

The Tale of Custard the Dragon

1st stanza:

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

2nd stanza:

Now the name of the little black kitten was Ink,
And the little gray mouse, her name was Blink,
And the little yellow dog was sharp as Mustard,
But the dragon was a coward, and she called him Custard.

3rd stanza:

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.

4th stanza:

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.

5th stanza:

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.

6th stanza:

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

7th stanza:

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.

8th stanza:

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.

The Tale of Custard the Dragon cont'd.

p.2.

9th stanza:

**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.**

10th stanza:

**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.**

11th stanza:

**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.**

12th stanza:

**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 pyrate.**

13th stanza:

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

14th stanza:

**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.**

Ogden Nash (1902-1971).
The Golden Books Family Treasury of Poetry.

Two Pictures

1.

**In a faraway land there is a great city;
in that great city there is a long street;
in that long street there is a large house;
in that large house there is a pretty room;
in that pretty room there is a small crib;
in that small crib there is a snow white blanket;
in that snow white blanket there is a sweet, new baby.**

2.

**In a faraway country there is a forest;
In the middle of the great forest there is a tall tree;
On that tree there are swinging branches;
In those swinging branches there is a little nest;
In the little nest there is a white egg;
In the white egg a young bird is saying "pip-pip,"
and the mother bird knows that is a call for help,
and she is ready to take the young bird from the shell,
and sing it a song of joy and gladness.**

- Anon.

TWO PICTURES cont'd.

Activities: Draw a picture/s of each poem. Can you make up a story like these? Examples: In a faraway kingdom; In a faraway country; In or On a faraway planet; In a faraway rainforest; On a faraway island; On a faraway mountain.

Patterns: free verse; each story builds detail upon detail about the city and the forest.

Meter: read the free verses of the two stories to get the feeling of them.

Questions:

1. What pattern do you see in each story?
2. Can you see each story becoming more and more detailed with each additional line?
3. Can you write a story with a lot of detail? What would you write about?

The Princess Fairy

1st stanza:

**The Princess Fairy flies at night,
Her dress has diamonds dazzling bright.
Her crimson curls glow on her gown,
As from the stars she flutters down.**

2nd stanza:

**She comes to children in their beds,
And waves her wand above their heads.
She helps them have delightful dreams,
Of fresh fruit frappes and crispy creams.**

3rd stanza:

**Of toads that talk and tell tall tales,
Of worms that walk and skunks with sails.
Of rams that read and wrens that write,
Of sloths that speed and buttercups that bite.**

4th stanza:

**Of fish that fly and snakes that sing,
Of purple pie and roses that ring.
Of pigs with pails and sheep with shells,
Of super snails and bugs with bells.**

5th stanza:

**The Princess Fairy flies at night,
So make sure you are tucked in tight.**

- Ellen Baumwoll (1938 -).

Activities: Illustrate a picture in the poem. Make it as interesting as you can. Make up your own Princess Fairy story.

Rhyming words: night, bright, tight; gown, down; beds, heads; dreams, creams; tales, snails; write, bite; sing, ring; shells, bells.

Rhyme pattern: 9 rhyming couplets throughout poem.

1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th stanzas: 4 quatrain stanzas, with an aabb/ccdd/eeff/gghh rhyme pattern; lines 1 and 2 rhyme, and lines 3 and 4 rhyme.

5th stanza: a rhyming couplet, with an aa rhyme pattern (rhymes with lines 1 and 2 in the 1st stanza); lines 1 and 2 rhyme.

Other patterns: alliteration.

Meter: every line has 8 counts; read poem to get the feeling.

Questions:

1. As you read the poem, what do you notice about the animals and things mentioned? (They are all doing things that in real life they cannot do.)
2. What makes them do these things? (The Princess Fairy.) Why? (She wants to help children have pleasant dreams at night.)
3. Do you notice something about the words in the poem? (Every line has a word pattern: there are two or more words that begin with the same letter/s; this is called alliteration.)
4. Can you find the words that begin with the same letter/s? Write them down.
5. Can you think of some words that go together and have the same beginning letter/s? Write them down.

Words that begin with the same letter line by line (alliteration):

1st stanza:

line 1. Fairy, flies.
line 2. dress, diamonds, dazzling.
line 3. crimson, curls, glow, gown.
line 4. from, flutters, stars, she.

2nd stanza:

line 1. comes, children.
line 2. waves, wand, her, head.
line 3. helps, have, delightful, dreams.
line 4. fresh, fruit, frappes, crispy, creams.

3rd stanza:

line 1. toads, that, talk, tell, tall, tales.
line 2. worms, walk, skunks, sails.
line 3. rams, read, wrens, write.
line 4. sloths, speed, buttercups, bite.

4th stanza:

line 1. fish, fly, snakes, sing.
line 2. purple, pie, roses, ring.
line 3. pigs, pails, sheep, shells.
line 5. super, snails, bugs, bells.

5th stanza:

line 1. Fairy, flies.
line 2. so, sure, tucked, tight.

POETRY. THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT.
2004. MotherGooseCaboose.com

The Blind Men And The Elephant

1st stanza:

**It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.**

2nd stanza:

**The first approached the elephant,
And, happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
“God bless me! but the elephant
Is very like a wall!”**

3rd stanza:

**The second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, “Ho! what have we here,
So very round, and smooth, and sharp?
To me ‘tis very clear,
This wonder of an elephant
Is very like a spear!”**

POETRY. THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT cont'd.

4th stanza:

The third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
“I see,” quoth he, “the elephant
Is very like a snake!”

5th stanza:

The fourth reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee:
“What most this wondrous beast is like,
Is very plain,” quoth he;
“‘Tis clear enough the elephant
Is very like a tree!”

6th stanza:

The fifth who chanced to touch the ear,
Said; “E’en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most:
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an elephant
Is very like a fan!”

POETRY. THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT cont'd.

7th stanza:

**The sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Then, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
“I see,” quoth he, “the elephant
Is very like a rope!”**

8th stanza:

**And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!**

Moral:

9th stanza:

**So oft in theologic wars,
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
And prate about an elephant
Not one of them has seen!**

- John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887).
The Oxford Illustrated Book Of American Children's Poems.

POETRY. THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT cont'd.

Activities: With friends, illustrate the poem and make a book.

Rhyming words:

stanza 1: inclined, blind, mind.

stanza 2: tall, bawl, wall.

stanza 3: hear, clear, spear.

stanza 4: take, spake, snake.

stanza 5: knee, he, tree.

stanza 6: man, can, fan.

stanza 7: grope, scope, rope.

stanza 8: long, strong, wrong.

stanza 9: Moral: mean, seen.

QUESTIONS:

1. How many blind men were there? (6.)
2. What were the blind men trying to do? (To find out what the elephant looked like.)
3. What did the first blind man do? (stanza 2: he felt the elephant's broad and sturdy side and concluded the elephant was a wall.)
4. What did the second blind man do? (stanza 3: he felt the elephant's tusk and concluded the elephant looked like a spear.)
5. What did the third blind man do? (stanza 4: he felt the elephant's trunk and concluded the elephant looked like a snake.)
6. What did the fourth blind man do? (stanza 5: he felt the elephant's knee and concluded that the elephant looked like a tree.)
7. What did the fifth blind man do? (stanza 6: he felt the elephant's ear and concluded that the elephant looked like a fan.)
8. What did the sixth blind man do? (stanza 7: he swung on the elephant's tail and concluded that the elephant was a rope.)

POETRY. THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT cont'd.

9. Did the blind men find out what the elephant looked like? (yes and no.) Why? (stanza 8: in describing the elephant, each blind man was right but they all were wrong because neither of them got the full picture.)

10. What can you conclude from this? (stanza 9: in religious philosophy, men have been debating about what is right and wrong, but they can only see what is in front of them, just as the blind men in the story. They often are not able to see the bigger picture.)

DEFINITIONS:

e'en – *adv.* Even.

disputants – *pl. n.* Those engaged in bitter argument or dispute.

grope – *v.* To search for something blindly or uncertainty by feeling with the hands.

oft – *adv.* Often.

prate – *v.* To talk idly or in a silly way and at great length about nothing important; chatter.

rail on – *v.* Argue back and forth with one another.

scope – *n.* Freedom, space, capacity to act; range of perceptions or mental activity; area.

spake – *v.* Past tense of speak; spoke.

theologic – *adj.* The study of the nature of God and religious truth.

ween – *v.* To think, believe, or suppose something.

The Secret Place

Halfway up a certain tree
There's a place belongs to me.
Two branches make a little chair
And I like it setting there.
I like it.
And it's secret too.
No grownup guesses where I go.
And if he should, and climb to it -
He would not fit, he would not fit.

- Dorothy Aldis. United States, poet.
Best In Children's Books. 1960.

Activities: Illustrate the poem.

The Birthday Child

Everything's been different
All the day long,
Lovely things have happened,
Nothing has gone wrong.

Nobody has scolded me,
Everyone has smiled.
Isn't it delicious
To be a birthday child?

- Rose Fyleman (1877-1957)
Favorite Poems. Old and New.

Activities: Illustrate the poem. Write a story about your birthday.

Rhyming words: long, wrong; smiled, child.

Rhyme pattern: lines 2 and 4 rhyme; lines 6 and 8 rhyme; an abcb/defe rhyme pattern.

Meter: read the poem to get the feeling.

Questions:

1. Are things in your house different on birthday days? How? What happens?
2. Do you like birthdays? What do you do on your birthday?
3. How old will you be on your next birthday?

The Mountain And The Squirrel

line 1: **The mountain and the squirrel**
line 2: **Had a quarrel,**
line 3: **And the former called the latter, “Little Prig!”**
line 4: **Bunn replied, “You are doubtless very big,**
line 5: **But all sorts of things and weather**
line 6: **Must be taken in together**
line 7: **To make up a year,**
line 8: **And a sphere.**
line 9: **And I think it no disgrace**
line 10: **To occupy my place.**
line 11: **If I’m not so large as you,**
line 12: **You are not so small as I,**
line 13: **And not half so spry;**
line14: **I’ll not deny you make**
line15: **A very pretty squirrel track.**
line16: **Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;**
line17: **If I cannot carry forests on my back,**
line18: **Neither can you crack a nut.”**

- Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882).

United States, poet, author, lecturer, minister, philosopher.

Aldine First Language Book. For Grades Three And Four.

Activities: Illustrate the poem.

Rhyming words: squirrel, quarrel; prig, big; weather, together; year, sphere; disgrace, place; I, sly, deny; track, back, crack; put, nut.

Rhyme pattern: 5 rhyming couplets in the first 10 lines (every two lines rhyme); lines 12 and 13 rhyme (couplet); open couplets - lines 15 and 17 rhyme; lines 16 and 18 rhyme.

Meter: read poem to get the feeling.

Other patterns: Personification (the mountain and the squirrel are talking).

Questions About The Poem:

1. Who had a quarrel? (The mountain and the squirrel.)
2. Why did the mountain call the squirrel “Little prig?” (He thought he was better.)
3. Who called whom “Little Prig?” The former here means the first person named. Read the third line in the poem. Who is named first in the poem? Go back to the first line. The latter means the last person named. Who is named last in the first line of the poem? Now read the first line again and put in the names of the persons quarreling in place of the former and the latter. (The former is the mountain; the latter is the squirrel.) A prig is a conceited person, a person who thinks of himself much better than he really is.
4. Who is Bunn? (The squirrel; sometimes a squirrel is called a Bunny, like a rabbit; the short name for Bunny is Bunn.)
5. What does the squirrel mean in lines 5-8? What is a “sphere?” (You know that there are all sorts of kinds of weather in a year; there is an old saying, “It takes all kinds of people to make a world.”) (A sphere means the world.)
6. What is meant in the next two lines, 9 and 10? “And I think it is no disgrace to occupy my place?” (“I am not ashamed of being a squirrel.”)
7. What is meant by the next three lines (11-13)? What does “sly” mean? (The squirrel tells the mountain that although he is not as big as the mountain, the mountain is not as big as the squirrel; and that he, the squirrel, is more lively.)
8. What do you think the next two lines, 14 and 15 mean? “I’ll not deny you make a very pretty squirrel track.” Do you think the mountain liked this remark? (No.) What might he have said back? (“I am more than just a pretty squirrel track! I am of more use than that. Just see the forests I carry on my back!”)

9. What do you think the squirrel meant in the last three lines (16, 17, and 18)? (“Talents differ,” means that each of us can do something, but not everyone can do the same thing well.) What did the squirrel say the mountain can do that he cannot? (The mountain can carry forests on its back and the squirrel cannot.) What can the squirrel do that the mountain cannot? (The squirrel can crack a nut and move around from place to place and the mountain cannot.)

Definitions:

deny – *v.* To say it is not true; refuse to believe; contradict.

disgrace – *n.* Loss of honor, respect, or reputation; shame.

doubtless – *adj.* Without a doubt; without question.

former – *adj.* Coming before; being the first mentioned of the two.

latter – *adj.* Coming after; being the last mentioned of the two.

occupy – *v.* In the poem, it means to live in or take up space; to be just a squirrel.

prig – *n.* A conceited person.

sphere – *n.* In the poem, it means the world. It is also any three-dimensional round object.

talents – *n.* An innate or natural ability to do something well; a specific mental or physical aptitude.