

**Sample Paper 10****Score for Voice** _____**Toughest Thing on Two Legs**

My grandmother likes to brag that she is the toughest thing on two legs. You're probably thinking that's a strange thing for an older lady to say. What's even stranger is that no one but my granddad ever challenges her. They don't dare. There's something about the look in her steely gray eyes that could scare a rattlesnake back into his hole.

Well, last summer my granddad had a chance to show Grandma that he was the toughest thing on two legs, but he didn't quite pull it off. He was cleaning out an old woodshed on his ranch, getting ready to tear it down because the wood was rotten. Even though Grandma had warned him plenty of times that old buildings make good hangouts for scorpions, Granddad insisted on going out there. Before long, we heard a yell from the shed, followed by a lot of words I won't repeat. I've heard my granddad get angry plenty of times, but this was above and beyond anything I'd ever heard before.

Grandma set down her coffee mug in time to see Granddad hobbling around the side of the shed, coming at a pretty good pace, biting his lip so he wouldn't let out another yell. She met him at the door, whipped off his shirt to make sure no other scorpions were hiding in it, pushed him into a chair, wrapped his hand in a cold, wet cloth, pumped two aspirins into him, and poured him a cup of coffee with cream, all in about one minute. Then she grabbed a hatchet and headed for the shed. Naturally, I followed, not wanting to miss anything. Something about an old lady with a hatchet kind of grabs your attention.



It took her only seconds, lifting boards with her toe (she had her boot on to protect her) to find the offending scorpion and dispatch it. She brought the body parts back to show Granddad—especially the scorpion’s tail, where the stinger is. “Hardly big enough to make a person yell,” she told Granddad, swinging the curly tail right in front of his nose. “But what really puzzles me is why you’re limping when you got stung on the hand.”

He didn’t have an answer to that one, and I had to bite the insides of my cheeks to keep from laughing, though I was glad I wasn’t the one who had been stung. I know who the toughest thing on two legs is, all right, but I also know enough to keep it to myself. That makes me the *smartest* thing on two legs.