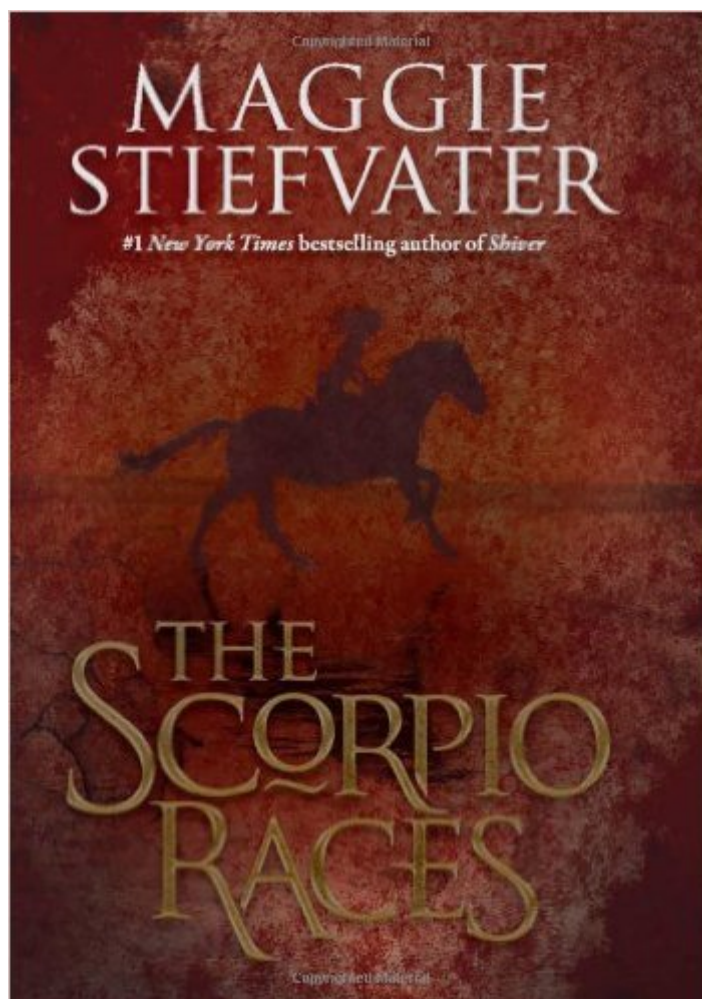


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The Scorpio Races



Synopsis

From the #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Shiver* and *Linger* comes a brand new, heartstopping novel. Some race to win. Others race to survive. It happens at the start of 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. Others die. At age nineteen, Sean Kendrick is the returning champion. He is 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 choice. So she enters the competition - the first girl ever to do so. She is in no way prepared for what is going to happen. As she did in her bestselling *Shiver* trilogy, author Maggie Stiefvater takes us to the breaking point, where both love and life meet their greatest obstacles, and only the strong of heart can survive. *The Scorpio Races* is an unforgettable reading experience.

Book Information

Hardcover: 416 pages

Publisher: Scholastic Press (October 18, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 054522490X

ISBN-13: 978-0545224901

Product Dimensions: 1.2 x 6 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (658 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #199,464 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #23 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Sports > Equestrian](#) #548 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Survival Stories](#) #942 in [Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Paranormal & Urban](#)

Customer Reviews

Maggie Stiefvater's *The Scorpio Races* takes readers to the small island of Thisby, a place where nothing is earned easily, whether it be money or respect. Sean Kendrick has found that out himself, scraping by as a stable worker. He's no ordinary stable hand, however, since he is the only one able to truly control the fearsome capaill uisce, the carnivorous water horses that emerge from the sea. Each year, Sean races his beloved water horse, Corr, in the potentially deadly Scorpio Races. Despite the odds in his favor, there's much more at stake in this year's race. Puck Connolly,

on the other hand, never meant to go near the Scorpio Races, but her own hard luck has changed that. As the two navigate the difficult paths given to them, they must decide which risks are worth taking. *THE SCORPIO RACES* stands out as Stiefvater's most well-written book to date. Her writing remains beautiful and evocative, and it does so this time without ever feeling overdone. She constructs a palpable sense of mood and place using her words, and the characters have authentic personalities and motivations based on what's shared about their pasts. Certain emotional and haunting scenes have stayed with me long after I finished, and I got goosebumps while reading more times than I could count. As a standalone novel, the story was satisfying and complete in itself, and the aching closing scene had me thinking about it for days. Other strong points of the novel included its unique water horse mythology (which was explained well without too much telling) and the focus on the strengths of Sean and Puck and the meaningful relationship each had with his or her horse. When a romance did surface, it was reflective of the characters involved and based on mutual respect and admiration. Despite these strengths, I wasn't able to give the book five stars due to a few weak points. The story was very slow in the beginning and didn't pick up until about page 160. Told in alternating first-person perspectives, the voices also felt too similar at times. Though this is the best book overall that I've read from Stiefvater, I didn't get caught up in the characters and their emotions like I did in her faerie books (*Lament: The Faerie Queen's Deception* (*Gathering of Faerie*) and *Ballad: A Gathering of Faerie*). I expect that this story will appeal to a smaller audience than her *Shiver* (*Wolves of Mercy Falls*) novels due to its focus on the human-horse relationships and its slow pacing and quiet romance. Even with these few small qualms, I greatly enjoyed *THE SCORPIO RACES* because of its gorgeous writing, tangible sense of place, and strong, resilient characters. After reading this, I can't wait to see what Stiefvater's two forthcoming standalone novels will bring. It feels like her work will continue to get better and better. Note: This review refers to an advance reader's copy.

Maggie Stiefvater has already mastered faeries and werewolves. But in "The Scorpio Races," she turns her sights to a more obscure supernatural creature -- deadly Celtic water-horses -- and wraps them in a story of blood, sea mist and windswept beaches. While the story itself is rather slow to unfold, it gives Stiefvater lots of time to flesh out her teen riders. On a small Irish island, there is a special race every November. Many men and boys ride the *capaill uisce* (pronounced "coppie ooshka") -- the swift, beautiful, bloodthirsty water horses, which want to either drown their riders or eat their flesh. They often succeed. Puck is the first girl to ever enter the race, but terrible memories make her reluctant to accept a *capaill uisce*, so she decides to ride her land mare, Dove. If she

doesn't win, she and her brothers will lose their home. Sean Kendrick is a boy with a special knack with the *capaill uisce*. He catches, trains and sometimes kills the water horses, and no one knows their ways better than he does. But as the race approaches, both the young riders are confronted by terrible problems -- the entire village is opposed to Puck racing, and Sean clashes with his cold, cruel employer over a prize stallion. And even as Sean and Puck grow closer, they begin to fall in love... but only one of them can possibly win the race. "The Scorpio Races" is a story rich with Irish atmosphere -- salt spray, grey stones, ancient rituals and a tradition reaching back further than memory. And unlike most teen fantasies, this one doesn't have supernatural creatures who look like sexy teenage boys -- the *capaill uisce* are violent, wild beasts who crave blood and the sea, evoking both terror and awe. Like her *Wolves of Mercy Falls* trilogy, Stiefvater alternates between Sean and Puck's perspectives, giving us different glimpses of their lives. The only problem with the plot is that it moves very slowly, but Stiefvater splashes it with stormy action scenes and a climax that races by at lightning speed. And her prose is simply exquisite -- one *capaill uisce* is "a fearful dull Pegasus with disintegrating wings of sea foam" and teeth "the color of dead coral." Stiefvater also crafts a pair of truly compelling lead characters -- Puck is a fierce, strong-willed young woman hurt by the loss of her family, and unwilling to let anyone tell her what she can't do. And Sean is a near-silent young man who has an innate touch with all horses, and a passionate connection to the stallion Corr. Their romance is handled delicately, with few words and lots of horse-training; it's also unusually complicated, since they both desperately need to win the race, but only one can. While recognizable in its poetic prose and haunting tone, "The Scorpio Races" is unlike any other book Stiefvater -- or other paranormal-romance writers -- have ever created. Slow but sublime.

This is the story of a girl named Puck who lives on an island with her two brothers. Their parents were killed by these terrible "water horses" (fantasy horses who live in the sea and are ravenous), and so Puck and her two brothers are left to try to survive on their own. When Puck decides that she must ride in the Scorpio Races, she has no idea what she has signed up for. Cut-throat competitors, male chauvinistic pigs, and surprise ally. The Scorpio Races was unlike anything I've read all year. Not only in terms of the story but mostly in the way that it was written. Maggie Stiefvater has a way with words. Her beautiful prose and luxurious writing style are second to none. If you've read *Shiver*, then you know what I'm talking about. The Scorpio Races' writing was so refined and so exquisite and yet, I don't think that many people will enjoy this read as much as I did. And it saddens me to say that because I really did love this book. This book is not one for someone who is looking for a great love story where the characters are made for each other; where they pine for each other

throughout the entire book. It is not an angsty read and if you're looking for a "romance novel", this is not it. It IS, however, a wonderful journey and although it may start out rather slow and confusing, once you're aware of what is going on you'll be dying to find out how it all ends. I think I would recommend this for older YA readers, just because the characters are a little bit older and mature. It might be hard for a 12 year old to connect to the story. Also, it's hard to say "if you liked this book, then you might like The Scorpio Races" so instead I'll say if you're looking for a good story and aren't looking for romance, then you'd enjoy this one.

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