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Young Adult Literature

Mr. Sispera

How the House of the Scorpion is an Accurate Representation of Today

The “House of the Scorpion” follows the story of a human clone named Matt’s child and teenage years as a clone of a wealthy drug lord. Matt eventually realizes what his purpose is, and begins to think of a way to escape. He struggles through people treating him as though he were an animal. Also, due to the fact that he is a “harvested” specimen of society, he doesn’t receive the respect that a normal person would. Several events that occurred in the story are happening today, such as: drugs, plankton farms, rebellions, experiments with human cloning, a dictatorial society in Aztlan, the household must live in an old-fashioned way, and the segregation that Matt faces because he is a clone.

One of the first ways in which the “House of the Scorpion is similar to today, is by the selling and buying of drugs in Mexico, and around the world. In the story, eejits are forced to harvest drugs from the poppies that grow in the fields around Opium. El Patron is the Drug Lord of Opium, and has gained his money from selling drugs around the world. Just like El Patron, there are several wealthy drug lords in Mexico today, including El Chacho, who earned a fortune of over 10 million dollars selling drugs. He was the world’s

biggest drug lord, and controlled several drug factories.

Source:<http://abcnews.go.com/International/el-chapos-capture-meet-worlds-wanted-drug-lords/story?id=22648404>

A second way in which “The House of the Scorpion” is similar to today, is the plankton farms around the world. Several plankton farms exist today, in parts of Spain and Europe. Plankton has played an important role in history as well. During World War 2, the British Government had plans to feed the population on plankton harvested from Scottish Channels to feed the people in the event of a food shortage. In similarity, Matt and the boys that lived with him were fed plankton, because it was the only food source available. The Keepers use the plankton in various different ways, and the boys’ job is to keep the plankton tanks clean. Plankton feeds off of sunlight in the ocean through a processes known as photosynthesis. Plankton is a good source of protein, and is a major part of what sustains the food chain in the ocean.

Source:<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-two/9099881/Wartime-population-facced-eating-plankton-to-avert-food-shortages.html>

A third way in which “The House of the Scorpion” is similar to today, is the rebellion that went on in the story between Matt and the boys, and the Keepers. Matt and the boys tried several times to rebell against the Keepers, and even going so far as to overdose them

with Ladium. Today, rebellions have recently took place in Hong Kong as a result of students demanding an end to several years of Chinese oppression and control. The name of this rebellion is The Umbrella Revolution. Students are marching through the capital with signs, and umbrellas, protesting that they should be able to have control over their government.

Source:<http://news.yahoo.com/katie-couric-now-i-get-it-umbrella-revolution-175949877.html>

A fourth way in which “The House of the Scorpion is an accurate representation of today, is by the dictatorial societies that exist in “The House of the Scorpion” world. In the story, the “modern” Aztalan was controlled by a government, who instituted the 4 Principles of Right Mindfulness into the heads of the young. You were not considered a full “citizen” until you turned 18 and had worked for several years. If you met all of these guidelines, then you were accepted into society. Much like that society, dictatorial governments exist today. These governments install certain ideas into the heads of the children in their country. A good example of this would be Communist China. This dictatorial government promoted the idea of a children’s army, which set out to “Correct Mistaken Ideas”. They handed out copies of “The Little Red Book”, which promoted Communistic ideas, and was the guide for the Red Army to follow.

Source:http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/special_report/1999/09/99/china_50/little.htm

A fifth way in which “The House of the Scorpion” is similar to today, is that they live in old fashioned conditions. El Patron doesn’t allow modern conveniences like air conditioning or a stove. Celia must cook on a wooden stove, and the TV’s all play reruns of shows that occurred decades before. Similarly, the Amish culture of today, doesn’t allow modern conveniences like air conditioning, cars, or electronics. Some Amish are more lenient, but others forbid any type of technology. They live strictly by a code that they must not violate, or they will be disowned from their families.

Source:http://pittsburgh.about.com/cs/pennsylvania/a/amish_2.htm

A sixth way in which “The House of the Scorpion” is similar to today, is by the hatred against clones, or people who look and act different. Matt is treated very rudely, just because he is a clone, and isn’t the same as everyone else. He is forced to live in a dirty room, and is thought of as a disease or dirty being, that will make everyone sick. Similarly, in the 1960’s, black people were treated very badly. After the establishment of the Jim Crow law in the 1950’s, blacks were given very few rights. They were forced to give up the best seats on the bus, and were expected to let whites have the best of everything. They weren’t allowed to attend the same schools as white children, and they couldn’t even drink

from the same drinking fountain.

Source: <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/freedom/1917beyond/essays/crm.htm>

To conclude, it is not incorrect to think that “The House of the Scorpion” is a very accurate representation of today. Many of the events that occurred in the story are occurring as we speak. As technological advances become more and more common, our society becomes harder to control. Is it possible, that we could someday see clones walking the street? I think it is very interesting to wonder if we would treat clones the same as we treat ourselves. It is both scary and interesting to think that someday, our society could turn into the same type of society as the one shown in Opium.