

The Tale of Custard The Dragon

Answers to NCERT Questions

Thinking about the Poem

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

Ans: The following are the characters with their pet names:

Characters	Pet Names
Little black kitten	Ink
Little grey mouse	Blink
Little yellow dog	Mustard
The dragon	Custard

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

Ans: The Custard was coward. That is why, he was called “cowardly dragon”. All other animals laughed at him. He did not like that. So he cried for a nice safe cage.

3. “Belinda tickled him, she tickled him unmerciful...” Why?

Ans: Belinda tickled Custard to tease him for his cowardice.

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: Similes used in the poem:

—And the little yellow dog was sharp as Mustard.

—Belinda is as brave as a barrel full of bears

—Snorting like an engine.

—He went at the pirate like a robin at a worm.

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

Ans: In stanza three of the poem, the poet describes the physical side of the dragon. By stating his ‘big sharp teeth’, ‘spikes’ and ‘scales’, the poet makes him fearful.

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

Ans: The rhyme scheme is:

Second stanza—aa bb

Third stanza—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: Some of the images used in the poem are:

— Mouth like a fireplace

— Chimney for a nose

— Daggers on his toes

— His beard was long, one leg was wood.

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: It is a light-hearted poem. The animals have been treated as human beings. There is irony in the poem. The animals who boast of their power, prove to be cowards. But the dragon whom everyone calls cowardly, fights bravely and kills the pirate.

Additional Questions

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow: (4 Marks each)

1. Belinda lived in a little white house,

With a little black kitten and a little grey mouse,
And a little yellow dog and a little red wagon,
And a realio, trulio, little pet dragon.

- Where did Belinda live?
- What was the colour of the kitten?
- Apart from the kitten, which other animals were living with her?
- What is the rhyme scheme of this stanza?

Ans:

- Belinda lived in a little white house.
- The kitten was of black colour.

- c. The other animals were: a mouse, a dog and a dragon.
- d. The rhyme scheme of this stanza is 'aabb'.

2. Now the name of the little black kitten was Ink,

And the little grey mouse, she called him Blink,
And the little yellow dog was sharp as Mustard,
But the dragon was a coward, and she called him Custard.

- a. What was the name of the kitten?
- b. What name did she give to the mouse?
- c. Why was the dragon named as 'Custard'?
- d. What was the name of the dog?

Ans:

- a. The name of the kitten was Ink.
- b. She gave the name Blink to the mouse.
- c. The dragon was named as 'Custard' because he was a coward.
- d. The name of the dog was Mustard.

3. 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.

- a. What was on top of the dragon's body?
- b. How does the poet describe the dragon's mouth and nose?
- c. What did the dragon have on his toes?
- d. What sort of teeth did he have?

Ans:

- a. The dragon had spikes on top of his body.
- b. The poet describes his mouth like a fireplace and nose like a chimney.
- c. The dragon had daggers on his toes.
- d. He had big sharp teeth.

4. Belinda was as brave as a barrel full of bears,

And Ink and Blink chased lions down the stairs,
Mustard was as brave as a tiger in a rage,
But Custard cried for a nice safe cage.

- a. How is Belinda described in the stanza?
- b. How did Ink and Blink show their strength?
- c. How did Mustard show his bravery?
- d. What did Custard cry for?

Ans:

- a. Belinda was as brave as a barrel full of bears.
- b. Ink and Blink showed their strength by chasing lions down the stairs.
- c. Mustard showed his bravery in anger.
- d. Custard cried for a nice safe cage.

5. Belinda tickled him, she tickled him unmerciful,
Ink, Blink and Mustard, they rudely called him Percival,
They all sat laughing in the little red wagon
At the radio, truly, cowardly dragon.

- a. Whom did Belinda tickle?
- b. Who was called Percival by Ink, Blink and Mustard?
- c. How did the animals make fun of the dragon?
- d. What was the colour of the wagon?

Ans:

- a. Belinda tickled the dragon.
- b. The dragon was called Percival by Ink, Blink and Mustard.
- c. All the animals laughed at him sitting in a little red wagon.
- d. The wagon was of red in colour.

6. Belinda giggled till she shook the house,
And Blink said Weeck! which is giggling for a mouse,
Ink and Mustard rudely asked his age,
When Custard cried for a nice safe cage.

- a. How long did Belinda laugh?
- b. Which kind of giggling sound does a mouse produce?
- c. How did Ink and Mustard ask the mouse his age?
- d. What did Custard cry for?

Ans:

- a. Belinda laughed till she shook the house.
- b. The giggling sound that the mouse produces is 'weeck'.
- c. They asked his age rudely.
- d. Custard cried for a nice safe cage.

7. Suddenly, suddenly they heard a nasty sound,
And Mustard growled, and they all looked around.
Meowch! cried Ink, and ooh! cried Belinda,
For there was a pirate, climbing in the window.

- a. What did they suddenly hear?
- b. What did Mustard do?
- c. What did they see in the window?
- d. Whose nasty sound was it?

Ans:

- a. They suddenly heard a nasty sound.
- b. Mustard growled.
- c. They saw a pirate in the window.
- d. It was the pirate's nasty sound.

8. 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.

- a. What did the pirate have in his hands?
- b. What was in his teeth?
- c. How does the poet describe his beard and leg?
- d. Did the pirate come for something good?

Ans:

- a. He had pistols in his hands.
- b. He had a sword in his teeth.
- c. His beard was black and his leg was of wooden.
- d. No, he did not come for something good.

9. Belinda paled, and she cried Help! Help!

But Mustard fled with a terrified yelp,
Ink trickled down to the bottom of the household,
And little mouse Blink strategically mouseholed.

- a. Why did Belinda get pale?
- b. What did Belinda cry for?
- c. What did Mustard do?
- d. What did Blink do on seeing the pirate?

Ans:

- a. Belinda got paled to see the pirate.
- b. Belinda cried for help.
- c. Mustard ran with a fearful bark.
- d. Blink ran into his mouse-hole.

10. But up jumped Custard, snorting like an engine,

Clashed his tail like irons in a dungeon,
With a clatter and a clank and a jangling squirm,
He went at the pirate like a robin at a worm.

- a. Upon whom did Custard jump?
- b. How did he clash his tail?

- c. What did he look like when he clashed with the pirate?
- d. How did custard snort?

Ans:

- a. Custard jumped upon pirate.
- b. He clashed his tail with clattering, clanking and jangling sounds.
- c. He looked like a robin falling on a worm.
- d. He snorted like an engine.

11. The pirate gaped at Belinda's dragon,

And gulped some grog from his pocket flagon,
He fired two bullets, but they didn't hit,
And Custard gobbled him, every bit.

- a. What did the pirate gulp?
- b. How did the pirate attack Custard?
- c. What did the dragon do to the pirate?
- d. Whose dragon was it?

Ans:

- a. The pirate gulped grog from his flagon.
- b. He fired two bullets but they did not hit.
- c. Custard, the dragon, swallowed the pirate fully.
- d. It was Belinda's dragon.

12. Belinda embraced him, Mustard licked him,

No one mourned for his pirate victim.
Ink and Blink in glee did gyrate
Around the dragon that ate the pirate.

- a. Whom did Belinda embrace?
- b. What did Mustard do?
- c. Who gyrated round Custard?
- d. What did no one mourn for?

Ans:

- a. Belinda embraced Custard.
- b. Mustard licked Custard.
- c. Ink and Blink gyrated round Custard.
- d. No one mourned for the death of the pirate.

13. But presently up spoke little dog Mustard,

I'd have been twice as brave if I hadn't been flustered.
And up spoke Ink and up spoke Blink,
We'd have been three times as brave, we think,

And Custard said, I quite agree.
That everyone is braver than me.

- a. What did Mustard say after the event?
- b. What did Ink and Blink speak about the situation?
- c. What was Custard's reaction?
- d. Was Custard brave?

Ans:

- a. Mustard said that he would have been twice brave if he had not become nervous.
- b. They said that they had been three times as brave.
- c. Custard agreed that everyone was braver than him.
- d. No, Custard was not brave.

Short Answer Questions (30–40 words: 2 Marks each)

1. 'Belinda was as brave as a barrel full of bears'. Identify two poetic devices used in the above line.

Ans:

- i. As brave as a barrel—Similie
- ii. Brave as a barrel full of bears—Alliteration

2. Why did Belinda cry for help? Who came to her help?

Ans: Belinda cried for help because she was afraid of the pirate. The custard came to her help.

3. How did Belinda's pets, other than Custard, face the pirate?

Ans: All the animals other than the dragon used to boast about their bravery and made the fun of the dragon. But when the pirate entered the house, all got scared and ran away and disappeared except Custard, the dragon.

4. How did each of Belinda's pets react at the sight of the pirate?

Ans: Each of Belinda's pets ran away and hid. They were scared at the sight of the pirate.

5. Give a brief description of the pirate in the poem, 'The Tale of Custard the Dragon'.

Ans: The pirate entered from the window. He had pistols in his left and right hand. He held a bright cutlass in his teeth. His beard was black and one leg was wood.

6. Who all lived in a white house with Belinda?

Ans: Belinda lived in a white house with Ink— a black kitten, Blink — a grey mouse, Mustard — a yellow dog, Custard — a dragon and a red wagon.

7. Why did everyone make fun of the dragon?

Ans: Everyone in the house used to laugh at the dragon because he always cried for a safe cage, whereas others used to boast about their bravery.

8. How did they say their admiration for the dragon after the death of the pirate?

Ans: They became very happy. Belinda embraced him. Mustard licked him. Ink and Blink jumped round surrounding him. They expressed their joy in this way. No one mourned for the pirate.

9. What did they say about their bravery after the pirate's death?

Ans: Mustard said that he would have been twice as brave, if he had not got nervous. Ink and Blink said that they had been three times as brave as he. But Custard said that he agreed with them. He said that they were braver than him.

10. Who among them was actually brave? How did he show his bravery?

Ans: Custard, the dragon, was the only one who was actually brave. The others were all cowards. They disappeared when they saw the pirate. But the dragon-faced him bravely and swallowed him up.

11. How is 'The Tale of Custard the Dragon' a ballad?

Ans: A ballad is a poem that tells a story. The theme of a ballad is an adventure, bravery, romance, etc. Then it is highly musical due to its rhyme scheme. This poem has these qualities. But it is a parody of a ballad. The poet shows these qualities in a humorous way.

12. What were the pet names of Belinda's animals?

Ans: The little black kitten was called Ink. She gave the name Blink to the little grey mouse. The little yellow dog's pet name was Mustard. The dragon was given the pet name Custard.

13. How does the poet describe Belinda and her animals' bravery? How was Custard different from them?

Ans: The poet says that Belinda was as brave as a barrel full of bears. Ink and Blink followed lions down the stairs. Mustard was as brave as a tiger in a rage. But Custard was a coward. He kept crying for a nice safe cage.

14. How did the animals make fun of the dragon?

Ans: They laughed at the dragon. Belinda teased the dragon. She tickled him very hard. Ink, Blink and Mustard called him Percival. They sat in the red wagon and laughed at the cowardly dragon.

15. Belinda and the other animals have been described as brave. But on seeing the pirate, they behaved in a cowardly way. How did they react?

Ans: Belinda turned pale with fear. She cried for help. Mustard ran barking fearfully. Ink went to the bottom of the house. The little mouse ran into his hole in no time.

16. How did Custard prove to be brave when the pirate came?

Ans: Custard, the dragon, jumped and snorted like an engine. He struck the pirate with his tail like iron. There were different sounds of clatter, clank and jangle. He attacked the pirate as a robin attacks a worm.

17. How did the pirate react when the dragon attacked him?

Ans: The pirate looked at the dragon with an open-mouth. He swallowed some liquor from his pocket flagon. He fired two bullets. But they did not hit the dragon. The dragon attacked him and swallowed him.

18. Where did Belinda live? Which animals lived with her?

Ans: Belinda lived in a little white house. Some animals also lived with her. They were: a little black kitten, a little grey mouse, a little yellow dog and little pet dragon.

Long Answer Questions (100–150 words: 8 Marks each)

1. Why do you think Custard, the dragon was called a coward? How was Custard able to save all his housemates from the pirate? What values should Belinda have possessed, so that Custard too could have been among her favourites?

Ans: The dragon appeared to be a coward as he always cried for a safe cage, so he was called a cowardly dragon. Later, when the pirate entered the house with pistols in his left and right hand, everyone was scared and ran away and disappeared, except Custard who faced him boldly and attacked him, hit him hard with his forceful tail and gobbled every bit of him. Belinda should have been nice to him. She should have made him feel comfortable and safe in the house, instead of laughing and making fun of him with other pets. Belinda should have been protective towards him.

2. Describe the fight between the dragon and the pirate.

Ans: The dragon had big sharp teeth, and spikes on top of him and scales underneath, but everyone laughed at him as he always cried for a safe cage, whereas everyone boasted about their bravery. But when the pirate entered, all were scared and ran away, except Custard who faced him boldly, attacked him, hit him hard with his forceful tail

and gobbled every bit of him. All of them later felt obliged to Custard for saving their lives.

Self- Assessment Test

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. Belinda still lives in her little white house,

With her little black kitten and her link grey mouse,
And her little yellow dog and her little red wagon,
And her realio, trulio little pet dragon.

- a. Where does Belinda still live?
- b. What is the colour of the kitten ?
- c. Of what colour is the wagon?
- d. What type of dragon is it?

2. Belinda is as brave as a barrel full of bears,

And Ink and Blink chase lions down the stairs,
Mustard is as brave as a tiger in a rage,
But Custard keeps crying for a nice safe cage.

- a. How brave is Belinda?
 - b. Who chase the lions down the stairs?
 - c. What does Custard keep crying for?
 - d. What is the quality of Mustard?
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Short Answer Questions

1. Belinda was a sweet little girl who lived in her sweet little white house. Who else lived with her in that house?
 2. Describe the pirate.
 3. Give a brief description of Belinda's pets.
 4. Why was pirate surprised?
 5. How did everyone praise the dragon?
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Long Answer Questions

1. Why did Custard cry for a nice safe cage? Why is the dragon called 'cowardly dragon'? How did he prove everyone wrong?
2. What is the theme of the poem, 'The Tale of Custard the Dragon'?