

This extract is from the opening of a novel by Robert Matheson. In this section the shrunken protagonist encounters a spider.

The Shrinking Man

The spider rushed at him across the shadowed sands, scabbling wildly on its stalk-like legs. Its body was a giant, glossy egg that trembled blackly as it charged across the windless mounds, its wake a score of sand-trickling scratches.

5 Paralysis locked the man. He saw the poisonous glitter of the spider eyes. He watched it scramble across a log-like stick, body mounted high on its motion-blurred legs, as high as the man's shoulders. Behind him, suddenly, the steel encased flame flared into life with a thunder that shook the air. It jarred the man loose. With a sucking gasp, he spun around and ran, the damp sand crunching beneath his racing sandals.

10 He fled through lakes of light and into darkness again, his face a mask of terror. Beams of sunlight speared across his panic-driven path, cold shadows enveloped it. Behind, the giant spider scoured sand in its pursuit.

15 Suddenly the man slipped. A cry tore back his lips. He skidded to a knee, then pitched forward onto outstretched palms. He felt the cold sands shaking with the vibration of the roaring flame. He pushed himself up desperately, palms flaking sand, and started running again.

Fleeing, he glanced back across his shoulder and saw that the spider was gaining on him, its pulsing egg of a body perched on running legs-an egg whose yolk swam with killing poisons. He raced on, breathless, terror in his veins.

20 Suddenly the cliff edge was before him, shearing off abruptly to a grey, perpendicular face. He raced along the edge, not looking down into the vast canyon below. The giant spider scuttled after him, the sound of its running a delicate scraping on the stone. It was closer still. The man dashed between two giant cans that loomed like tanks above him. He threaded, racing, in between the silent bulks of all the clustered
25 cans, past green and red and yellow sides all caked with livid smears. The spider had to climb above them, unable to move its swollen body rapidly enough between them. It slithered up the side of one, then sped across their metal tops, bridging the gaps between them with sudden, jerking hops.

30 As the man started out into the open again, he heard a scratching sound above. Recoiling and jerking back his head, he saw the spider just about to leap on him, two legs slipping down a metal side, the rest clutching at the top.

35 With a terrified gasp, the man dived again into the space between the giant cans, half running, half stumbling back along the winding route. Behind him, the spider drew itself back up to the top and, backing around in a twitching semicircle, started after him again.

Section A: Reading

- 1) Read again the first part of the source from **lines 1 – 3**.

List four things from this part of the text about the spider. **[4 marks]**

- 2) Look in detail at this extract from **lines 4 – 16** of the Source.

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How does the writer use language here to describe the terror caused by the spider?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- Words and phrases
- Language features and forms
- Sentence forms

[8 marks]

- 3) You now need to think about **the whole of the Source**.

This text is from the opening of a novel. How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- What the writer focuses your attention on in the beginning
- How and why the writer changes the focus as the Source develops
- Any other structural features that interest you.

[8 marks]

- 4) Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the Source from **line 17 to the end**.

A student, having read this section of the text, said: "The writer brings the struggle of the protagonist to life for the reader. It is almost as if you are there." To what extent do you agree?

In your response you could:

- Write about your own impressions of the protagonist's struggle
- Evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
- Support your opinions with reference to the text

[20 marks]

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

Write in full sentences.

You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.

You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

- 5) You are going to enter a writing competition judged by a panel of people of your own age.

Either: Write a description suggested by this picture.



Or: Write the opening part of a story in which a character or characters experience something terrifying.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]