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CLASS – 10

ENGLISH

First Flight

Poem : The Tale of Custard the Dragon

Part – 3

Comprehension

ARPITA SHARMA

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Belinda lived in a little white house, A
With a little black kitten and a little grey mouse A
And a little yellow dog and a little red wagon, B
And a realio, trulio, little pet dragon. B

AABB

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.

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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.

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.

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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 realio, trulio, cowardly dragon.

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.

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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 winda.

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.

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Belinda paled, and she cried Help! Help!
But Mustard with a terrified yelp,
Ink trickled down to the bottom of the household,
And little mouse Blink strategically mouseholed.

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.

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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.

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.

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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 everybody is braver than me.

Belinda still lives in her little white house,
With her little black kitten and her little grey mouse,
And her little yellow dog and her little red wagon,
And her realio, trulio little pet dragon.

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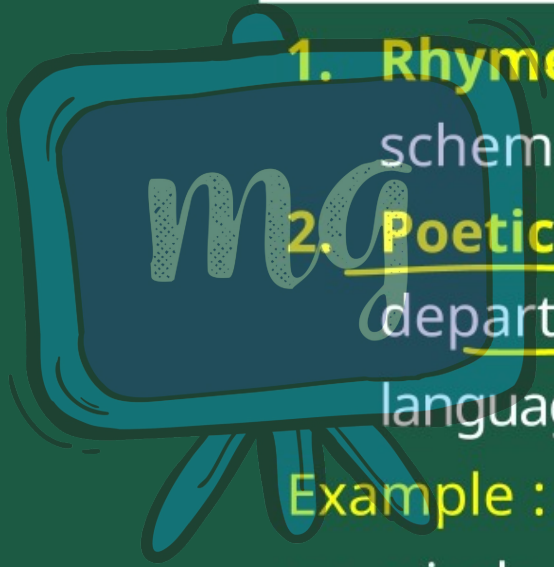
Belinda is as brave as a barrel full of bears, A
And Ink and Blink chase lions down the stairs, A
Mustard is as brave as a tiger in a rage, B
But Custard keeps crying for a nice safe cage. B

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Literary Devices Used



1. **Rhyme Scheme :** The rhyme scheme of the poem is AABB.
2. **Poetic Licence :** The freedom to depart from the rules of language that is used by the poets.

Example :

- winda - window
- trulio
- realio

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3. **Alliteration :** Repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of the words.

Example : क

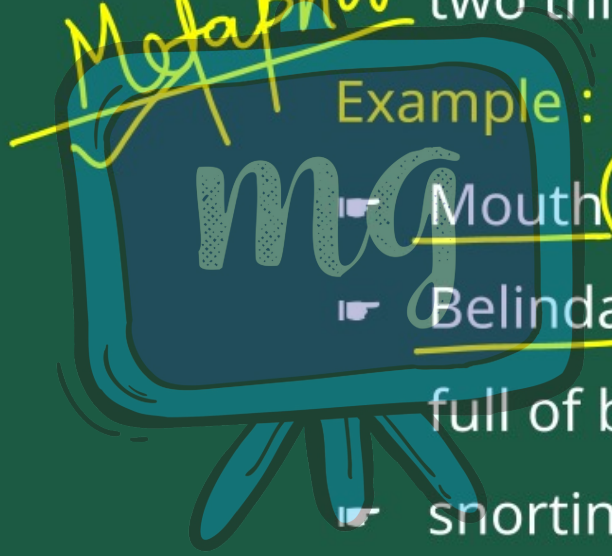
- Coward – Called – Custard
- Belinda – Brave – Barrel – Bear
- Beard – Black
- Gulped – Grog
- Glee – Gyrate

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4. **Simile:** Comparison between two things using 'like' or 'as'

Metaphor



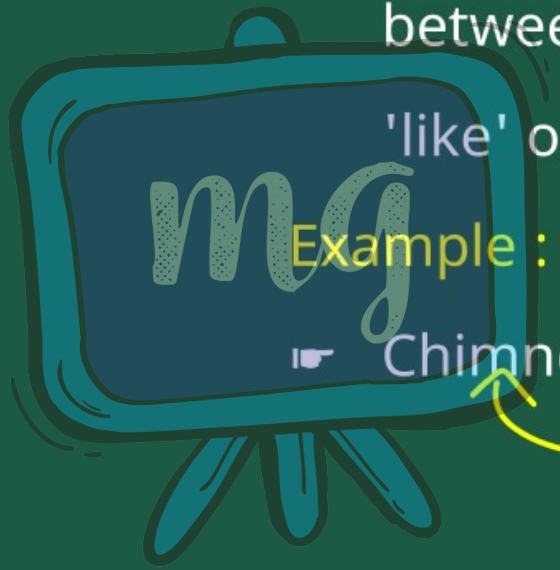
Example :

- Mouth like a fireplace
- Belinda is as brave as a barrel full of bears
- snorting like an engine
- went at the pirate like a robin

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5. **Metaphor:** Comparison between two objects without 'like' or 'as'.



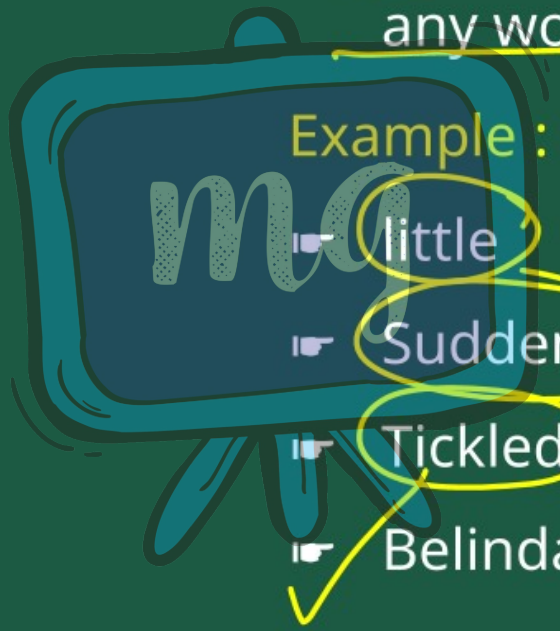
Example :

☛ Chimney for a nose

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6. **Repetition/Refrain;** To repeat any word, phrase or sentence.



Example :

- little
- Suddenly
- Tickled
- Belinda is as brave.....nice safe cage.

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7) Onomatopoeia : Sound words.

Example :



- weeck
- growled
- meowch
- clatter and clank
- jangling

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8. **Oxymoron :** A phrase having opposite words.

Example :

☛ pet dragon

9. **Anaphora :** Repetition of the same word at the beginning of the sentence.

Example :

☛ And the little grey.... And the little yellow.

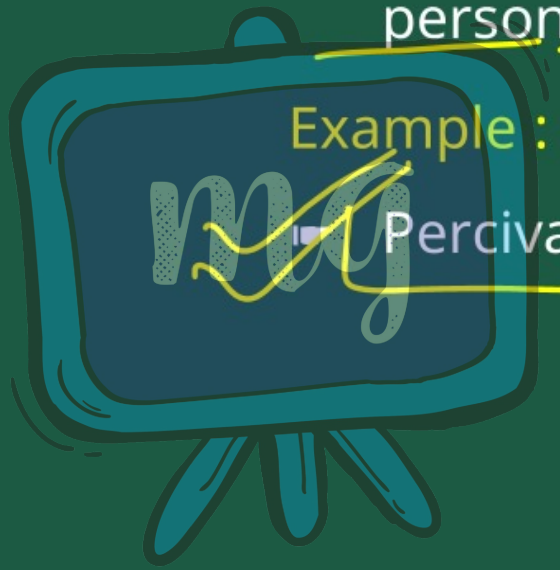
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10. Allusion: Indirect reference to a person, event or thing.

Example :

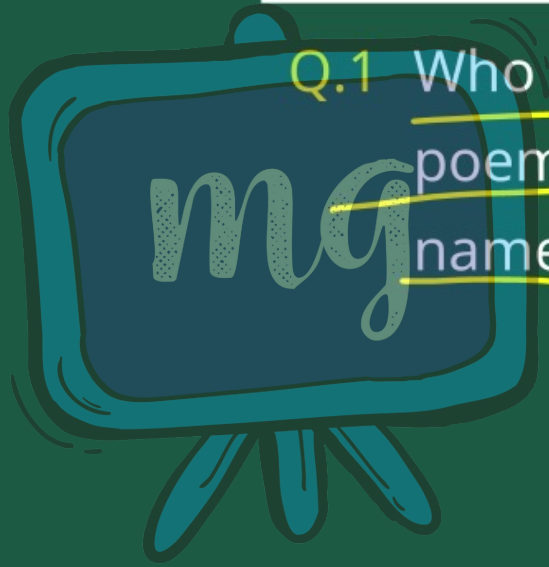
Percival



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COMPREHENSION



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

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Answer : The characters in this poem are Belinda, a little girl and her pets. They are –

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

Apart from these a pirate is also a part of the poem.

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

Coward



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Answer : Custard cried for a nice safe cage because it (he) was coward and was scared very easily. It (he) is called "cowardly dragon" because everyone else in the house is very brave. Belinda is brave like a barrel full of bears. Ink and Blink could chase lions and Mustard is as brave as a tiger while the dragon is the only one, who fears a lot.

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



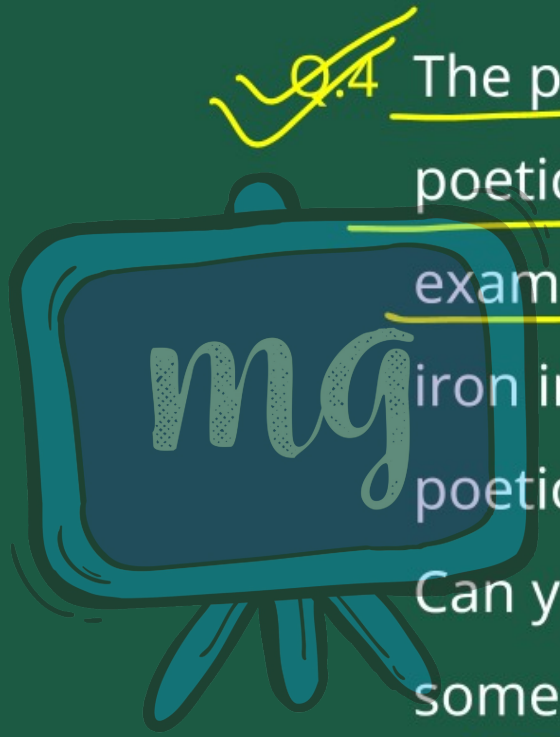
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Answer : Belinda tickled him unmerciful because it had a big effect on him and to make fun of him as he was very sensitive. Though he was a dragon, tickling could upset him and showed his cowardice on which everyone laughed.

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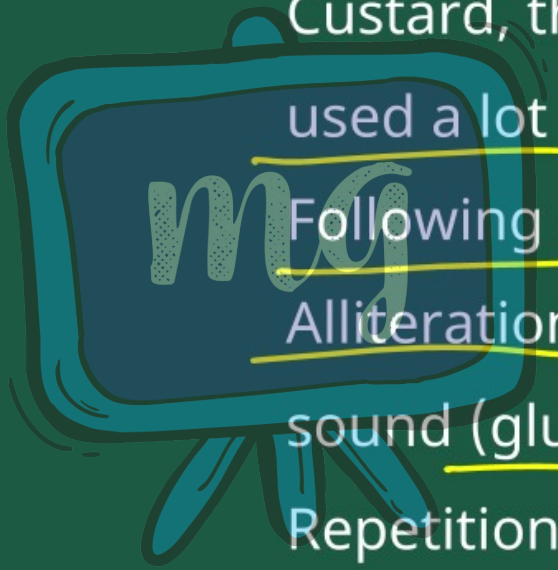
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Q.4 The poet has employed many poetic devices in the poem. For example: “Clashed his tail like iron in a dungeon” — the poetic device here is a simile. Can you, with your partner, list some more such poetic devices used in the poem?

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Answer: In the poem, 'The tale of Custard, the Dragon', the poet has used a lot of poetic devices.

Following are the devices used :

Alliteration: the repeated consonant sound (gluped-grog) in stanza 11.

Repetition: the repetitive use of the word 'little' in stanzas 1, 14.

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



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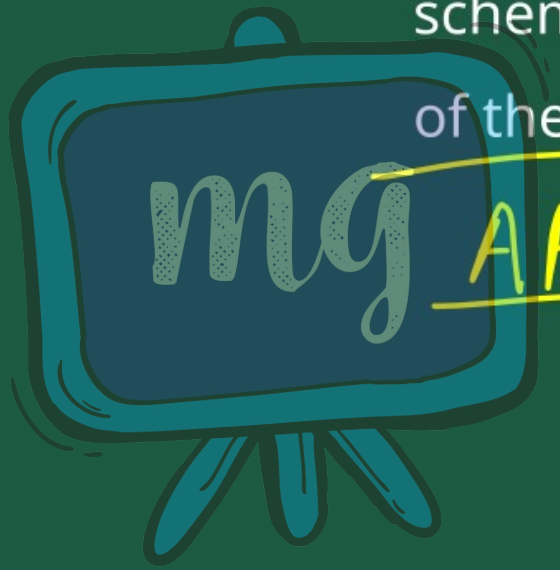
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Answer : Stanza three of the poem describes the physical side of the dragon. By stating: His mouth is compared to a fire place and a chimney –like nose. His 'big sharp teeth', 'spikes' on his back and 'scales', underneath. There are daggers on his toes. The poet makes him fearful.

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

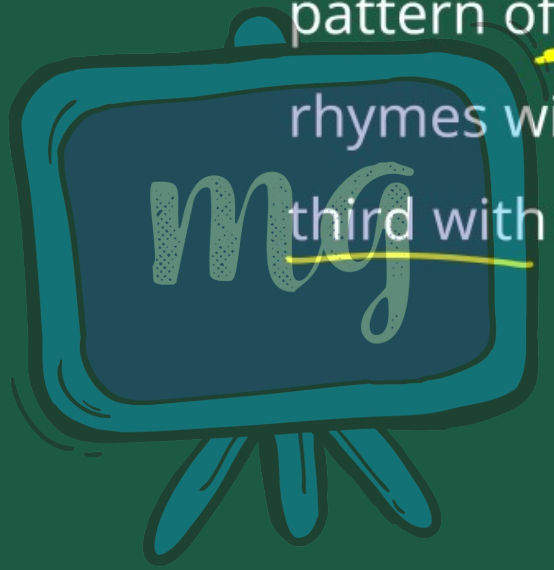


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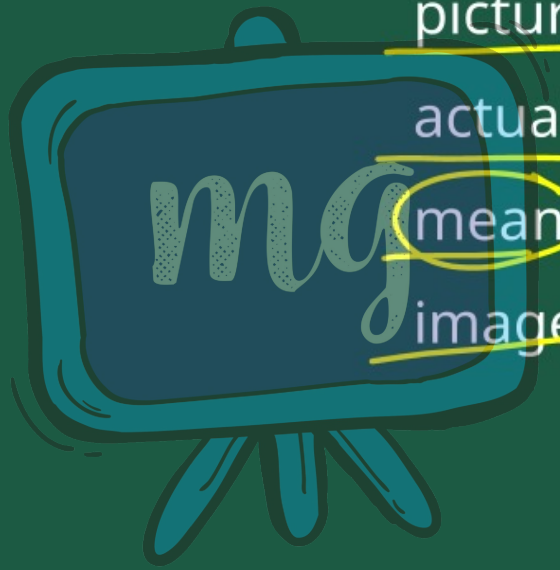
Answer: The poem follows a rhyme pattern of AABB where the first line rhymes with the second, and the third with the fourth.



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Q.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?



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

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Q.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.



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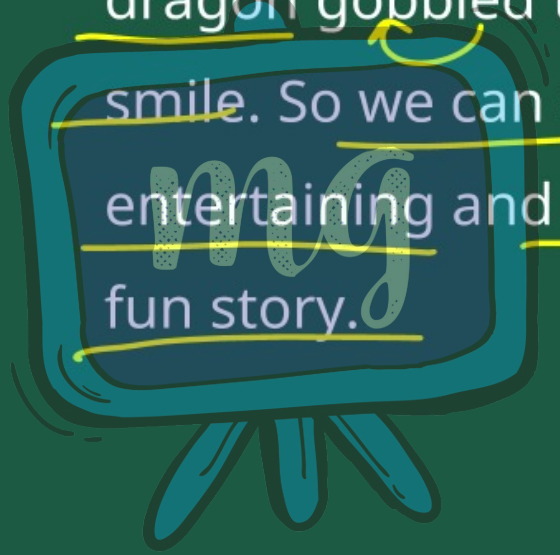
Answer :'The Tale of Custard the Dragon' is a very light and funny poem meant to be enjoyed by everyone. The way the poem is written with a fix rhyme scheme, makes it very easy and enjoyable to read.

The pet animals are also described in a funny and comical way. Especially the image of all tiny creatures such as a kitten, mouse and dog making fun of a dragon is very amusing.

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The climax of the story where the little dragon gobbled the pirate also makes us smile. So we can say that it is very entertaining and interesting poem with a fun story.



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Q.9 This poem, in ballad form, tells a story. Have you come across any such modern song or lyric that tells a story?



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Answer: I remember the poem 'A legend of the Northland', which was a long poem and told a legend/ story about a greedy woman who kept St. Peter hungry and was cursed by him to become a bird and struggle for meagre amount of food, the way she kept him waiting for smallest quantity of food when he was fainting out of hunger.