

A.

1. The scorpion was hiding beneath a sack of rice to save itself from the rain.
2. The peasants crowded the narrator's house when they found out that the narrator's mother had been stung by a scorpion.
3. The peasants cicked their tongues to express their condolence and sympathy as they watched the narrator's mother writhing pain.
4. Superstitions are irrational beliefs held by a community based on some natural or supernatural occurrence. They are usually believed to bring good or bad luck. An instance found in the poem is the neighbours' belief that with every movement the scorpion made, his poison spread in the blood of the person stung.

B.

1. It is quite evident that the poem is set in a remote village. The people are illiterate and steeped in superstition. There is mention of any healthcare facility. Even the father, who is a rationalist, had to depend on powders, mixtures and herbs instead of taking his wife to a doctor. Moreover, details like mud-baked walls, lanterns and candles also portray the image of a rural setting.
2. The narrator's father was a rational person and knew better than to believe in superstitions. Yet, when his wife was bitten by the scorpion, he put all the scepticism behind and tried everything possible to save her. He was dutiful, affectionate and emotional.
3. In the eyes of the peasants, a scorpion sting was fatal as it had no cure. They were completely unaware of the available medical procedures and praying was the only way to help the narrator's mother. Their only hope was that their prayers would help lessen her pain.

