

1 Who are the characters in this poem? List them with their pet names.

WASAKH

Ans. There are six characters in the poem. These include Belinda and her four pets, and a pirate. Her pets are

(i) A little black kitten, Ink

(ii) A little grey mouse, Blink

(iii) A yellow dog, Mustard

(iv) A dragon, Custard

2 Why did Custard cry for a nice safe cage? Why is the dragon called 'cowardly dragon'?

Ans. Custard cried for a nice safe cage because he was a 'coward' who wanted peace and safety.

He is called a "cowardly dragon" because apart from him, all other pets are described as very brave. Belinda is as brave as a big group of bears, Ink and Blink can chase lions and Mustard is like an angry tiger.

Compared to all of them, the dragon demanded nice safe cage so it is called 'Cowardly dragon'.

3 "Belinda tickled him, she tickled him unmerciful..." Why?

Ans. Belinda tickles her pet dragon, Custard quite cruelly.

She does so because she want to excite Custard as he was a lazy dragon. In addition, it amused her. She along with her other pets laughed at the dragon's Makness (cowardness).

4. The poet has employed many poetic devices in the poem. For example

"Clashed his tail like iron in a

dungeon"- the poetic device here is a simile. Can you, with your partner, list some more such poetic devices used in the poem?

Ans. In the poem, 'The Tale of Custard, the Dragon', the poet has used a lot of poetic devices. Following are some of the devices used

- (i) Simile Mouth like a fireplace.
- (ii) Repetition The repetitive use of the word 'little' in stanza 1.
- (iii) Onomatopoeia Use of sound words such as 'weeck' and 'meowch'.
- (iv) Metaphor Use of comparison such as 'Nose for a Chimney'.

5. Read stanza three again to know how the poet describes the appearance of the dragon.

Or What did Custard look like?

Ans. Stanza three of the poem 'The Tale of Custard the Dragon' describes the physical appearance of the dragon. Custard, the dragon has big sharp teeth. He has spikes on top and scales underneath him. His mouth is like a fireplace and his nose is like a chimney. He has daggers on his toes. 1

6 Can you find out the rhyme scheme of two or three stanzas of the poem?

Ans. The rhyme scheme of the poem is 'aabb'.

7 Writers use words to give us a picture or image without actually saying what they mean. Can you trace some images used in the poem?

Writers always use such phrases and words that do not tell us directly about what they mean but always give us an indication of the meaning. Such words or phrases are used to trigger our own imagination in painting the picture that they mean. Use of such images in the poem are 'mouth like a fireplace', 'chimney for a nose', 'brave as a barrel full of bears', 'tiger in a rage', 'went at the pirate like a brave as a robin at a worm', etc.

8 Do you find 'The Tale of Custard the Dragon' to be a serious or a light-hearted poem? Give reasons to support your answer.

Ans The Tale of Custard the dragon' is a very light hearted funny poem that is meant to be enjoyed by everyone. The fixed rhyme scheme and the use of wrong

spelling to maintains and it, makes it easy and enjoyable to read. Even the names of the pets are rhyming and evokes laughter.

The description of Belinda and her pets makes the poem entertaining. Belinda's bravery is described as equal to a group of bears. The smallest of her pets, her kitten Ink and mouse Blink have been shown so brave that they can scare a lion. The dog Mustard is like an angry tiger. But the biggest of them all, the dragon is nice and cowardly. He is always crying for a safe cage. In addition, the reactions of these characters to the dangerous pirate, also makes it funny.

9. This poem, in ballad form, tells a story. Have you come across any such modern song or lyric that tells a story? If you know one tell it to the class. Collect such songs as a project.

Ans. Do it yourself.