

# Predator!

All right, you're a leopard and you've been very clever and you've cornered an eighty-pound baboon with three-inch fangs and frightened him into an adrenaline-stoked frenzy of hatred. Great! Now what, hotshot? Remember—you're supposed to be *happy* about this; you've worked hard to put yourself in this position.

What you do, if you are a leopard, is simple. You fake a step forward, inducing the baboon to make a do-or-die lunge at your eyes with those fangs. Then you pull back. The fangs click together a half-inch in front of your face, and before the stumbling primate can open his mouth again, you swing your right leg sharply from the shoulder and clout him on the side of the chest. He flies ten feet and lands in a tangle of broken ribs and crushed organs, and you heave a sigh: *whew!* Not that you ever doubted your superior strength, or your speed, or your craftiness. But all the same, those fangs, if they *did* get your eyes . . .

The sternest fact of a predator's life is this: if you are going to go around getting dangerous animals into a fight for their lives, you'd better have the stuff to put them on ice.

*from Predator! by Bruce Brooks*