

## NIGHT OF THE SCORPION



*Notes*

The poem is written by Indian Jewish poet **Nissim Ezekiel**. It is about the night when the poet's mother is bitten by a scorpion. The poem explores the reactions and emotions of the people in the household, the superstitious beliefs of the villagers, and the unity of the family in the face of adversity. The poem delves into themes of suffering, community, and the complex relationship between humans and nature. The poet further underneath the superstitious practice while portraying the impression of motherly love.



### LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing the lesson, the learner:

- Identifies the genre of poetry as a literary text by close reading, and interpreting possible meanings;
- Recognises works of Indian English literature;
- Analyses rituals and customs of Indian society in the late 20th Century;
- Appraises the motherly resilience, strength and selflessness;
- Develops a sense of community and solidarity in times of crisis.

### 11.1 SECTION I

I remember the night my mother  
was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours  
of steady rain had driven him  
to crawl beneath a sack of rice.

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## Notes

- **Diabolic:**  
monstrous

Parting with his poison— flash  
of **diabolic** tail in the dark room—  
he risked the rain again.



*Fig. : 11.1*

### LET US UNDERSTAND 11.1

The poem opens with the speaker reminiscing about a particular night his mother was stung by a scorpion. This incident serves as the central event of the poem. The mention of ten hours of continuous rain suggests that it was a stormy night. The scorpion sought shelter from the rain and took refuge under a sack of rice. This sets the stage for the encounter between the scorpion and the mother. The “flash of diabolic tail” implies the sudden, sinister appearance of the scorpion’s tail in the dark room as it stung her. This image adds an element of fear and foreboding to the scene. The poet comments that after stinging the mother, the scorpion flees from their house, braving the rain once more. This action suggests that the scorpion is willing to face the natural threat rather than confront the consequences of its actions. Again, this commentary of the poet on this action denotes his sympathy for that creature.



**INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.1**

1. What drove the scorpion inside the house?
2. The word 'flash' means —
  - a) a cowardly action
  - b) a quick and sudden action
  - c) a wicked action
  - d) a bright action
3. Why does he call the tail 'diabolic'?
4. What is the scorpion's action after stinging the mother?
  - a) It crawls beneath a sack of rice
  - b) It bites the speaker
  - c) It runs away from the house
  - d) It hides in a dark room
5. Why did the scorpion risk going out again into the rain?
  - a) It wanted to find more prey
  - b) It regretted stinging the mother
  - c) It needed to replenish its poison
  - d) It was seeking shelter from the rain
6. What does the stanza suggest about the scorpion's behaviour?
  - a) The scorpion is cunning and evil
  - b) The scorpion is a harmless creature
  - c) The scorpion is desperately seeking shelter
  - d) The scorpion is attacking the villagers



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## 11.2 SECTION II

The peasants came like **swarms** of flies  
 and buzzed the Name of God a hundred times  
 to paralyse the Evil One.  
 With candles and with lanterns  
 throwing giant scorpion shadows  
 On the mud-baked walls  
 they searched for him; he was not found.

*Notes*

- **Swarms:** a large group of flying insects



*Fig. : 11.2*

### LET US UNDERSTAND 11.2

The poet continues vividly describing the reactions of the villagers or peasants who rush to the speaker's house upon hearing about the scorpion sting incident involving the speaker's mother. He compares the arrival of the villagers to swarms of flies, emphasising their large numbers and the speed at which they gathered upon hearing about the incident. The villagers, in their superstition and desire to ward off evil,

repeatedly invoke the name of God. This repetition underscores their fervent and desperate prayers for divine intervention. The villagers believe that by invoking God's name, they can paralyse or render powerless the evil force responsible for the scorpion's attack. They see the scorpion as a symbol of evil or malevolence. They had come prepared with candles and lanterns. These light sources not only serve a practical purpose in searching for the scorpion at night but also symbolise their attempt to dispel darkness and fear with the light of their faith. As they move about with their candles and lanterns, the villagers cast large and eerie shadows on the mud walls of the house. This image adds to the atmosphere of tension and mystery in the scene. However, despite their efforts, the villagers are unable to locate the scorpion. It suggests the elusiveness of the evil they are trying to combat, emphasising the unpredictability of life's hardships.



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**INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.2**

1. How did the peasants arrive at the scene?
2. Why do the villagers come together and chant the name of God a hundred times?
  - a) To celebrate a religious festival
  - b) To ward off evil and help the mother
  - c) To express their frustration with the scorpion
  - d) To honour the scorpion's bravery
3. How did the peasants use candles and lanterns?
4. What visual effect is created by the candles and lanterns used by the villagers in their search for the scorpion?
  - a) They create a warm and welcoming atmosphere
  - b) They cast giant scorpion shadows on the mud-baked walls
  - c) They illuminate the room entirely
  - d) They make the room appear smaller

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5. What was the outcome of the peasants' search for the scorpion?
  - a) They found it and captured it
  - b) They gave up and left the scene
  - c) They were disappointed
  - d) They found traces of the scorpion's presence
6. Did the peasants successfully find the scorpion?

**11.3 SECTION III**

They clicked their tongues.

With every movement that the scorpion made his  
poison moved in Mother's blood, they said.

May he sit still, they said

May the sins of your previous birth  
be burned away tonight, they said.

May your suffering decrease  
the misfortunes of your next birth, they said.

**LET US UNDERSTAND 11.3**

The action of clicking their tongues expresses the villagers' disappointment or frustration at not finding the scorpion. It adds to the atmosphere of communal concern and shared experience in the poem. They express their belief that the poison from the scorpion's sting is spreading through the mother's body with every movement of the scorpion. It emphasises the villagers' superstitious beliefs and their attempts to make sense of the scorpion sting through a blend of religious and cultural interpretations. This belief attributes almost mystical qualities to the scorpion's venom too that copes justly with their superstitious understanding of the situation. The rural folk hope that the scorpion will remain still and not move, as they believe this will somehow help alleviate the mother's suffering. This reflects their desire for the situation to stabilise and improve. The villagers also believe that the mother's suffering may be a form of karmic purification, and they hope that her ordeal on this night will cleanse her of past sins. It reflects the

deep intertwining of religious and cultural beliefs in the poem. Some villagers express the idea that the mother's current suffering might somehow reduce or mitigate the misfortunes she might face in her next life. This belief is rooted in the Hindu concept of karma, where one's actions in this life affect their circumstances in future lives.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.3**

1. The phrase 'clicked their tongues' expresses
  - a) The peasants' worries about the sting
  - b) The peasants' sorrow for the mother
  - c) The peasants' failure to find the scorpion
  - d) The peasant's anger towards the scorpion
2. What bodily fluid was affected by the scorpion?
3. In the stanza, what do the villagers hope for regarding the scorpion's movements?
  - a) They hope it will escape and be safe
  - b) They hope it will sting others as well
  - c) They hope it will remain still and not move
  - d) They hope it will reveal its hiding place
4. What did the villagers express regarding the sins of the Mother's previous birth?
5. What was the focus of the wishes regarding the Mother's next birth?
6. What is the underlying belief or sentiment expressed by the villagers in their words to the mother?
  - a) They wish her suffering to increase
  - b) They hope her pain will lead to a better next life
  - c) They believe she deserves the scorpion's sting
  - d) They want to punish her for past sins

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## 11.4 SECTION IV

*Notes*

- **Unreal world:** the imperfect world in which we live, suggests the inherent difficulties and complexities of human existence

May the sum of evil  
 balanced in this **unreal world**  
 against the sum of good  
 become diminished by your pain.  
 May the poison purify your flesh  
 of desire, and your spirit of ambition,  
 they said, and they sat around  
 On the floor with my mother in the center,  
 the peace of understanding on each face.



Fig. : 11.3

**LET US UNDERSTAND 11.4**

The villagers continue to express their wishes and beliefs regarding the mother's suffering after being stung by the scorpion. They hope that the mother's pain and suffering will serve to reduce the overall balance of evil in the world when compared to the sum of good. It's a belief that her ordeal can somehow contribute to a greater cosmic balance. They further suggest that the poison from the scorpion's sting may have a purifying



effect on the mother. The peasants believe that it can cleanse her of worldly desires and ambitions. This reflects a spiritual or philosophical perspective, where suffering is seen as a means of attaining purity or detachment from material concerns. The peasants, while praying for the woman, begin each prayer with the word 'may'. It shows here the peasant's concern for the suffering woman. Then the speaker paints a powerful picture of the villagers sitting in a circle with the mother at the centre. It conveys a sense of communal support and unity in the face of the mother's suffering. The "peace of understanding" on their faces suggests that they share a common belief and purpose in attempting to offer comfort to the mother. It highlights the role of community and empathy in times of crisis.



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#### INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.4

1. Who are 'they' in the above lines?
2. What is the wish expressed regarding the balance of good and evil in the world?
3. How do the villagers believe the mother's pain might affect the balance of good and evil?
4. According to the villagers, what is the effect of the poison from the scorpion's sting on the mother?
  - a) It intensifies her desires
  - b) It purifies her flesh of desire
  - c) It increases her ambition
  - d) It has no effect on her
5. Where do the villagers sit as they offer their prayers and wishes for the mother's well-being?
  - a) On the roof of the house
  - b) On chairs and benches
  - c) On the floor with the mother in the centre
  - d) In a circle around a fire

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**Notes**

- **Twist:** form into a distorted shape
- **Sceptic:** a person tends to question accepted opinions
- **Rationalist:** a person who bases opinions and actions on reason and knowledge
- **hybrid:** mixture or combination of different elements
- **Paraffin:** a colourless, flammable, oil liquid used as fuel

6. What is the prevailing emotion on the faces of the villagers in this stanza?
- a) Fear and anxiety
  - b) Anger and frustration
  - c) Peace and understanding
  - d) Sadness and despair

**11.5 SECTION V**

More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours,  
more insects, and the endless rain.

My mother **twisted** through and through,  
groaning on a mat.

My father, **sceptic, rationalist**,  
trying every curse and blessing,  
powder, mixture, herb and **hybrid**.

He even poured a little **paraffin**  
upon the bitten toe and put a match to it.

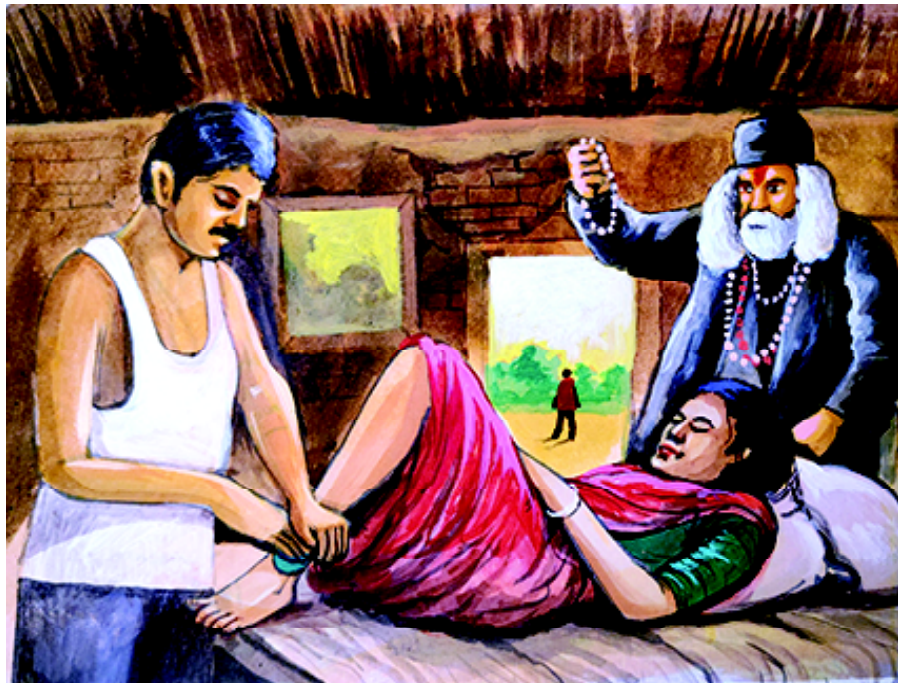


Fig. : 11.4

**LET US UNDERSTAND 11.5**

The poem continues to build the tension and drama of the poem, portraying the frantic and varied efforts made by the family and neighbours to save the mother from the effects of the scorpion sting. The use of the word “more” emphasises the increasing intensity and activity in the household. The family and neighbours are bringing additional light sources (candles and lanterns) to illuminate the scene, more people are gathering, and the heavy rain outside continues unabated. Then the speaker vividly depicts the mother’s physical and emotional distress. She is in great pain, twisting and turning on a mat, and her groaning indicates her suffering. At that point the father’s character is introduced and contrasted with the superstitious beliefs and rituals of the neighbours. He is described as a “sceptic” and a “rationalist,” indicating that he relies on logical and scientific methods. The contrast between the father’s rationalism and the villagers’ superstitious beliefs adds depth to the poem’s exploration of human responses to crisis and suffering. Despite his scepticism, he is desperate to help and is trying various remedies, including curses, blessings, powders, mixtures, herbs, and hybrids (likely referring to a mix of traditional and modern treatments). Strikingly enough, in a desperate attempt to counteract the scorpion’s venom, the father applies paraffin to the mother’s bitten toe and tries to burn it using a match. This drastic measure highlights the father’s willingness to try anything to alleviate the mother’s suffering.

*Notes***INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.5**

1. What was the atmosphere like with the addition of more candles, lanterns, neighbours, insects, and rain?
2. How was the mother’s physical condition described in this stanza?
3. “My father, sceptic, rationalist” What does that mean?
4. What does the father do in an attempt to treat the scorpion’s sting?
  - a) He pours water on the wound to cool it down
  - b) He applies a special ointment on the bitten toe
  - c) He uses a traditional method involving fire
  - d) He rushes the mother to the hospital

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**Notes**

- **Rites:** religious act
- **Incantation:** series of words said as a magic spell

5. How does the speaker's father react to the scorpion's sting?
  - a) He resorts to superstitious rituals and prayers
  - b) He ignores the situation and continues with his work
  - c) He rushes to find medical help immediately
  - d) He scolds the mother for allowing the scorpion to sting her
6. The poet says that his father, who was a rationalist, tried everything. Why did he do so?
  - a) because the father had changed
  - b) because the father wanted to do what others were doing
  - c) because the father was deeply concerned
  - d) because the father was superstitious

### 11.6 SECTION VI

I watched the flame feeding on my mother  
 I watched the holy man perform his **rites**  
 to tame the poison with an **incantation**.

After twenty hours  
 it lost its sting.

My mother only said  
 Thank god the scorpion picked on me  
 and spared my children.

— Nissim Ezekiel

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### LET US UNDERSTAND 11.6

The speaker observes how the father's attempt to use fire (by pouring paraffin and lighting a match) to counteract the scorpion's venom affected the mother. The word "feeding" implies that the fire was used to counter the poison's effects. It seems to the speaker that a holy man is performing rituals and incantations to try to neutralise the poison in the mother's body. This reflects the persistence of superstition and spirituality in the face of adversity. However, the speaker reveals that after twenty long hours of

suffering, the effects of the scorpion's sting began to diminish. The mother's condition improved, indicating that her ordeal was finally coming to an end. The final lines of the poem come to a poignant conclusion, highlighting the mother's strength, resilience and selflessness. Instead of dwelling on her own pain and suffering, she expresses gratitude that the scorpion chose to sting her and spare her children. This sentiment underscores the deep love and sacrifice of a mother for her family.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.6

1. What does the speaker mean when they say, "I watched the flame feeding on my mother"?
  - a) The mother was being consumed by the scorpion's venom
  - b) The mother was engulfed in a holy fire
  - c) The mother was undergoing a ritual purification
  - d) The mother was trying to control the scorpion
2. What was the purpose of the rites and incantation?
3. The speaker mentions that the poison from the scorpion's sting "lost its sting." What does this imply?
  - a) The scorpion's venom became less potent.
  - b) The mother's pain intensified.
  - c) The scorpion returned to sting again.
  - d) The villagers' efforts were in vain.
4. How long did it take for the poison to lose its sting?
5. What unconventional method did the father attempt to use in treating the scorpion sting?
6. Why did the mother feel relieved?

### CHARACTER SKETCHES

#### Mother

The mother is portrayed as selfless and devoted to her family. When she is stung by a



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scorpion, her primary concern is for her children's well-being, not her own pain. She displays remarkable resilience in the face of excruciating pain. Despite the agony of the scorpion's sting, she continues to pray and endure, setting an example of inner strength. Her strength in the face of adversity and her ability to unite the community around her highlight her central role as a nurturing and enduring figure.

### Father

The father is portrayed as a pragmatic and rational figure. He reacts to his wife's scorpion sting with practicality, seeking the help of the local healer and remaining composed. His actions suggest a logical and level-headed nature, in contrast to the superstitious villagers. While he may lack the emotional intensity of his wife, his rationality provides a stable anchor for the family during the crisis, embodying the calm and collected qualities of a responsible head of the household.

### The peasants

The peasants in "Night of the Scorpion" are depicted as superstitious and closely connected to their rural community. They embody traditional beliefs and rituals, relying on mystical remedies to counter the scorpion's sting when the mother is afflicted. Their collective response reflects their communal unity and the strength of their shared beliefs. Despite their superstitions, they come together to support the afflicted mother, revealing their capacity for compassion and solidarity in times of crisis. The peasants symbolise the enduring influence of folklore and superstition in rural life while also demonstrating a sense of community and resilience.



### DO YOU KNOW

- Nassim Ezekial was born in Bombay in 1924 as part of Bombay's Jewish community.
- The poem is anthologised in his poetry collection *The Exact Name* which was published in 1965.
- His first collection of poetry is *The Bad Day*, published in 1952.
- Ezekiel was honoured with the Padma Shri award in 1988 and the Sahitya Akademi cultural award in 1983.

**APPRECIATION****Free verse**

Free verse is a form of poetry that does not adhere to a strict metre or rhyme scheme. Unlike traditional forms of poetry, which often follow specific rules regarding syllable count, rhythm, and rhyme, free verse allows poets greater freedom in their choice of language, structure, and form.

The poem is written in Free Verse which has no rhyme scheme.

**Narrative Poetry**

Narrative poetry includes a structured and sequential style of storytelling with a 1<sup>st</sup> person narrative.

“Night of the Scorpion” tells a story, recounting the events of a particular night when the speaker’s mother is bitten by a scorpion. The poem unfolds in a sequential manner, with a clear beginning, middle, and end, as it describes the incident and the reactions of the villagers. Through its narrative structure, the poem draws the reader into the dramatic events and explores themes of suffering, superstition, and community.

**LET’S DO**

List the prayers that the peasants make for the mother.

i. \_\_\_\_\_

ii. \_\_\_\_\_

iii. \_\_\_\_\_

**LET’S LEARN****Direct - Indirect Speech**

Consider the following sentences:

- a) She said, “I will go to the store.”
- b) She said that she would go to the store.



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## Notes

You may notice that in the first sentence, the actual words spoken are directly enclosed in quotation marks. It is called **Direct Speech**. Yet, in the second sentence, the speaker's words are reported without quoting them directly. It is an **Indirect Speech**.

Hence, Direct speech involves quoting the exact words spoken by a person, while Indirect speech involves paraphrasing or reporting what someone has said.

Now, let's move in to the Conversion Rules:

1. Pronoun Changes: Change pronouns according to the perspective of the reporting sentence.
  - i. He said, "I am happy." '! He said that he was happy.
  - ii. He said, "We are happy." '! He said that they were happy.
2. Tense Changes: Adjust verb tenses according to the context and time of reporting.
  - i. She said, "Praful loves to read books." '! She said that Praful loved to read books.
  - ii. The daughter said to her mother, "I have completed my writing." '! The daughter told her mother that she had completed her writing,
  - iii. "I can help you," she said. '! She said that she could help.
3. Time and Place Changes: Modify time expressions and location words if needed.
  - i. They said, "We will meet tomorrow." '! They said that they would meet the next day.
  - ii. He said, "Yesterday we enjoyed the celebration." '! He said that they had enjoyed the celebration on the previous day.
  - iii. She said, "I have Math exam today." '! She said that she had Math exam on that day.
  - iv. He asked me, "Which bus stops here?" '! He asked me which bus stopped there.



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.7

1. Rewrite the following sentences using indirect speech:



- i. “I won the competition,” she said.
  - ii. “We will visit the museum tomorrow,” they said.
  - iii. “He is studying in the library,” she said.
  - iv. “I have already booked the tickets,” he said.
  - v. “They are renovating their house,” he said to me.
2. Rewrite the following sentences using direct speech:
- i. He mentioned that he was going to travel to Paris next month.
  - ii. She informed us that she had bought a new car.
  - iii. They told me that they were going to start a new business.
  - iv. He explained that he couldn’t attend the meeting due to illness.
  - v. She confessed that she had forgotten to do her homework.



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## LITERARY DEVICES

### Simile

We have discussed Simile in Lesson 6. In this poem also we can find the use of simile. For ex,

“The peasants came like swarms of flies”

This simile compares the arrival of the villagers to swarms of flies, emphasising their large numbers and the sense of urgency as they gathered upon hearing about the scorpion sting incident. It helps create a vivid and impactful image in the reader’s mind, illustrating the chaotic and sudden nature of their arrival.

### Alliteration

It is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words.

**Ex.** “Parting with his poison”

“stung by a scorpion”

“risked the rain”

“poison purify”

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“herb and hybrid”

“flame feeding”

In the above sentences the underlined consonants are repeated and add a sense of emphasis and rhythm.

### Onomatopoeia

It is a literary device where words imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they describe.

“buzzed the name of God”

“They clicked their tongue”

“groaning on a mat”

The word “buzzed” in the line imitates the sound of a swarm of insects or the buzzing of voices, emphasising the noisy and frenzied atmosphere as the villagers invoke God’s name.

Similarly, the word “click” imitates the sound of the villagers clicking their tongues in response to the situation. This onomatopoeia conveys their disapproval or frustration.

Also, groaning is a sound that denotes pain. Here in this line the word reflects the pain the Mother is suffering from.

### Dramatic Irony

We have learnt about Dramatic Irony in Lesson 8. It is a situation where the audience knows something more about the story that the characters in the story do not.

For example, the villagers were trying to find the scorpion in the room. Yet, the reader knows that the scorpion had already fled, as the narrator describes. Again, the pain of the mother had subsided with the natural course of time. However, the superstitious villagers kept their faith in the magical power.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.8

Identify the literary devices used in the following sentences:

1. The bees buzzed around the blooming flowers.
2. The waves crashed against the shore like angry giants.

3. The fireworks exploded with a loud bang.
4. Her hair was as black as coal.
5. The leaves rustled in the gentle breeze.
6. The cat meowed plaintively at the door.
7. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
8. The door creaked open slowly.
9. Sally sells seashells by the seashore.
10. His eyes sparkled like diamonds in the sunlight.



*Notes*

## VOCABULARY ENRICHMENT

### Compound Words

Compound words are formed in many ways.

Sometimes you make a new word by adding a prefix or a suffix as we have seen in Lesson 1 and also in Lesson 2.

Another way of forming a new word is by putting two words together. This is done because a single noun or adjective is often not enough to refer clearly to a person or thing or quality. When this is the case, a compound word is used which consists of two words put together.

Look at the following examples of compound words:

- i. There is a huge swimming pool in the club. (Compound noun)
- ii. The bus stop is overcrowded at peak hours. (Compound noun)
- iii. Kill me if you find me killing-worth. (Compound adjective)
- iv. Nobody should ignore the words of their well-wishing friends. (Compound adjective)

Compound words are written in three ways:

- i) Some compound words are written with space between two words. For example: car park, gas stove.
- ii) Some compound words have a hyphen (-). For example: eagle-eyed, twenty-four, good-tempered.
- iii) Some compound words are joined together. For example: fisherwoman, staircase.

**Note:** Compound nouns are usually written as two separate words. Compound adjectives are usually joined together with a hyphen.



**INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.9**



*Notes*

- Form new words by choosing one word from Group A and one from Group B.

**Group A**

**Group B**

first	footed
four	year-old
three	over
before	stove
bats	box
pull	maker
far	sighted
grand	cut
night	in-law
gas	man
trouble	mother
inter	class
short	handed
bread	hand
white	crumbs
bald	sighted
brother	coloured
letter	headed

- Fill up the blanks in the following paragraph with some of the compound words you have formed:

Every evening.....i..... used to sit on the verandah with her sewing machine. She stitched clothes for her grandson Ali. After finishing her work she would feed the sparrows with .....ii..... The sparrows could come and perch themselves on the .....iii..... Soon all the crumbs were eaten up.

Grandmother who was .....iv..... could not see the sparrows clearly but she knew each sparrow who came and sat in her verandah everyday.

### LET'S TALK

Explore how the poem depicts the clash between superstition and rationality. Discuss how the villagers' beliefs in traditional remedies and rituals contrast with the narrator's more rational perspective.



### WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT

- The poem teaches us about the complexities of human nature, the power of community in times of crisis, and the enduring themes of love, sacrifice, and resilience.
- It shows how people in the face of adversity often turn to superstitions for explanations and solutions.
- It also promotes the sense of community and unity in times of crisis.
- The poem demonstrates the depth of a mother's love and sacrifice for her children.



### TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Who is the 'I' in the poem?
2. What is the central event described in the poem?
3. How was the night when the event happened?
4. How do the villagers react when they hear about the scorpion sting incident?
5. How did the peasants react when they couldn't find the scorpion?
6. How does the poem explore the theme of superstition?
7. How does the poem depict the unity and support of the community in the face of adversity?
8. What cultural and religious beliefs are reflected in the villagers' actions and prayers?
9. What was the mother's reaction to the scorpion's sting?



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10. What is the overall mood or atmosphere created by the poem?



### ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

#### 11.1

1. continuous rain
2. b) a quick and sudden action
3. because it poisons his mother
4. a) It crawls beneath a sack of rice
5. d) It was seeking shelter from the rain
6. c) The scorpion is desperately seeking shelter

#### 11.2

1. The peasants arrived at the scene “like swarms of flies.”
2. b) To ward off evil and help the mother
3. The peasants used candles and lanterns to illuminate the area and search for the scorpion.
4. b) They cast giant scorpion shadows on the mud-baked walls
5. c) They were disappointed
6. No.

#### 11.3

1. c) The peasants’ failure to find the scorpion
2. blood
3. c) They hope it will remain still and not move
4. The villagers expressed the hope that the sins of the speaker’s previous birth would be burned away that night.
5. to reduce her misfortunes
6. b) They hope her pain will lead to a better next life

#### 11.4

1. the peasants
2. The wish expressed is that the sum of evil in the unreal world would be diminished by the mother’s pain, thereby balancing it against the sum of good.
3. The villagers believe that the mother’s pain might diminish the sum of evil in



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the world, thus balancing it against the sum of good.

4. b) It purifies her flesh of desire
5. c) On the floor with the mother in the centre
6. c) Peace and understanding

### 11.5

1. The atmosphere in the stanza becomes more crowded and chaotic with the addition of more candles, lanterns, neighbours, insects, and the ongoing rain.
2. The mother is described as “twisted through and through, groaning on a mat,” indicating that she is in significant pain and discomfort due to the scorpion sting.
3. This suggests that he is a person who relies on logic and reason rather than superstition or faith.
4. b) He applies a special ointment on the bitten toe
5. a) He resorts to superstitious rituals and prayers
6. c) because the father was deeply concerned

### 11.6

1. a) The mother was being consumed by the scorpion’s venom
2. The purpose of the rites and incantation was to try to tame or counteract the poison from the scorpion sting and heal the mother.
3. a) The scorpion’s venom became less potent
4. 20 hours
5. In an unconventional and desperate attempt, the father poured a little paraffin (a type of fuel) onto the bitten toe and set it on fire by putting a match to it. This unusual method was likely an extreme measure in an attempt to counteract the effects of the scorpion’s venom.
6. The mother felt relieved because she believed that by being stung by the scorpion, she had spared her children from a similar fate. Her gratitude reflects her deep love and maternal instinct to protect her family.

### 11.7

1.
  - i. She said that she had won the competition.
  - ii. They said that they would visit the museum the next day.
  - iii. She said that he was studying in the library.
  - iv. He said that he had already booked the tickets.



*Notes*

## Night of the Scorpion



## Notes

- v. He told me that they were renovating their house.
2. i. He said, "I am going to travel to Paris next month."
- ii. She said, "I have bought a new car."
- iii. They said, "We are going to start a new business."
- iv. He said, "I can't attend the meeting due to illness."
- v. She said, "I have forgotten to do my homework."

## 11.8

1. Onomatopoeia: The word "buzzed" imitates the sound made by bees.  
Alliteration: The repetition of the 'b' sound in "bees" and "blooming."
2. Simile: The comparison of waves to "angry giants" using the word "like."  
Personification: The waves are given human qualities of anger.
3. Onomatopoeia: The word "bang" imitates the sound of fireworks.
4. Simile: The comparison of her hair to "coal" using the word "as."
5. Onomatopoeia: The word "rustled" imitates the sound of leaves moving.  
Personification: The leaves are given the action of "rustling," typically a human action.
6. Onomatopoeia: The word "meowed" imitates the sound made by a cat.
7. Alliteration: The repetition of the 'p' sound.
8. Onomatopoeia: The word "creaked" imitates the sound made by a door opening.
9. Alliteration: The repetition of the 's' sound.
10. Simile: The comparison of his eyes to "diamonds" using the word "like."

## 11.9

1. first class                      bald-headed      four-footed      brother-in-law  
three-year-old                  letter box          gas stove          beforehand  
trouble maker                  right-handed      inter-class        batsman short-  
sighted                          far-sighted        bread crumbs      grandmother white-  
coloured                          pullover
2. i. grandmother  
ii. three-year-old  
iii. bread crumbs  
iv. short-sighted