

NCERT QUESTIONS WITH SOLUTIONS

Thinking About the Poem

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

Ans. One human and four animals are the characters in this poem.

1. Belinda – the girl
2. Custard – the dragon
3. Ink – the kitten
4. Blink – the mouse
5. Mustard – the dog

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 seemingly a coward. He thought that the house in which they lived was unsafe. The dragon is called 'cowardly dragon' because he is the only one in the house who is fainthearted. He always cries for a nice safe cage.

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

Ans. Custard was a frightened little soul. Belinda did so out of affection. They all sat laughing in the little red wagon but the dragon used to cry for a nice safe cage. So Belinda would tickle the dragon unmercifully as she was sure he would never hurt her.

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.	• clatter, clank, jangling, weeck, gowled and meowch	(onomatopoeia).
	• '..... Blink chased lions down the stairs.'	(Exaggeration)
	• 'That everybody is braver than me.'	(Satire)
	• Belinda was as brave as a barrel full of bears.	(Alliteration)
	• Custard cried for a nice safe cage.	(Alliteration)
	• With a clatter and a clank.	(Alliteration)
	• Gaped at Belinda's dragon and gulped some grog.	(Alliteration)
	• 'W'd 'have been three times as brave	(Paradox)
	• 'But up jumped Custard, snorting like an engine.	(Simile)
	• Sharp as mustard.	(Simile)
	• Mouth like a fireplace.	(Simile)
	• As brave as a barrel full of bears.	(Simile)
	• He went at the pirate like a robin at a worm.	(Simile)

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

Ans. Custard the dragon has big sharp teeth. On top it has spikes on his back and scales underneath on his belly. Its mouth emits fire like a fireplace. Smoke comes out of nose as if from a chimney. The claws on his toes may be sharp, hence the poet compares them to daggers.

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

Ans. The rhyming scheme of the last three stanzas (13,14, 15) are-

Stanza 13 – aa bb cc

Stanza 14 – aa bb

Stanza 15 – aa bb

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?

Ans. Yes, we can find such type of imagery in this poem. In the third stanza, we have delineation of the dragon. Similarly, in the 8th stanza, there is depiction of the pirate.

(i) Description of Dragon:

Custard the dragon had big sharp teeth,
And spikes on top of him and scales underneath,
Mouth like a fireplace, chimney for a nose,
And realio, trulio daggers on his toes...

(ii) Description of Pirate:

Pistol in his left hand, pistol in his right,
And he held in his teeth a cutlass bright,
His beard was black, one leg was wood;
It was clear that the pirate meant no good.

(iii) Clashed his tail

irons in a dungeon
He went at the pirate like
a robin at a worm.

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. I find this poem a light-hearted one. The following reasons support it. First, their names are rhyming ones-Ink: Blink, Custard: Mustard. Second, their humorous images of bravery-Ink and Blink chase lions down the stairs. Third, Dragon has fearsome body even then he keeps crying for a nice safe cage. Fourth, the coward dragon emerges the bravest. Belinda still lives with false friends.

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. This question is to be answered individually. The students should collect such poems and share in the class.