

## **The Tale of Custard, The Dragon**

**Central Idea:** Everything created whether small or big has its specific importance. Usually, we underestimate talented persons but they prove themselves by their wits and right actions. We should never look down upon other. Moreover, right and timely actions are always beneficial. In other words a stitch in time saves nine, is also the nucleus of the poem.

**Summary:** The poem “The Tale of Custard, the Dragon” is a light verse ballad written by “Frederick Ogden Nash”. Various animals have been personified and are the main characters of the poem. The central figure of the poem as the title indicates is Custard, a pet dragon, which is looked down upon by his fellows because of his cowardice. In the further stanzas, Custard gets a chance to prove his bravery and saves his friends from danger. The characters in the poem are Belinda; Ink, a black kitten, blink little grey mouse, mustard, little yellow dog and Custard, the dragon and they have a red wagon. In the beginning stanza, the poet says that few animals live like humans in a little white house. The house is perhaps owned by Belinda who is accompanied by a little black kitten, ink; a little grey mouse, blink; a little yellow dog, mustard and a little real, true and pet dragon, Custard. Custard has big sharp teeth, spikes on his top and scales beneath. His mouth is like a fireplace, nose like a chimney and has knife like daggers on his toes. Belinda is depicted as brave as a large number of bears. Ink and blink are so brave that they can chase lions. Mustard is also compared to an angry lion in terms of bravery. But Custard is a coward and looks for a safe place in case of danger.

The poet further says that Belinda tries to tickle Custard so that he becomes expressive and bold. His other friends tease him and call him innocent and coward. They all usually sit in the little red wagon and ridicule their friend, Custard. Belinda and her friends laugh at him and ask him his age but Custard does not agitate and retreats to a safe place.

One day, they hear an unpleasant sound. All of them get startled and astonished. Finally, they see a pirate entering their house through a window. He has two pistols in his two hands and a bright, sharp knife in his teeth. He has a black beard and looks dreadful. All the members of the house understand his wrong intention and become nervous and terrified. They start yelling and move towards safer places. But Custard jumps like a thunderous engine and squirming, he engulfs the pirate like a worm swallowed by a bird. The pirate tries to defend himself by shooting at the dragon but

all his efforts prove to be in vain and the dragon swallows him without sparing even a single bit. Now all the members of Belinda's house start praising and encouraging him. All of them sing and dance for their victory and appreciate Custard. Soon, they start boasting about themselves that they could have done better than Custard if they had not been nervous and confused. Custard, being very calm and composed considers himself inferior to his companions in spite of his heroic efforts. In the last stanza, the poet again repeats the beginning stanza i.e. uses refrain and describes the Custard as coward again because he again prefers to be away from conflicts and fights.

**Do you find “ The Tale of Custard the Dragon” a serious or funny poem? Give reasons for your answer.**

Ans. We find “The Tale of Custard the Dragon” both serious and funny. It seems serious to us because poor dragon is criticized and teased by his companions. On the contrary, Custard, the dragon does not offend or resist them. Instead he retreats to a safer place. But later in the poem, he proves his metal by protecting his family members from the pirate.

The poem is funny as well because the members tease and criticize him. Moreover, the characters and their names are very funny. They boast about themselves when the dragon kills the pirate instead of appreciating him.

**What images does the poet use in the poem?**

Ans. The poet uses the images like: “fireplace”, “chimney” , “engine” and “robin”