*The House of the Scorpion* Study Guide

Chapter 1

1. What is the setting of this chapter?
2. What is Eduardo trying to do?
3. What happens to most clones? Why didn’t it happen to this clone?

Chapter 2

1. What does “mi vida” mean?
2. Besides Celia, what is Matt’s only connection to the outside world?
3. What did Matt see & hear outside the house one day when Celia was at work? What was his reaction?

Chapter 4

1. How do the children describe clones?
2. Where is Matt taken after he hurt his hands and feet?
3. How does Rosa treat Matt when he is locked away?
4. How is Maria different than the others? What does she do for Matt to help him?

Chapter 5

1. What steps did Rosa take to make Matt’s life miserable in his prison?
2. Who’s Tom? How did Matt and Tom’s first meeting go?
3. Who finally brings Celia to see Matt?
4. What was Celia’s plan to free Matt?

Chapter 6

1. What was Rosa’s warning to Matt? Why was she nervous?
2. For whom was Matt cleaned up to meet?
3. What is discovered when Matt takes off his shirt?
4. Who did Matt choose as a bodyguard?

Chapter 7

1. Why did the doctor visit El Patron more?
2. What is Matt and Maria’s relationship like?
3. Matt refused to talk after his imprisonment. What made him finally talk? Why?

Chapter 8

1. What are the farm workers like? What controls them?
2. Why won’t the safe horse leave the farm?
3. Where was the picnic that Tam Lin and Matt had? Why did Tam Lin keep this place a secret?
4. What is an “eejit?”

Chapter 9

1. Who is Felicia?
2. What did Matt witness in the Secret passage of the music room?
3. What did the Doctor give to Felicia?
4. What talent did Matt discover he had?

Chapter 10

1. Who is Mr. Ortega?
2. What did El Patron’s birthday mean for Matt?

Chapter 11

1. Who is El Viejo? How is her different than El Patron? Why could this difference be considered dangerous for him?
2. By moving the place cards, what is Matt showing? How does Maria react?
3. How has Maria and Matt’s relationship changed? Why? What is El Patron’s reaction to this?

Chapter 12

1. Whose clone did Matt, Maria, and Tom see in the hospital room?

Chapter 13

1. An earlier line from the book was repeated by Matt: “Clones go to pieces when they get older.” What do you now think this statement means?
2. Who is Felicia’s son? Who is his father?
3. What is wrong with Mr. MacGregor’s clone? Why did Matt not suffer the same fate?

Chapter 14

1. How did Celia come to work for El Patron?

Chapter 15

1. What has happened to Rosa? What was Matt’s reaction to seeing Rosa?
2. What did Matt find at the oasis? Why do you think Tam Lin left these things for Matt?
3. Who has died? What was the reaction to Matt at the service?

Chapter 16

1. Why did Maria forgive Matt?
2. What did Matt think about faults?
3. What does Felicia say that startles Maria? Matt?
4. How is El Patron going to help Matt and Maria?

Chapter 17

1. What was contained in a “History of Opium?” How was this different than what Matt expected?
2. Who rescued Matt from drowning? What were they part of? How did Matt talk to them?
3. Why do eejits sleep in the field some nights?

Chapter 18

1. What is a “Dragon Hoard?” Why did Tam Lin tell the story?

Chapter 19

1. What happened to Matt when singing? What does this signify?
2. What did Matt begin to realize about the role of clones?
3. Why is it ironic that El Patron refers to Matt as Mi Vida?

Chapter 20

1. Why did El Patron come up with idea of Eejits?
2. What happened to dead Eejits?

Chapter 21

1. Who is getting married? Why did El Patron want this?
2. Who is Maria engaged to? Who decided this?
3. How was Maria different from the others at the wedding?
4. What happened at the end of the wedding?

Chapter 22

1. What is Maria’s plan to help Matt escape?
2. What does El Patron need to survive?
3. What did the red light show? What are the possible dangers? Who told Maria about the red light?
4. Who betrayed Matt and Maria?

Chapter 23

1. What is implied by El Patron’s story and the quote “I am meant to have those lives.” (p. 232-233).
2. Why has Celia poisoned Matt?
3. What is Mr. Alcaran’s order to Tam Lin?
4. How has Tam Lin changed? What will happen to Celia? Why?

Chapter 24

1. What was Tam Lin’s real plan?
2. What is meant by “El Patron kept Opium frozen one hundred years in the past?” (p. 245).
3. Where does Tam Lin tell Matt to head to first when he gets to Aztlan?

Chapter 25

1. Why does Matt weep for El Patron?
2. What does Matt finally see across the border? His reaction?
3. How was Matt able to get across the border?

Chapter 26 – The Lost Boys

1. How was Matt welcomed in Aztlan? What is Matt’s cover story?
2. Why was Matt asked about skills?
3. Is Matt familiar with the new technology available? Why or why not?
4. What does “The orderly production of resources is vital to the general good of the people” (p. 264), “Its hard, but fair” and “Attention to the welfare of the nation is the highest virtue to which a citizen can aspire” (p. 265) tell you about the priorities of the country of Aztlan?

Chapter 27 – A Five Legged Horse

1. Who were the Lost Boys and Lost Girls?
2. What was Opium called at the work camps?
3. What did the boys have to recite before eating?
4. What did Matt not want the other boys to see?

Chapter 28 – The Plankton Factory

1. What happened at age 18?
2. What is the symbolism of the emblem of a beehive on the keepers’ uniforms?
3. What is Plankton? Why are they harvesting it?

Chapter 29 – Washing a Dirty Mind

1. Why is Matt called “the aristocrat?”

Chapter 30 – Where the Whales Lost Their Legs

1. Why was Matt targeted with accusations each night?
2. What did Fidelito do out of fear of what would happen to Matt?
3. What did Matt take at the infirmary?

Chapter 31 – Ton-Ton

1. Why didn’t Matt want the Laudanum?
2. What happened every night? What was the significance of this event to Matt?
3. Matt finally admits who is his mother?
4. Who does he see as his father figure?

Chapter 32 – Found Out

1. Why is Fidelito punished by Jorge in particular?
2. What was Flaco’s “implied threat” (p. 320-321).
3. What was found out about Matt? What was the impact on the other boys?
4. Where were Matt and Chacho taken?

Chapter 33 – The Boneyard

1. How does Matt describe Tam Lin?

Chapter 34 – The Shrimp Harvester

1. Who arrived to help the boys? With what?
2. How was Chacho removed from the bone pit?
3. What happened to the keepers?
4. Where is Flaco going? Why?
5. Where are Matt and Fidelito going?

Chapter 35 – El Dia De Los Muertos

1. What day was being celebrated? Purpose?
2. How would the boys go undetected?

Chapter 36 – The Castle on The Hill

1. Who was waiting for Matt and Fidelito at the hospital?
2. What happened to the keepers?

Chapter 37 – Homecoming

1. How have things changed in Opium?
2. What does Esperanza’s view of international law mean for Matt? What is Matt to do?

Chapter 38 – The House of Eternity

1. What happened to all of the Alcarans and most of the bodyguards, including Tam Lin?
2. How did Daft Donald survive?
3. Why did Tam Lin not warn anyone else?
4. Tam Lin knew what would happen to him by drinking the toast to El Patron. Why do you suppose he drank anyway?