

Dog Poop Dilemma

The boys were bored. Enzo was lying on the sofa. Alex was lying across the big blue chair.

“Ugh,” said Enzo.

“Argh,” said Alex.

“If you’re bored,” said Enzo’s mom, “you can scoop Meatball’s poop from the back yard,”

“We’re not bored!” they shouted. But it was too late. The damage was done.

Enzo and Alex walked outside to take a look. There was dog poop. There was a lot of dog poop. There was a *very extreme* amount of dog poop. Meatball was a small dog, but he made a lot of poop.

“Now is the time for a dung beetle,” said Alex.

“A what?” asked Enzo.

“A dung beetle. They roll up poop and bury it.”

“I think we need an army of dung beetles,” said Enzo.

“It might be hard to find an army,” said Alex.

Enzo had a different plan. He wanted to build a machine to take care of the poop. “A dung beetle machine?” asked Alex.

“More powerful than a dung beetle,” said Enzo.

“Dung beetles can bury 250 times their weight in poop in one night,” said Alex.

“Then equally powerful,” said Enzo. He took his black notebook and pencil out of his pocket and started to draw. “I like the idea of burying the poop like a dung beetle,” he said. “If I make a machine that can bury it, then we don’t have to touch it with those little plastic bags.”

“Good plan,” said Alex. He hated those bags. Especially the ones that were supposed to smell like baby powder or tropical breezes. Plain poop smelled better than tropical breeze poop. That was the truth.

Enzo sketched his machine ideas in his notebook. “I’ve got it!” he said. “All I need is my remote control car, a garden shovel, and some twine. Plus the motor from my old fish tank and the scooper from my toy backhoe.”

That sounded like a lot of things. Alex helped Enzo collect them from the garage, under his bed, and the back of his closet. Enzo set to work. Before long he had a machine that rolled over the grass and dug a hole. Then it rolled some more and scooped the poop into the hole. Impressive.

Unfortunately the machine did *not* fill in the holes. “A minor detail,” said Enzo. But Enzo’s mom did not think it was so minor.

“What are all these holes?” she said when she came outside.

“They are from the dung beetle machine,” said Alex.

“The what?” said Enzo’s mom.



“The machine I built,” said Enzo. “It cleans up Meatball’s poop.”

“Interesting,” said Enzo’s mom. “But I think it would be worse to fall in a hole than to step on poop. You need to use the little bags.” She handed the boys two rolls of aqua colored bags. Tropical breeze. Ugh.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What is Enzo's dog's name?
 - a. Alex
 - b. Beetle
 - c. Meatball
 - d. Breeze

2. Why did Enzo model his machine on dung beetles?
 - a. Dung beetles form armies
 - b. Dung beetles bury poop
 - c. Dung beetles use plastic bags
 - d. Dung beetles are colorful

3. Why didn't Enzo's mom like the machine?
 - a. Because it left holes in the yard
 - b. Because it buried the poop
 - c. Because it cost too much money
 - d. Because it smelled

4. How did Alex help Enzo?
 - a. He helped him gather materials
 - b. He gave his the idea to model his machine on a dung beetle
 - c. He filled in the holes
 - d. A and B

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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