

The House of the Scorpion

Nancy Farmer

Reviewed by: Ashley Siavoshi, 14

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Matteo Alacran is a normal boy, living in a dystopian, futuristic society. He eats, sleeps, plays. Everything a normal young child does. But Matt is anything but normal. He is a clone of El Patron, drug lord and ruler of the country of Opium. Society sees Matt as an animal, a creature with no rights or feelings. He is abused by a maid and treated like dirt. El Patron rescues him from his situation and leaves Celia and a bodyguard, Tam Lin, to protect him. After years of living in the estate, he escapes death and travels south into Mexico. There, he is captured by "Keepers". Matt must escape and change the ways of the land of Opium and redeem El Patron's evil empire.

A gripping novel depicting the struggle between science and humanity, *The House of the Scorpion* is a great read for any teenager who enjoys science-fiction or thrillers. Nancy Farmer truly knows how to keep a reader coming back for more. As we learn more about Matteo Alacran's life and the society he lives in, Farmer inserts issues like immigration, drug use, slavery, and labor rights in a very real way. One can't help but question: Is this in our future?

Although *The House of the Scorpion* contains great ideas and wonderful characters, the plot becomes a bit loose at the end. With a great beginning and captivating middle, the conclusion to the novel just isn't satisfying. It still leaves some vital questions unanswered.

All-in-all, Nancy Farmer's novel *The House of the Scorpion* is a creative, dynamic science-fiction read. It has won many awards, including the 2002 National Book Award and the Newbery Honor Book Award. I would recommend it to anyone in search of a sci-fi novel.

Recommended Reading

The Samurai's Tale by Erik Haugaard

The Sea of Trolls by Nancy Farmer

A Girl Named Disaster by Nancy Farmer