

Name: _____
Date: _____

MIDDLE AGE: 7 to 11 – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The House of the Scorpion

Directions: As you read this section, select one discussion question to answer per chapter. You may decide which question you would like to answer; but, by the end of the section, you must have answered at least two Level 3 questions. Challenge yourself! Write your responses on a blank sheet of paper. *All responses must be written in complete sentences.*

CHAPTER 6: “El Patron”

Level 1: Identify three similarities between El Patron and Matt.

Level 2: On page 63, El Patron says, “Anyone—*anyone*—who harms Matt will be dealt with severely. Do I make myself clear?” Based off this threat, what do you infer happened to Rosa? Why?

Level 3: On page 62, El Patron says, “This is my clone. He’s the most important person in my life.” Why do you think Matt is the most important person in El Patron’s life? Why would having a clone be so important to somebody?

CHAPTER 7: “Teacher”

Level 1: Contrast how Maria and Matt deal with their anger, specifically towards Tom. Based off your contrast, what can you infer about each of their characters?

Level 2: On page 70, Tam Lin uses a tree metaphor to describe El Patron, claiming that his “branches are twisted.” Explain this metaphor. What can you infer about El Patron and his history based off his “twisted branches”?

Level 3: On page 70, Tam Lin claims, “When you’re small, you can choose which way to grow.” Do you think that who you are when you are younger determines who you turn into as you grow up? Why or why not? Depending on your response, what factors most influence the individual you grow into?

CHAPTER 8: “The Eejit in the Dry Field”

Level 1: Where does Tam Lin take Matt? What does Matt discover about Farm laborers?

Level 2: How does Tam Lin feel about the Alacran family? Identify two pieces of textual evidence that justify your response.

Level 3: On page 81, what does Matt claim Maria would do if she really loved him? Do you believe that true love overcomes social expectations and/or prejudices? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 9: “The Secret Passage”

Level 1: How does Matt discover the secret passage? What do you think this foreshadows?

Level 2: Why is Matt so eager to “excel”? Do you believe that his hopes are realistic? Why or why not?

Level 3: On page 90, Tam Lin contrasts the musical talent of Matt and El Patron. What does this example say about nature vs. nurture? Based off your response, what can you predicate about the person Matt will become contrasted to the person El Patron is?

CHAPTER 10: “A Cat with Nine Lives”

Level 1: How has Matt’s label of a clone affected his perspective of himself? Support your response with textual evidence.

Level 2: Mr. MacGregor is introduced in this chapter. What is his last name an allusion to? Based off this allusion, form a prediction about his future role in the novel.

Level 3: El Patron tells his personal history at his birthday party. From this story, identify three character traits of El Patron, defending each with textual evidence.

CHAPTER 11: “The Giving and Taking of Gifts”

Level 1: How does Matt assert his authority at El Patron’s birthday party in regards to Tom? What does this reveal about Matt’s character?

Level 2: How does El Patron feel about gifts? Explain why you agree or disagree with his opinion.

Level 3: How does Matt react to Maria’s taking away of his birthday gift? Identify the consequences of his reaction in regards to Maria’s feelings, Matt’s feelings, and the guests’ feelings.

CHAPTER 12: “The Thing on the Bed”

Level 1: Matt is supposed to only participate in “risk-free” activities. What precautions are taken to ensure his safety in activities? Why do you think it is so important that Matt remains safe?

Level 2: What does Maria claim is the “dodge” people use to avoid helping others? Explain whether you agree or disagree with her claim. Use personal, social, or textual evidence to support your response.

Level 3: In the end of the chapter, Maria and Matt leave without helping the clone. Why do you think Maria was more willing to help an animal than a clone? Why do you think Matt did not help another clone?

CHAPTER 13: “The Lotus Pond”

Level 1: What has Tom done to the frog? Using this information, what can you infer actually happened to Furball?

Level 2: Tam Lin says, “I always say the truth is best even when we find it unpleasant.” Explain whether you agree or disagree with this statement. Tam Lin also says, “Lying is the most personal act of cowardice there is.” Explain whether you agree or disagree with this statement.

Level 3: On page 26, MacGregor informs El Patron that he has received a new liver and new kidneys. Return to the bottom portion of page 120. By looking at these passages together, what can you infer happened to the clone Matt saw in the hospital? Based off your response, what predication can you make about Matt’s future?

CHAPTER 14: “Celia’s Story”

Level 1: What is a “coyote”? Summarize what happened between the coyote and Celia.

Level 2: Matt claims that “safety lay in silence.” Explain whether you agree or disagree with this statement. Support your response with personal, social, or textual evidence.

Level 3: “Humans, Matt realized, were a lot harder to forgive” (138). Why do you think it is so difficult for us to forgive one another? How does true forgiveness occur?