

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Kyleigh Schubert	School:	Shanahan
Book Title:	The House of the Scorpion	Genre:	Science Fiction
Author:	Nancy Farmer	Pages:	380
Publisher:	Antheneum Books	Copyright:	2002

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

From Nancy Farmer's Official Website: Between the U.S.A. and Aztlán (once called Mexico) lies a strip of land, known as Opium, the name of its chief product. It is ruled by a 146-year-old drug lord known as El Patrón. His fields are tilled by illegal immigrants, called "eejits," who have computer chips implanted in their brains so that they can be kept in slavery. Matt, a boy who is confined in a cottage on El Patrón estate, manages to break out, only to find himself treated like an animal. Eventually he learns why. The tattoo on his foot, "Property of Alacrán Estates," means that he is a clone of El Patrón--and that he is being raised to provide spare body parts for his original. With the aid of Tam Lin, his bodyguard, Matt escapes from Opium but that is not the end of his troubles. He is imprisoned in a brutal labor camp for orphaned boys in Aztlán and leads a rebellion to rescue not only himself, but the other "Lost Boys." (From

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

RL 8.1- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL 8.2- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL 8.3- Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

From Barnes and Noble: This modern classic takes on an iron-fisted drug lord, clones bred for their organs, and what it means to be human. Winner of the National Book Award as well as Newbery and Printz Honors.

Matteo Alacrán was not born; he was harvested. His DNA came from El Patrón, 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. Then he was placed in the womb of a cow, where he continued the miraculous journey from embryo to fetus to baby. He is a boy now, but most consider him a monster—except for El Patrón. El Patrón loves Matt as he loves himself, because Matt is himself.

As Matt struggles to understand his existence, he is threatened by a sinister cast of characters, including El Patrón’s power-hungry family, and he is surrounded by a dangerous army of bodyguards. Escape is the only chance Matt has to survive. But escape from the Alacrán Estate is no guarantee of freedom, because Matt is marked by his difference in ways he doesn’t even suspect.

Review #2

From Kirkus Review: Matt Alacrán has spent his youth secreted away in a secluded hut, his only knowledge of the world provided by his caregiver Celia and his view out the window on the white ocean of poppies growing all around. Matt is a clone, an outcast hated and feared as a beast by human society. When he uses an iron cooking pot to smash his window and goes out into the world, Matt sets into motion a fantastic adventure in a land called Opium, a strip of land between the US and a place once called Mexico. Opium is ruled by El Patrón, a 142-year-old drug lord, inhabited by “eejits”—docile farm workers controlled by brain implants—and overseen by an army of bodyguards. Farmer’s tale is a wild, futuristic coming-of-age story with a science-fiction twist: How do you find out who you are when what you are is a clone—a photograph—of a human being. How have you come to exist, and for what purpose? Can you ever expect to be more than what you were designed to be? As demonstrated in *The Ear, the Eye, and the Arm* (1994), Farmer has a talent for creating exciting tales in beautifully realized, unusual worlds. With undertones of vampires, Frankenstein, dragons’ hoards, and killing fields, Matt’s story turns out to be an inspiring tale of friendship, survival, hope, and transcendence. A must-read for SF fans. (Fiction. 11+)

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: **Rocket Boys**

Author: **Homer Hickam Jr.**

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

From Commonsensemedia.org: There is some violence in *The House of the Scorpion*, although most of it occurs "offstage." One child character tortures frogs and drugs a girl's dog. Matteo and his fellow orphans are beaten with a cane when they disobey their Keepers in Aztlan, and they eventually fight back. An incident of mass murder is described, but without too many disturbing details.

In *The House of the Scorpion*, Matthew's benefactor, El Patron, raises, manufactures, and distributes opium. At least one character in the household is addicted to laudanum, a medicinal form of the drug. Adults smoke and drink at various celebrations, but the younger characters do not partake.

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable): 660L

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 7/13/2015

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults