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PART 2
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CPD QUESTIONS

Pterois miles is variously known as the Devilfish, Firefish or Lionfish — all apt names considering that its dorsal spines can inject an agonisingly painful toxin. It is fearless in its behaviour, swimming conspicuously over reefs when it is not sheltering under overhangs. When approached, it erects its fins and lunges with its dorsal spines. The most effective treatment is to immerse the wound in water that is as hot as can be tolerated, to denature the toxin. A close relative is the deadly stonefish Synanceia verrucosa, the world’s most venomous fish, capable of causing death in less than an hour. An antivenin is available in Australia, but immediate and sustained immersion in searing hot water is often more practical. The famous South African ichthyologist JLB Smith saved his own life this way after envenomation by a stonefish.

Photo and text: George Branch
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