3 Osamushi

It was through his friend, Minoru Ishihara, that Tezuka developed an interest in science. Ishihara loved science and in his home there were lots of scientific books and illustrated books of all kinds. Following his example, Tezuka began to take an interest in astronomy and insects and was soon an avid reader of the science fiction works of Wells and other writers.

One day, these two young science enthusiasts hit upon the idea of making their own science magazine. They began to visit the library after school, where they wrote articles which they asked Mr. Inui to print for them on the school press. The result was a ten-page magazine dealing with insects, plants and flowers, astronomy and so on, which they distributed among their classmates.

While making the magazine, Tezuka became engrossed in collecting insects. The copse behind his house turned out to be a treasure-trove for this sort of thing. In it he found all kinds of insects, from which he made a specimen book. Among them there was one small black beetle, called osamushi, that rustled around in the rubbish and was also known as gomimushi, or "rubbish-beetle." Tezuka took a fancy to this beetle whose name, osamushi, resembled his own. "And it's not just our names that are alike," he thought. "It's feeble and looks as though it's wearing glasses. We both like meat, too." Soon after, the pen-name OSAMUSHI began to appear on Tezuka's drawings.

Tezuka's passion for insects remained unchanged when he moved to junior high school. With his new friends, he renewed his efforts to collect them and started the publication of a research magazine. Then, after the second issue of the magazine had been published, he had an idea: "What if I published an illustrated book in color? Instead of using colored photos, I could draw them myself." Tezuka was in the art club at the time.

He soon set about sketching the insects he collected for his specimen book. In this he was thorough. From the size of the insect to the details of the feelers and legs and even the shine of the surface, every picture was an exact replica of the original. On occasion, when it was impossible to get the precise shade of red by using just paint, he even went so far as to use his own blood. In all he compiled five hundred illustrations of insects, which he published in hand-made form together with their descriptions.

Later, Tezuka again produced a magazine about insects. This time he made only one copy of each issue, which was passed around among his classmates. This magazine was such a hit that even those who cared nothing about insects couldn't wait to read it. The secret of its popularity lay in the serial comic strips it carried. Tezuka himself drew them and included them as a service to his readers, who enjoyed them so much that they just couldn't wait for the next installment.

Comprehension Check 3

本文の内容に合うものには○を、合わないものには×をつけなさい．

1. Both Ishihara and Tezuka were great fans of science fiction. ( )

2. Tezuka liked the osamushi because it rustled around in the rubbish. ( )

3. Tezuka published an illustrated book of insects when he was a junior high school student. ( )

4. Tezuka's magazine with comic strips was very popular among his classmates. ( )