

Subj: House of the Scorpion booknotes
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THE HOUSE OF THE SCORPION Nancy Farmer

SETTING: a little house in the poppy fields, the Big House, the plankton factory
 Primarily set in Opium, a strip of poppy fields lying between the US and what was once called Mexico

CHARACTERS

The Alacran Family

- *Matt -(6-14) Matteo Alacran, the clone
- *El Patron-140 years old) the original Matteo Alacran; a powerful drug lord, lord of a country called Opium (a strip of poppy fields lying between the US and what was once called Mexico)
- *Felipe – El Patron's son; died long ago
- *El Viejo – El Patron's grandson and Mr. Alacran's father; a very old man
- *Mr. Alacran – El Patron's great grandson; husband of Felicia, father of Benito and Steven
- *Felicia - Mr. Alacran's wife; mother of Benito, Steven and Tom, frail, concert pianist,
- *Benito – Oldest son of Mr. Alacran and Felicia
- *Steven – second son of Mr. Alacran and Felicia
- *Tom - son of Felicia and Mr. MacGregor
- *Fani – Benito's wife

Visitors and Associates of the Alacrans

- *Senator Mendoza – a powerful politician in the United States; father of Emilia and Maria; also called Dada
- *Emilia – oldest daughter of Senator Mendoza
- *Maria – younger daughter of Senator Mendoza
- *Esperanza – Emilia's and Maria's mother; disappeared when Maria was five
- *Mr. MacGregor – a drug lord

Slaves and Servants

- *Cedlia – chief cook and Matt's caregiver
- *Tam Lin – bodyguard for both El Patron and Matt, interesting ears
- *Daff Donald – bodyguard for El Patron, juggles bowling balls
- *Rosa – housekeeper; Matt's jailer
- *Willum – chief doctor for the Alacran household; Rosa's lover
- *Mr. Ortega – Matt's music teacher
- *Teacher – an eejit
- *Hugh, Ralf, and Wee Wullie – members of the Farm Patrol

People in Aztlan

- *Raul – a keeper
- *Carlos – a keeper
- *Jorge – a keeper
- *Chacho – a lost boy
- *Fidedlito – a lost boy, eight years old
- *Ton-ton – a lost boy, driver of the shrimp harvester
- *Flaco- oldest of the lost boys
- *Luna – lost boy in charge of the infirmary
- *Sister Inez – a nurse at the Convent of Santa Clara

Misc characters

- *Furball – Maria's dog
- *Eejits – people with computer chips in their brains, also known as zombies
- *Chupacabras – mythical creature that sucks the blood out of goats, chickens

**La Llorona – The Weeping Woman who searches in the night for lost children*

Matteo Alacran was not born; he was harvested. His DNA came from El Patron, lord of a country called Opium – a strip of poppy fields lying between the United States and what was once called Mexico. Matt's first cell split and divided inside a Petri dish. The cells were frozen over 100 years. The cells would understand hair color, height, and interests. Then he was placed in the womb of a cow, where he continued the miraculous journey from embryo to fetus to baby. Normally a needle would blunt intelligence at birth, but not in the case of Matteo Alacran.

El Patron grew up in Aztlan (used to be Mexico) He came from a place called Durango where people were called scorpions – because there were so many of them.

QUESTIONS

- *...is a boy often referred to as mi vida (my child)?*
- *...does a boy entertain himself with the storybook PETER RABBIT?*
- *...does a boy repeatedly practice introducing himself to other children?*
- *Which story is divided into chapters, categorized by the main characters' age?*
- *...was a boy not able to talk because of the stressful ordeal he had been thru?
(When he tried to speak he was overcome with terror?)*
- *QUOTE: "When he was young he made a choice, like a tree does when it decides to grow one way or the other. He grew large and green until he shadowed over the whole forest, but most of his branches are twisted."*
- *Who finally gets Matt to talk? A teacher*
- *...does a boy study via distance learning over the TV?*
- *...does a man have a 143rd birthday party?*
- *...are a boys activities supposed to be risk free?*
- *...does the main character discover a secret passage in the big house?*
- *...does one of the characters want to be buried like an Egyptian Pharaoh?*
- *...were two girls sent to a convent to turn them into proper young ladies?*
- *...do powerful people create a clone so that they could have transplants available when they needed them?*
- *ALACRAN EMPIRE – stretched from central California all across Arizona and into New Mexico.*
- *What is the Farm Patrol? Meant to control the flow of illegals crossing the border.*
- *What does Celia do to Matt? She poisoned him with foxglove. She made Matt's heart too unstable for transplant.*
- *You have two problems. First you cannot control your borders, and second you cannot control us. Solution. If both countries set aside land along their common borders, the dealers would establish Farms and strip the flow of illegals. In return, dealers would promise not to sell drugs to citizens of the US and Mexico. They would peddle their wares in Europe, Asia and Africa instead.*
- *...are the workers asked why individualism is like a five-legged horse? The workers are asked by the keepers. Things go smoothly only when everyone works together.*
- *...do the workers recite the Five Principles of Good Citizenship and the Four Attitudes Leading to Right-Mindfulness?*
- *...do the keepers line up the boys and raise a flag with the emblem of a beehive over the factory?*
- *What is a lockdown? Nothing is allowed to enter or leave the country.*
- *...are a group of people poisoned at the end of a story?*