

My Mother Saw a Dancing Bear

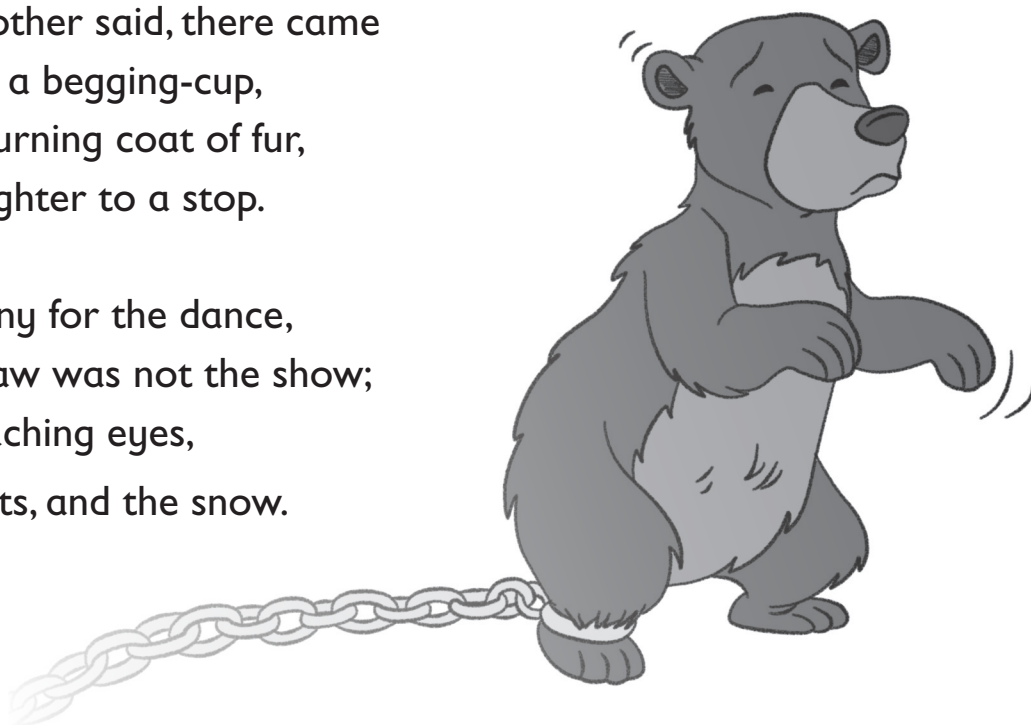
My mother saw a dancing bear
By the schoolyard, a day in June.
The keeper stood with chain and bar
And whistle-pipe, and played a tune.

And bruin lifted up its head
And lifted up its dusty feet,
And all the children laughed to see
It caper in the summer heat.

They watched as for the Queen it died.
They watched it march. They watched it halt.
They heard the keeper as he cried,
“Now, roly-poly!” “Somersault!”

And then, my mother said, there came
The keeper with a begging-cup,
The bear with burning coat of fur,
Shaming the laughter to a stop.

They paid a penny for the dance,
But what they saw was not the show;
Only, in bruin’s aching eyes,
Far-distant forests, and the snow.



Name: Class: Date:

1 Who has told this story to the poet?
.....

2 Where did they see the dancing bear and its keeper?
.....

3 Which season did the event take place in? Tick **one**.
 spring summer autumn winter

4 Complete the sentence.
The keeper controls the bear with

5 Write down **three** things that the keeper makes the bear do, apart from dance.
.....

6 What other word for bear does the poet sometimes use?
.....

7 In verse 2, the poet uses the word “*caper*” instead of “*dance*”. Which of the following best describes the kind of dance the bear performs? Tick **one**.
 comical serious slow fast

8 Look at verse 4.
 a) What does the keeper use the begging-cup for?
.....
 b) Why do you think the bear’s fur is described as “*burning*”?
.....

9 Look at the last verse.
 a) Why do you think the bear’s eyes are described as “*aching*”?
.....
 b) Why can “*far-distant forests, and the snow*” be seen in the bear’s eyes?
.....

10 Does the poet approve of how the bear is treated? Explain your answer with reference to the poem.
.....
