

Answer ALL questions.

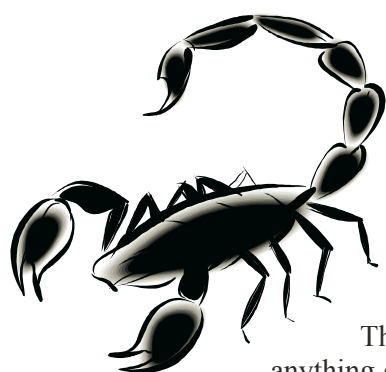
SECTION A: Reading

You should spend about 40 minutes on this section.

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions which follow.

In this passage, the writer describes how, as a young boy, his fascination with scorpions caused panic in his family.

The scorpion who came to lunch



5 The crumbling wall that surrounded the sunken garden alongside the house in Greece was a rich hunting ground for me. It was an ancient brick wall that had been plastered over, but now the whole surface was an intricate map of cracks. There was a whole landscape on this wall if you peered closely enough to see it; the roofs of a hundred tiny toadstools, like villages on the damper portions; mountains of bottle-green moss; forests of small ferns drooping languidly like little green fountains.

10 The top of the wall was a desert land, too dry for anything except a few rust-red mosses to live in it. At the base of the wall was a pile of broken and chipped roof-tiles.

15 The inhabitants of the wall were a mixed lot, but the shyest of the wall community were the most dangerous. Under a piece of the loose plaster there would be a little black scorpion an inch long, looking as though he were made out of polished chocolate. They were weird-looking things, with their neat, crooked legs and the tail like a string of brown beads ending in a poisonous sting like a rose-thorn. I grew very fond of these scorpions. Provided you did nothing silly or clumsy (like putting your hand on one) the scorpions treated you with respect, their one desire being to get away and hide as quickly as possible.

20 One day I found a fat female scorpion in the wall, wearing what at first glance appeared to be a pale fawn fur coat. Closer inspection proved that this strange garment was made up of a mass of tiny babies clinging to the mother's back. I was enraptured by this family, and I made up my mind to smuggle them into the house. With infinite care I manoeuvred the mother and family into a matchbox, and then hurried home. Just as I entered the door, lunch was served; so, I placed the matchbox carefully on the mantelpiece in the drawing-room, and made my way to the dining room and joined the family for the meal. My elder brother Larry, having finished his meal, fetched his cigarettes and the matchbox from the drawing room, and lying back in the chair he put one in his mouth. Oblivious of my impending doom I watched him interestedly as he opened the matchbox.

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35 Now I maintain to this day that the female scorpion meant no harm. She was agitated and a trifle annoyed at being shut up in a matchbox for so long. She hoisted herself out of the box with great rapidity, her babies clinging on desperately, and scuttled on to the back of Larry's hand. There, not quite certain what to do next, she paused, her



sting curved up at the ready. Larry, feeling the movement of her claws, glanced down to see what it was.

40 He uttered a roar of fright that made the maid drop a plate and brought Roger, the dog, from beneath the table, barking wildly. With a flick of his hand Larry sent the unfortunate scorpion flying down the table, and she landed midway between Margo and Leslie, scattering babies like confetti. Thoroughly enraged at this treatment, the creature sped towards Leslie, her sting quivering with emotion. Leslie leapt to his feet and flicked out desperately with his napkin, sending the scorpion rolling across the
45 cloth towards Margo, who promptly let out a scream that any railway engine would have been proud to produce. Mother, completely bewildered, put on her glasses and peered down the table to see what was causing the pandemonium, and at that moment Margo, in a vain attempt to stop the scorpion's advance, hurled a glass of water at it. The shower missed the animal completely, but successfully drenched Mother. The
50 scorpion had now gone to ground under Leslie's plate, while her babies swarmed wildly all over the table. Roger, mystified by the panic, but determined to do his share, ran round and round the room, barking hysterically.

"It's that boy again..." bellowed Larry.

"Look out! Look out! They're coming!" screamed Margo.

55 "All we need is a book," roared Leslie; "don't panic, hit 'em with a book."

"What on earth's the *matter* with you all?" Mother kept imploring, mopping her glasses.

"It's that boy... he'll kill the lot of us... Look at the table... knee-deep in scorpions..."

60 "That boy... Every matchbox in the house is a deathtrap..."

"Look out, it's coming towards me... Quick, quick, do something..."

By the time a certain amount of order had been restored, all the baby scorpions had hidden themselves. While the family, still simmering with rage and fright, retired to the drawing room, I spent half an hour rounding up the babies, picking them up in a
65 teaspoon and returning them to their mother's back. Then I carried them outside and, with the utmost reluctance, released them on the garden wall. Roger and I spent the afternoon on the hillside, for I felt it would be prudent to allow the family to have a rest before seeing them again.



**You should refer closely to the passage to support your answers.
You may include brief quotations.**

1. Name **two** plants that grow on the wall.

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Q1

(Total 1 mark)

2. Look again at lines 14 to 24. Give **two** comparisons that the writer uses to describe the scorpions, in this section of the passage.

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Q2

(Total 2 marks)

3. What do we learn about the boy's character, from his thoughts about the scorpions, and how he treats them?

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Q3

(Total 5 marks)



4. How does the writer try to create tension in this passage?

In your answer you should write about:

- how the atmosphere is built up and developed
- how the events are described, and how the characters react to these events
- particular words, phrases and techniques.

You should refer closely to this passage to support your answer. You may include **brief** quotations.

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