



**“The Scorpio Races” by Maggie Stiefvater, Scholastic Press, 2011, \$17.99.**

By Amber Ovsak

While reading this book, I was reminded of a readers’ advisory conference that I recently attended, featuring Nancy Pearl as the keynote speaker. She discussed the different ways that a reader can get “hooked” into a novel. One of the “doorways” that she talked about was *setting*. There are certain novels that create such a fantastic sense of place and this was certainly one of them. Stiefvater’s beautiful and mystical island of *Thisby*, with its stunning, yet grotesque water horses creates an alluring world for the reader to cross into. Her detailed descriptions of the setting made me feel as if I could taste the salt of the Atlantic on my very own lips. I felt that

this element was the strongest “hook” for *The Scorpio Races*.

Beyond the setting, the characters were complex and dynamic as well. The heroine of the story is Kate Connelly, more commonly known as “Puck”. After suffering through a great deal of loss in her life, she decides to enter the Scorpio Races in an attempt to save her family and her home. In the midst of training for these races, she crosses paths with Sean Kendrick, who is the returning champion. Stiefvater told the story from both Sean and Puck’s perspective, which I really enjoyed. I found myself looking forward to reading Sean’s perspective because of the mystery and intrigue surrounding his character.

The relationship between Sean and the horses was also captivating. I am not a person who is naturally drawn to horses or horseback riding, but after reading this novel, I would really like to try it!

The ending was left open enough for a sequel and I REALLY hope to find out what happens next for Sean and Puck.