

The Red Beast

Level 4

In the summer sky sits an angry sun,
Threatening, menacing the ground so dry.
Firefighters are on constant high alert,
Prepared to respond, to give what's needed.

Residents on edge, the danger is close at hand.
Houses prepared, they've done everything they can.
Following advice, most have left early,
But others have stayed, ready to fight.

Early in the afternoon, a tiny spark flies,
Grass, trees, and now the whole bush is alight.
Those that stayed hold hoses in hands,
Hoping against hope that will be enough.



Flashing lights cut through the suffocating smoke.
Roaring sirens pierce the crackle of the flames.
Firefighters are in a battle against a monster.
They've been here before and know the cost of victory.

The trees are like torches, burning, burning.
The fire laughs, destroying everything it can.
It feasts on houses, cars, bushland and mountains.
The great battle rages, night after night.

Victory at last as the flames surrender,
Exhaustion and disbelief, people crying and hugging.
Firefighters collapse on the blackened ground,
Nothing left to give; they've given it their all.

Land devastated, lives and houses destroyed,
Pain is here to stay; tears are still to fall.
The community is strong, the people are tough.
The monster has gone, but they know it will be back.



Questions

The Red Beast – Level 4

1. What season is the poem set in? _____

2. How long do you think it took for the fire to be put out? Explain?

3. Who do you think gave residents advice to leave early? _____

4. What does the author mean by the residents have 'done all they can'?

5. Do you think a bushfire hit this community before? Explain.

6. What does it mean that residents were 'on edge'?

7. The writer refers to the bushfire as a 'monster'. Find two verbs the author used to describe the bushfire as a monster.

8. Do you think a 'monster' is an effective way to describe a bushfire? Explain.



Answers

The Red Beast – Level 4

1. What season is the poem set in? **Summer.**

2. How long do you think it took for the fire to be put out? Explain?

Answers may vary. It took many days. The poem said, 'night after night'.

3. Who do you think gave residents advice to leave early? **Government/council.**

4. What does the author mean by the residents have 'done all they can'?

Answers may vary. They have prepared themselves and their house for the fire (eg. hoses ready, cleared their gutters, lawn mowed, branches cut back, first aid kit.)

5. Do you think a bushfire hit this community before? Explain.

Yes, because they were ready and prepared for a bushfire. Also, they know it will be back.

6. What does it mean that residents were 'on edge'?

It means they were feeling anxious or nervous. They were not relaxed.

7. The writer refers to the bushfire as a 'monster'. Find two verbs the author used to describe the bushfire as a monster.

'Laughs', 'destroying', 'feasts'.

8. Do you think a 'monster' is an effective way to describe a bushfire? Explain.

Answers will vary but should refer to qualities and characteristics of a monster and a fire.

