

The Scorpion

Ninos M. Piro

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A person could be on one path only to wake up to a new calling. *The Scorpion's* protagonist, Marcus Pirelli, is a bounty hunter superhero of Ocean City. When his beloved Stephanie is killed, Pirelli decides to change his line of work. Instead of hunting down people running from bail, he, his sister, and his loyal group of friends and coworkers decide to fight the darkest types of crime: the serial killer who killed his love, the power-hungry mobs or gangs, and the questionable characters that corrupt the area police.

The dialogue in this story is sharp and fast: The characters' interactions are fun to watch because the relationships are deep and loyal. From the start, the community is shown when Pirelli's friends and sister come together after Stephanie's death. They are there for him, no questions asked. Pirelli's friend Jefferson, an ex-car thief says it best, "Vigilantes with a cause, I like the sound of that." Indeed, the thought of a ragtag group of ex-thieves coming together to fight crime is an interesting and complicated concept on which to center this book.

Piro does a fine job describing the mechanics involved with tracking down and dealing with killers and corruption. With experts in nearly every field, Pirelli's team knows how to hunt down even the most skilled thief or renegade. This makes the plot that much more exciting. This writer knows how to create a scene: everything from the discussion of hair follicles to the actual hunt for Stephanie's killer is explained using sharp language.

A lot is packed into a small space. The reader moves very quickly from the opening murder scene to Pirelli's decision to fight crime. Thus, important moments like Marcus's grieving or the decision he makes are glossed over to get to the action and scenes. Similarly, clumps of description fill many of the early pages. Piro provides the reader with a baseball-card-like description of people's features. This can be overwhelming at times, especially with so much action thrown into the pot.

Like an action film and thriller linked together, the reader can never be sure which road Piro will take his characters down. In Ocean City, Pirelli is both scorpion and angel: the sharpness of the sting is deadly, but the intentions of this character are pure and good. This duplicity is what makes the book so enjoyable and interesting. Pirelli is the kind of character that could span many volumes or sequels. To see this scorpion evolve is a joy readers will relish.

LISA BOWER (February 7, 2011)

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