

The Bully Asleep

One afternoon, when grassy
Scents through the classroom crept,
Bill Craddock laid his head
Down on his desk and slept.

The children came round him:
Jimmy, Roger and Jane;
They lifted his head timidly
And let it sink again.

'Look, he's gone sound asleep, Miss'
Said Jimmy Adair;
'He stays up all night you see;
His mother doesn't care.'

'Stand away from him children.'
Miss Andrews stooped to see.
'Yes he's asleep; go on
With your writing and let him be.'

'Now's a good chance!' whispered Jimmy;
And he snatched Bill's pen and hid it.
'Kick him under the desk, hard;
He won't know who did it.'

'Fill all his pockets with rubbish –
Paper, apple-cores, chalk.'
So they plotted, while Jane
Sat wide-eyed at their talk.

Not caring, not hearing,
Bill Craddock he slept on;
Lips parted, eyes closed –
Their cruelty gone.

'Stick him with pins!' muttered Roger.
'Ink down his neck!' said Jim.
But Jane, tearful and foolish,
Wanted to comfort him.



John Walsh

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Read the poem, and then answer the questions. Don't forget to support your answers with reference to the text.

- 1.** Why do you think Bill Craddock fell asleep? Support your answer with evidence from the poem.

- 2.** Why do you think the children lifted his head timidly?

- 3.** What sort of person is Bill Craddock? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

- 4.** What does the author want the reader to think and feel about Bill Craddock and his life and behaviour? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

- 5.** Why do you think Jimmy and Roger wanted to kick Bill and fill his pockets with rubbish, stick him with pins and so on? What do you think the author is suggesting about them?

- 6.** What do the last two lines make you think and why?
