***“MAGICIAN OF THE SEA”* By Kelly Hashway**

What do three hearts, eight arms and one huge brain add up to? An octopus, a creature that can do amazing things.

Octopuses are extremely intelligent. They have even learnt a few tricks to get them out of sticky situations, as for example, when it is afraid of a predator. As octopuses don’t have teeth or sharp claws to defend themselves, they hide themselves in the sand on the bottom of the ocean floor. Do you want to know how they do that? Well, the octopus is like a chameleon because it can change the color of its skin to match the sand. This color change happens in less than a minute.

Some octopuses like to stay in more shallow water where there are rocks and coral. Because octopuses are invertebrates, they can squeeze themselves into small spaces between the rocks to get out of reach of predators. Another way an octopus can hide is by shooting ink. An octopus uses a part of its body called a siphon to shoot ink into the water. The ink forms a cloud that hides the octopus. It’s like a magician doing a vanishing act.

If an octopus is being attacked, it can actually make itself look like a venomous sea snake. It will bury itself in the sand, keeping two arms visible. It will change the color of those arms to match a sea snake. But if there’s no time to hide? If an octopus is in trouble, it can break off one of its arms. The arm will then change colors and squirm around the water to distract the predator while the octopus swims away to safety. Don’t worry though. The octopus’s arm will grow back.

There is one kind of octopus that has venom to use in defense. The blue-ringed octopus is tiny; it could fit in the palm of your hand. Predators might think this size makes the octopus a great snack, but they know to stay away. The blue-ringed octopus is very poisonous and can kill predators much larger than it, including humans.

**Answer the following questions:**

1. What is special about the octopus’ body? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. Why are octopuses intelligent? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. What happens to an octopus if it breaks off one of its arms? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. How do blue-ringed octopuses defend themselves? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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