermediate, Young  
Adult

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### Pages

144

### Year

2019

### ISBN

9781250144638

### Publisher

Roaring Brook Press

Carl Safina, an animal conservationist, investigates the similarities between wild animals and humans by traveling the world and learning from experts. In Kenya, he learns about the playfulness, ingenuity, and sensitivity of elephants, finding that these large animals perform their own mourning rituals. In the Pacific Northwest, he studies killer whales' creativity, adaptability, and thoughtfulness, learning that whales once led a boat to rescue a missing sailor three miles away. Through his travels, Safina becomes aware of the dangers to animals' lands and lives. For example, the poaching of one elephant dismantles the leadership of the whole family, and the captivity of one whale creates echoes of terror and confusion for the parent and child.

This young reader's adaptation of Safina's adult work by the same title reveals the need to protect and understand animals for who they are. The book's conversational tone, fast-moving narratives, and frequent photographs will lure upper-elementary readers into its fact-packed science. Since the format is not chronological but a collection of research experiences loosely tied together, the organization is unclear. However, this structure does allow the chapters to be isolated and studied more in-depth. Teachers could use it as part of a study on wildlife conservation, which has both science and social studies connections. It could be used when writing essays as both a primary source, since Safina includes many personal discoveries, and a secondary source, since Safina describes other researchers' experiences. Parents could also discuss its messages with their children, such as how animals show they care about others and how understanding another species can inspire them to be a better person.

\*Contains mild violence.