

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## OLD AGE: 12 to 14 – 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 three Level 3 questions. Challenge yourself! Write your responses on a blank sheet of paper. *All responses must be written in complete sentences.*

#### **CHAPTER 15: “A Starved Bird”**

Level 1: What does Tam Lin leave for Matt? Why do you think Tam Lin left these items?

Level 2: How does Matt react to discovering Rosa’s transformation? Is this how you would have expected him to react? Why or why not? As a reader, what was your reaction to discovering Rosa’s transformation? Explain your response.

Level 3: How does the priest react to Matt’s presence at the church? Is this how you would expect a priest to react? Why or why not? What can you infer about religion within this society based off the priest’s reaction?

#### **CHAPTER 16: “Brother Wolf”**

Level 1: Why does Matt allow Maria to “forgive” him even though he is innocent? If you were in a situation like Matt, what would you say/do? Explain your response.

Level 2: What do Matt and Maria hear Felicia confess while hiding in the passageway? What does this tell you about Felicia’s character? As a reader, do you dislike Felicia or Tom more? Explain your response.

Level 3: What does Maria say is the reason the priest called Matt “an unbaptized limb of Satan”? Do you agree with Maria’s understandings? Explain your response.

#### **CHAPTER 17: “The Eejit Pens”**

Level 1: Retell the history of Opium.

Level 2: Why does Matt think he was created? If you could say anything to Matt right now, what would it be?

Level 3: What do we learn about the history of Tam Lin? As a reader, how have your opinions of Tam Lin changed? Explain your response.

#### **CHAPTER 18: “The Dragon Hoard”**

Level 1: On page 183, Tam Lin says, “They do say guardian angels guide the steps of idiots.” What was Matt protected from by his “guardian angel”? Do you think a “guardian angel” protected Matt? Why or why not?

Level 2: On page 183, El Patron says, “In the end they’re only rocks.” Why does El Patron say this? How does this statement connect to El Patron’s obsession with his belongings?

Level 3: What extended metaphor does Tam Lin use to discuss El Patron and his belongings? Why do you think Tam Lin uses this metaphor? What do you think Tam Lin wants Matt to walk away knowing?

## **CHAPTER 19: “Coming-of-Age”**

Level 1: What event marks that Matt has “grown up”? Why is Matt’s “growing up” so significant?

Level 2: Why does Matt say he was “blinded” to the truth? In our society, do you think that people can be “blinded” for similar reasons? Use another text to provide an example.

Level 3: What does Matt conclude is the reason El Patron kept Matt’s intelligence? Do you agree with Matt’s conclusion? Why or why not? Think of two other possibilities for why El Patron would keep Matt’s intelligence.

## **CHAPTER 20: “Esperanza”**

Level 1: What can you infer from Tam Lin’s and Celia’s discussion on page 199? Identify three inferences.

Level 2: What does Matt discover about Maria’s mother? Based off this information, do you think Maria is shaping up to be more like her father or her mother? Explain your response.

Level 3: On page 200, it says, “Matt still loved the old man, but there was no question he was evil.” Why do you think Matt still loves El Patron? Is it possible to love someone who is entirely evil? Why or why not?

## **CHAPTER 21: “Blood Wedding”**

Level 1: What does Maria tell Matt about charity work at the convent? How does this contrast what is expected at a convent? What does this tell you about religion in this society?

Level 2: Identify the series of marriages that El Patron has set in place. Why has El Patron set these marriages in place? Based off these marriages, what can you predict about future life in the world?

Level 3: On page 209, Matt tells Maria that she cannot change Tom. In response, Maria says, “Patience and love can do anything.” Do you agree with Maria? Why or why not? Use an example to justify your response.

## **CHAPTER 22: “Betrayal”**

Level 1: Why does Matt claim he cannot wish for El Patron’s death? What simile does Tam Lin use to describe Matt’s feelings toward El Patron (as told to Matt by Celia)?

Level 2: How does Emilia respond to Maria’s revealing of information concerning their mother? Based off her response, what can you infer about her character?

Level 3: How are Matt’s opinions of other characters questioned in this chapter? Based off these responses, what can you conclude about Matt’s perceptions of people?