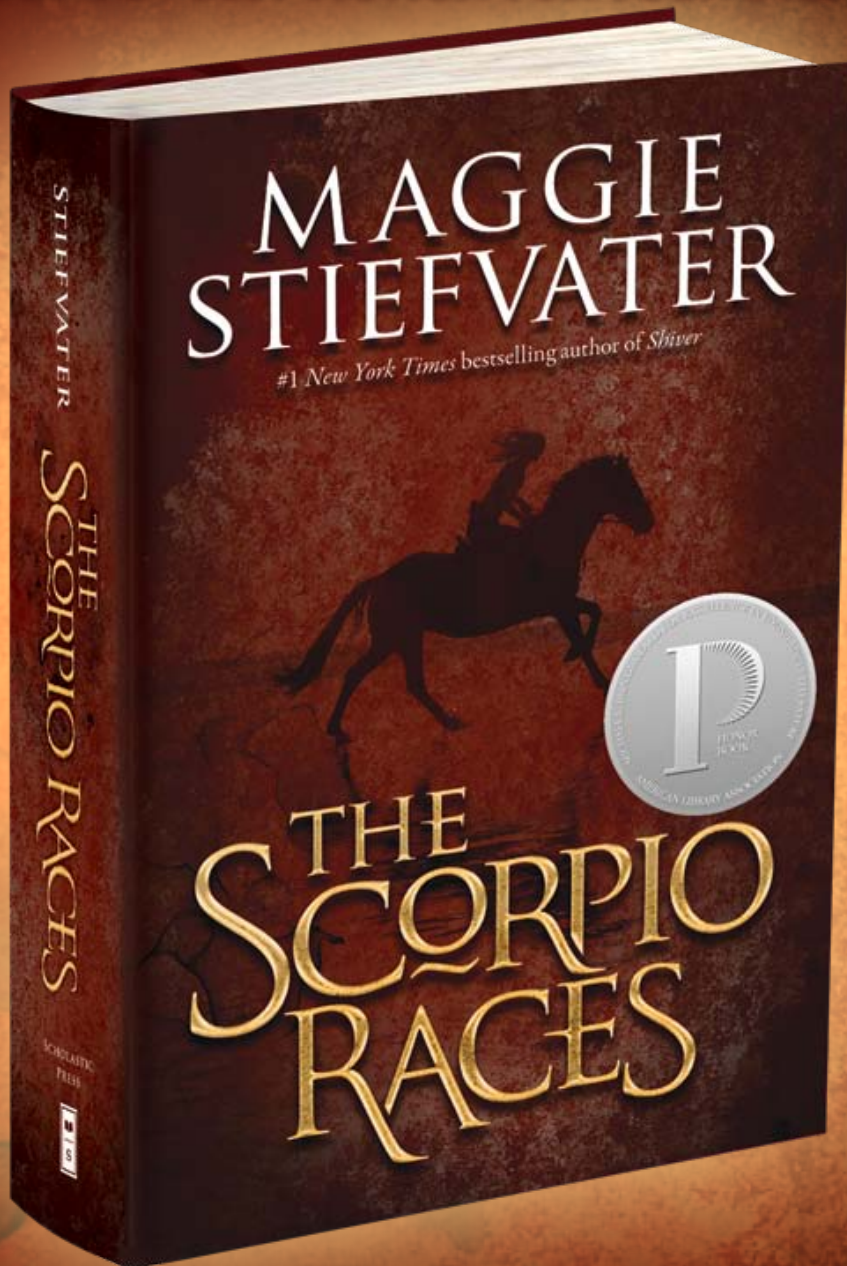
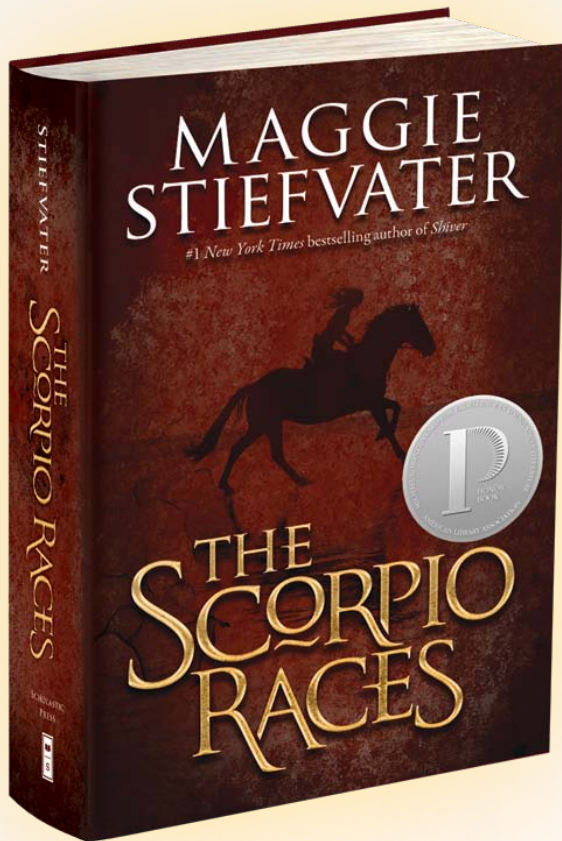


DISCUSSION GUIDE

A 2012 MICHAEL L. PRINTZ HONOR BOOK
AN ALA NOTABLE CHILDREN'S BOOK
ALA TOP TEN BEST FICTION FOR YOUNG ADULTS



- ★ "Masterful. Like nothing else out there now."—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review
- ★ "A study of courage and loyalty tested...an utterly compelling read."—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review
- ★ "An intoxicating ride."—*Horn Book*, starred review
- ★ "A book with cross-appeal to lovers of fantasy, horse stories, romance, and action-adventure."—*Booklist*, starred review
- ★ "Action, conflict, excitement, and a heart-stopping climax...marvelous."—*School Library Journal*, starred review



ABOUT THE BOOK

It happens every November—the Scorpio Races. Riders attempt to keep hold of their water horses long enough to make it to the finish line. Some riders live; many die. At nineteen, Sean Kendrick is the returning champion. He's a young man of few words, and if he has any fears, he keeps them buried deep, where no one else can see them.

Puck Connolly is different. She never meant to ride in the Scorpio Races. But fate hasn't given her much of a chance. So she enters the competition—the first girl ever to do so. She is in no way prepared for what is going to happen.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. What did Sean Kendrick notice was different about his father on the day he was killed? What would you do if you noticed a close family member or friend not acting like him or herself?
2. How many people live on Thisby? How would you describe the physical characteristics of the island, and how do they contribute to the narrative?
3. Water is prominently featured throughout the story. Name three things that the water symbolizes.
4. When they first meet, Sean tells Puck to keep her pony off the beach. Why do you think he says this to her? Was he looking out for her or only for himself?
5. The recurring themes of trust and love run throughout the story. Sean warns Puck not to trust Corr, yet he loves him. Do you think it is possible to love without trust? Why or why not?

6. There are many similarities between Puck and Sean, such as their backgrounds, hobbies, and the type of people they respect. Compare and contrast their similarities as well as their differences.
7. To calm Corr, Sean ties knots in his mane. He always ties the knots in the same sequence of numbers. What were the numbers and what do they represent?
8. Did Sean trust Corr? Do you think he should have trusted him? If you were in Sean's position would you be able to put your faith in a water horse?
9. How did Puck get the money to buy better grains to feed Dove? Do you think Puck's actions were justified? Why or why not? What would you have done if you were in Puck's situation?
10. Why do you think the author chose to use the butcher shop as the location where the townsfolk sign up for the races?
11. Why do you think Sean put up with abuse from Mr. Malvern and his son?
12. Puck's mother told her: "...sometimes obstacles were there to stop you from doing something stupid." What are some of the obstacles that Puck has had to face? Do you think Puck's mom would have supported her decision to join the race? Is there any evidence in the story that shows Puck's mom may have supported her decision to race?
13. Was Mutt Malvern jealous of Sean Kendrick, or do you think that he was just a bully?
14. Peg Gratton mentioned that she did not think everyone was meant to live on Thisby. What did she mean by this? Why did Kate feel that she was meant to stay, and Gabe was meant to leave? Have you ever felt an unexplained connection to a place?
15. Why did both Puck and Sean need the prize money from the race? Who do you think deserved it more?
16. What is a "sea wish"? Do you think "sea wishes" are good or evil? If you could make a "sea wish," what would it be?
17. What is the significance of Mr. Malvern, a thoroughbred breeder, having a son nicknamed "Mutt"?

18. Peg Gratton performed a pre-race ritual after the parade. She said: "...if you feed the island blood before the race, maybe she won't take as much during it." What was the ritual, and what do you think she meant with her cryptic comment?
19. Puck tells Sean, "The tourists always seem to want something. On Thisby it's less about wanting, and more about being." What do you think she feels are the differences between "wanting" and "just being?"
20. After Tommy Falk died, his father asked Sean to give his horse "back to the sea." What did he mean by this and how did Sean do it? Why do you think Mr. Falk did not ask Gabe to do this instead?
21. Puck said that Dove is "my mare and my best friend, and I keep waiting for something bad to happen to her because I love her too much." Why do you think that Puck has such a fatalistic view of the world?
22. Mutt used drastic methods to sabotage Sean. Have you ever felt that someone was out to get you? How did that make you feel? Did you do anything to stop them?
23. Why did Puck think that riding a water horse in the race was disloyal to her parents?
24. Benjamin Malvern is depicted as a spiteful, mean, and unloving man. Does he have any good qualities? Do you think that a person can be truly bad?
25. Sean shares his winning strategy with Puck: "There are many people on horseback trying to prove themselves. They haven't discovered yet that it's not the fastest who made it to race day. You only have to be the fastest of those who are left." Explain Sean's theory. Do you agree or disagree with it? Did Puck follow his advice?
26. George Holly was an outsider, yet he seemed to take the place of Sean's father. In many ways he was the antithesis of Benjamin Malvern. Compare and contrast the two men's personalities and their actions toward Sean.
27. Who did you think had the biggest advantage in the Scorpio Races? Do you think it's easier to compete at something as the frontrunner or the underdog? Have you ever felt this pressure?
28. Throughout the story, Sean's words and actions inspire Puck. Describe two of these instances.

29. When Puck goes to settle her debt with Mr. Malvern, she also asks him for a job. Why does she want to work for him? Is this something that you think you could ever do? Why or why not?
30. What is the significance of Sean's statement: "My father rode him and my father lost him, and then I found him again. He's the only family I have."
31. Why do you think Corr returned to Sean instead of returning to the sea?
32. If you were in Sean's position and had to race against Puck in a Scorpio Race, how would you feel? Would you want to beat her?
33. How did the Scorpio Races help the people of Thisby? Were there any negative consequences from the tourists coming to town? Would you consider visiting Thisby if you could?
34. How does reading both Puck's and Sean's narratives make the story more complete? How would the story have been different if the reader only heard it told from either Puck's or Sean's point-of-view?
35. When Corr stayed with Sean in the water, he saved his life and proved his devotion to Sean. When Sean released Corr back into the sea, he showed his love for Corr in return. Sometimes we have to let animals and people go even if we love them. Do you agree with this? Has there ever been a time when you had to let someone or something go even though you didn't want to?
36. Do you think that Thisby should hold the Scorpio Races every year? Do you think the races truly preserve the culture, or is it a dangerous and archaic tradition? What would you do if you lived on Thisby—would you race?
37. What year does *The Scorpio Races* take place—do you think it takes place in the past or the future? Does the author give any clues as to what year it is? Cite examples to back your theory.
38. Why did the author choose to call this book *The Scorpio Races*? What does the word "Scorpio" have to do with the story? Come up with an alternate title, and explain your thoughts on choosing it.

COMPARISONS

You can have interesting discussions comparing the themes in the following books to those in *The Scorpio Races*.

Kendare Blake. *Anna Dressed in Blood*. Tor Teen, 2011.

Teen ghost haunts her earthly home, but when Cas, a teen ghost-slayer who follows legends and local lore finds Anna, they both get more than they bargained for.

Martha Brockenbrough. *Devine Intervention*. Scholastic, 2012. A wayward angel-trainee and an awkward teen girl named Heidi have to make a series of wrongs right before Heidi loses her soul forever.

Suzanne Collins. *The Hunger Games*. Scholastic Press, 2008.

***Catching Fire*. Scholastic Press, 2009. *Mockingjay*. Scholastic Press, 2010.**

Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen lives in the post-apocalyptic country of Panem—where she single-handedly takes on the government and leads a revolution.

Becca Fitzpatrick. *Hush, Hush*. Simon & Schuster, 2009.

***Silence*. Simon & Schuster, 2011. *Crescendo*. Simon & Schuster, 2012.**

After getting paired together in biology, Nora knows that she should stay away from the mysterious Patch, who always seems to be two steps ahead of her.

Michelle Hodkin. *The Unbecoming of Mara Dyer*. Simon and Schuster, 2011.

A teen finds herself in a hospital with no memory of how she got there.

Lauren Oliver. *Delirium*. HarperCollins, 2010. *Pandemonium*. HarperCollins, 2012.

People are taught to fear and are cured of love in future America.

Ransom Riggs. *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*. Quirk Books, 2011.

A mysterious island, an abandoned orphanage, and a very strange collection of photos are waiting for Jacob to discover them.

Veronica Roth. *Divergent*. Katherine Tegen Books, 2011.

***Insurgent*. Katherine Tegen Books, 2012.**

Tris's initiation day should have been a celebration; instead, her choice and its consequences cause unspeakable and unchangeable horrors.

Maggie Stiefvater. *Shiver*. Scholastic Press, 2009. *Linger*. Scholastic Press, 2010. *Forever*. Scholastic Press, 2011.

When Grace falls in love with Sam, a boy who becomes a wolf every winter, both must decide how much they're willing to risk in order to be together.

Laini Taylor. *Daughter of Smoke and Bone*. Little, Brown and Company, 2011.

Karu fills her sketchbooks with monsters that may or may not be real. She disappears on mysterious errands, speaks many languages—not all of them human, and her natural hair color is bright blue. So, who is she? That's what she is about to find out.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maggie Stiefvater is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Shiver*, *Linger*, and *Forever*. Since publication, rights to thirty-five foreign editions of *Shiver* have been licensed. Maggie is also the author of *Lament: The Faerie Queen's Deception* and *Ballad: A Gathering of Faerie*. *The Raven Boys*, the first book in her new series, the Raven Cycle, is published in September, 2012. An avid reader, award-winning artist, and accomplished musician, Maggie lives in Virginia with her husband and their two children. You can visit her online at www.maggiestiefvater.com.



The Scorio Races

Hardcover: 978-0-545-22490-1 \$17.99

Audiobook: 978-0-545-35702-9 \$39.99

Also available in September 2012

The Raven Boys

Hardcover: 978-0-545-42492-9 \$17.99

Books may be ordered from any bookseller or your usual vendor.
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2931 East McCarty Street, P.O. Box 7502, Jefferson City, MO 65102,
or call toll-free 1-800-724-6527.

Discussion guide written by Mary Kate Doman.

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