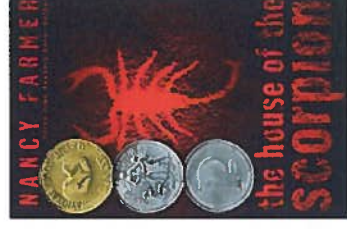


# 9<sup>th</sup> Grade English

## Novel Unit: The House of the Scorpion



### INTRODUCTION:

In the course textbook, you completed a number of readings on that centered around fear. You considered such questions as, “What makes a story scary?” and “How does a good story keep the reader riveted?”

You are now beginning a novel unit that is an extension of just such questions. The House of the Scorpion takes the concept of human cloning and explores the fear, violence and ethical dilemmas that dominate a world in which cloned humans are raised for their organs to prolong the lives of the rich and powerful. The book is a dystopian tale (like The Hunger Games) set in the not-too-distant future. In keeping with the narrative power of suspense and terror, the story has undertones of vampires, Frankenstein, dragon battles, and war zones. Those who are most powerful inspire and control with fear. However, the book also asks you to confront realistic issues such as the war on drugs and the treatment of migrant farm workers. To what extent can you connect to Matt’s world?

## Calendar of Assignments

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<b>WEEK 1</b>	Read and annotate "Plan to create human-cow embryos"	"Plan to create human-cow embryos" questions and writing assignment	Read "Youth: 0 to 6" Study Guide	Read "Youth: 0 to 6" Study Guide	Read "Youth: 0 to 6" Study Guide
<b>WEEK 2</b>	Read "Middle Age: 7 to 11" Study Guide	Read "Middle Age: 7 to 11" Study Guide	Read "Middle Age: 7 to 11" Study Guide	Read "Middle Age: 7 to 11" Study Guide	Read "Middle Age: 7 to 11" Study Guide
<b>WEEK 3</b>	Read "Old Age: 12 to 14" Study Guide	Read "Old Age: 12 to 14" Study Guide	Read "Old Age: 12 to 14" Study Guide	Read "Old Age: 12 to 14" Study Guide	Read "Age 14" Study Guide

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<b>WEEK 4</b>	Read "La Vida Nueva" Study Guide	Read "La Vida Nueva" Study Guide	Read "La Vida Nueva" Study Guide	Read "La Vida Nueva" Study Guide	Read "La Vida Nueva" Study Guide
<b>WEEK 5</b>	View Henrietta Lacks documentary & take notes	Henrietta Lacks and <u>House of the Scorpion</u> compare/contrast paragraph	Read poem "Clones" by Edward Racey Answer questions	Catch up / Study Day	Final Test on House of the Scorpion

## Plan to create human-cow embryos

By Fergus Walsh  
BBC News, Medical correspondent

**UK scientists have applied for permission to create embryos by fusing human DNA with cow eggs.**

Researchers from Newcastle University and Kings College, London, have asked the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority for a three-year licence.

The hybrid human-bovine embryos would be used for stem cell research and would not be allowed to develop for more than a few days.

But critics say it is unethical and potentially dangerous.

Liberal Democrat MP Dr Evan Harris - a member of the Commons Science and Technology Select Committee - said: "If human benefit can be derived by perfecting therapeutic cloning techniques or from research into subsequently-derived stem cells, then it would actually be immoral to prevent it just because of a 'yuck' factor."

Stem cell research is one of the most promising areas of medical science.

**" You may begin to undermine the whole distinction between humans animals and humans "**  
Calum MacKellar

Stem cells are the body's master cells and five-day-old embryos are packed with them - each with the potential to turn into any tissue in the body.

It is this ability which scientists want to harness to treat diseases such as Parkinson's Disease, strokes and Alzheimer's Disease.

To do that, they say they need to have access to thousands of embryos for research.

### Short supply

The problem is that human eggs for research are in short supply and to obtain them women have to undergo surgery.

That is why scientists want to use cows' eggs as a substitute.

They would insert human DNA into a cow's egg which has had its genetic material removed, and then create an embryo by the same technique that produced Dolly the Sheep.

The resulting embryo would be 99.9% human; the only bovine element would be DNA outside the nucleus of the cell.

It would, though, technically be a chimera - a mixing of two distinct species into one.

The aim would be to extract stem cells from the embryo when it is six days old, before destroying it.

**" If human benefit can be derived by perfecting therapeutic cloning techniques or from research into subsequently-derived stem cells, then it would actually be immoral to prevent it just because of a 'yuck' factor "**  
Dr Evan Harris

The quality and the viability of stem cells would then be checked to see if the technique had worked.

The scientists also plan to examine the way the cells are reprogrammed after fusion to see if there are useful processes they could replicate in the laboratory.

Lead researcher Dr Lyle Armstrong said: "If we can learn from the egg cell how to make embryonic stem cells without having to use an animal egg at all then some day we may be able to cure diseases such as Parkinson's disease, or better still some of the age-related diseases which are creating such a burden on society."

Dr Stephen Minger, from King's College London, said: "The current state of the technology is such that literally hundreds of human oocytes (eggs) from young women will be required to generate a single human embryonic stem cell line.

"Therefore we consider it more appropriate to use non-human oocytes from livestock as a surrogate.

"We feel that the development of disease-specific human embryonic stem cell lines from individuals suffering from genetic forms of neurodegenerative disorders will stimulate both basic research and the development of new medicines to treat these horrific brain diseases."

#### **'Undermining humanity'**

Professor Robin Lovell-Badge, head of developmental genetics, National Institute for Medical Research, said: "This is a very rational step: to learn what you can using animal eggs, which are readily obtainable, before moving on to valuable human eggs when or if this becomes necessary."

#### **HAVE YOUR SAY**

**" What are diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's if they are not undermining human dignity? "**

Paul Kemp, Munich

But some will argue the end does not justify the means.

Calum MacKellar, from the Scottish Council on Human Bioethics, said the research undermined the distinction between animals and humans.

He said: "In the history of humankind, animals and human species have been separated.

"In this kind of procedure, you are mixing at a very intimate level animal eggs and human chromosomes, and you may begin to undermine the whole distinction between humans and animals.

"If that happens, it might also undermine human dignity and human rights."

Story from BBC NEWS:  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/health/6121280.stm>

Published: 2006/11/06 22:45:03 GMT

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GMT © BBC 2013

## Plan to create human-cow embryos Article

**Directions:** Read the following article and answer the questions. Be prepared to discuss article.

1. What is the topic of the article? (1-3 words)

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2. What is the main idea? (State what the author is saying about the topic in a complete sentence.)

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3. What is the purpose of this article?

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4. What supporting details does the author include to help you understand his main purpose?

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5. What text structure(s) does this author use (cause/effect, problem/solution, compare/contrast etc)?

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## Questions for Discussion

Be prepared with evidence to discuss the following questions with your teacher and/or classmates.

1. What is the most important point in this article?
2. What does the author think about creating human-cow embryos? How do you know?
3. What is the message in the following sentence?

"If human benefit can be derived by perfecting therapeutic cloning techniques or from research into subsequently-derived stem cells, then it would actually be immoral to prevent it just because of a 'yuck' factor."

4. What does the author mean by "undermine humanity"?
5. What is the author mean by "the end does not justify the means"?
6. Why does the author include the opinions of others and not himself?





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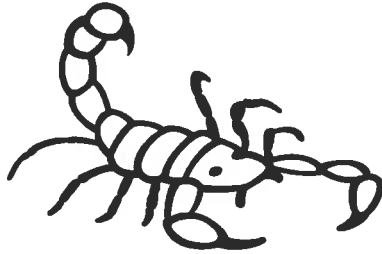
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Name \_\_\_\_\_

# The House of The Scorpion

By Nancy Farmer



## Study Guide

- Please answer all questions in complete sentences.
- Please use evidence from the story to support your answer.
- Answers without evidence will not receive full credit.

**Ch.1 – In The Beginning**

1. Describe three major events of Ch. 1, in order? How do these events relate to the theme?

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2. How does the author help you learn about the setting (time, place, season)? How does the setting relate to the theme?

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3. Explain if the “Farms” have a positive or negative connotation. How does this relate to the theme?

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4. What word from the chapter describes the tone? How does this relate to the theme?

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5. Determine the meaning of the following words, (a) “**blunt**” and (b) “**intact**” (4), and the context clues that helped to determine the meaning? How do these words relate to the theme?

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Notes

Are there any **difficult** or **vivid** vocabulary? Identify meaning based on context clues or explain how it helps visualize the author’s meaning. Document pg. #.

<u>Difficult</u>	<u>Pg.#</u>	<u>Meaning based on context</u>		<u>Vivid</u>	<u>Pg. #</u>	<u>Image author is creating</u>

What is the theme of this chapter? What evidence supports this?

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Ch. 2 – The Little House in The Poppy Fields

1. What can you infer about the way Matt punishes the stuffed animals (8)?

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2. Explain if the simile on pg. 5 is an effective comparison? Why or why not?

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3. What words does the author use to characterize Matt? How does this relate to the theme?

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4. In the following sentence, why did the author include the information inside the dashes? What is the author trying to tell the reader?

“The walls were covered with pictures Celia had torn out of magazines: movie stars, animals, babies—Matt wasn’t thrilled by the babies, but Celia found them irresistible—flowers, news stories” (8).

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5. What is the author trying to tell the reader in the following sentences? How does this relate to the theme?

“What does Steven look like?” It sometimes took a long time to steer Celia to the things Matt wanted to know—in this case, the names of the children who’d appeared outside the window” (12).

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What is the theme of this chapter? What evidence supports this?

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**Ch. 3 – Property of The Alacran Estate**

1. How does the dialogue between the children help you understand the interaction between them? How does this relate to the theme?

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2. Explain if “eejit” has a positive or negative connotation. How does this relate to the theme?

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3. How does the final event on pg. 23-24 advance the plot? How does this relate to the theme?

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4. How does the author want the reader to feel about Matt in the final event? How do you know? How does this relate to the theme?

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What is the theme of this chapter? What evidence supports this?

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**Ch. 4 – Maria**

1. What information is revealed in Chapter 4 that advances the plot? How does this relate to the theme?

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2. Explain how the connotation of the word “*deposited*” (27) affects the tone of the event? How does this relate to the theme?

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3. How is Matt characterized throughout Chapter 4? What else is characterized similarly and why? How does this relate to the theme?

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4. What does the nightmare Maria had and the story about La Llorona have in common? What can you infer from this? How does this relate to the theme?

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What is the theme of this chapter? What evidence supports this?

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**Ch. 5 – Prison**

1. Explain Matt’s strengths and weaknesses? How does this relate to the theme?

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2. Based on the last paragraph on pg. 49, what does the author want us to know about Matt? How does this relate to the theme?

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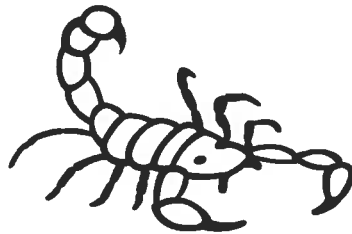
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# The House of The Scorpion

By Nancy Farmer



**Middle Age:**

**7 to 11**

**Study Guide**

- Please answer all questions in complete sentences.
- Please use evidence from the story to support your answer.
- Answers without evidence, will not receive full credit.

## **Ch.6 – El Patron**

1. How does the word “**shucked**” (52) help you visualize the author’s meaning?

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2. How does the following analogy help you understand Matt’s feelings?

“He forced his trembling legs to follow her to a part of the house as different from his old prison as the sun was from a candle” (53).

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3. Use evidence to characterize Willum, the doctor.

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4. On pg. 56, what is ironic about Rosa’s behavior towards the doctor?

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5. Explain how the dialogue helps you understand the relationship between El Patron and the other characters.

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What is the theme of this chapter? What evidence supports this?

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## Ch.7 – Teacher

1. On pg. 67, the author ends a paragraph with a dash; how does the author's use of punctuation convey meaning?

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2. Explain the meaning of the comparison being made on pg. 70, second paragraph.

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3. Use evidence to characterize the teacher.

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What is the theme of this chapter? What evidence supports this?

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## Ch.8 – The Eejit in The Dry Field

1. How does Matt react to the change in setting? How do you know?

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2. Use evidence characterize Tam Lin.

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3. Use evidence to describe how Matt changes throughout the chapter.

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What is the theme of this chapter? What evidence supports this?

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## Ch.9 – The Secret Passage

1. Explain how Matt develops throughout this chapter.

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2. Explain Mr. Ortega’s piano playing ability according to Tam Lin’s opinion, “Music has to be in the head first” (90).

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### Notes

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What is the theme of this chapter? What evidence supports this?

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**Ch.10 – A Cat with Nine Lives**

1. What is ironic about the way Matt feels compared to Tom regarding the Furball incident?

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2. Explain if the following comparison is effective or not:

“It would be trampled into oblivion by tomorrow, but now it glowed like a green jewel in the soft afternoon light” (97).

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3. How does the information about the Farmers develop the plot?

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4. What does the author want the reader to understand from the following sentence?

“I imagine *they* hoped to see me in my grave by now, but no such luck” (99).

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What is the theme of this chapter? What evidence supports this?

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**Ch.11 – The Giving and Taking of Gifts**

1. How does Matt's change throughout the chapter develop the theme?

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2. Use evidence to explain the tone of Chapter 11.

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3. Explain why the author introduces Maria's mother at the end of this chapter.

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4. What evidence does the author include that contradicts El Patron's opinion about love?

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Notes

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What is the theme of this chapter? What evidence supports this?

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## Ch.12 – The Thing on The Bed

1. Explain why Maria’s statement below is ironic in regards to the way she responds to the “thing” on the bed when Matt shouts, “Use your eyes!” (121).

Maria stormed. “Don’t you see? Adults don’t see anything wrong with those experiments” (118).

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2. Explain how Tam Lin’s “trips” develops the theme?

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3. How would the meaning of this sentence change if the author had chosen “pain” instead of “anguish”?

“It wasn’t like anything Matt had heard before, but there was no mistaking the anguish in it” (119).

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What is the theme of this chapter? What evidence supports this?

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**Ch.13 – The Lotus Pond**

1. Explain why the author has several page breaks throughout the chapter as opposed to just beginning a new chapter.

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2. How does Matt change in this chapter? And how is it related to the theme?

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3. Use evidence to explain Tom's weaknesses.

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4. Explain how Tam Lin's opinion about lying relates to the theme?

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What is the theme of this chapter? What evidence supports this?

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**Ch.14 – Celia’s Story**

1. Use evidence to compare and contrast Matt and El Patron thus far.

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2. An author usually does some research to help him/her write the text. What evidence of research do you find in this text?

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3. How does Celia’s story relate to the theme?

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4. Identify one sentence from the chapter that sums up the chapter. Copy it and then explain why.

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What is the theme of this chapter? What evidence supports this?

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