

Reader Information Guide

Daniel Scratch: a story of witchkind

Approximate Reading Grade Level

- **Grade Level: 6th – 8th Grade**
- **Rationale:** The prose is sophisticated but accessible, utilizing a first-person narrative with a clear, reflective voice. While the vocabulary includes genre-specific terms (e.g., *mausoleum*, *adherent*, *incorporeal*) and invented terminology for magic, the sentence structure remains straightforward

Recommended Grade Level for Readers

- **Recommendation: Grades 9 and up (Ages 14+)**
- **Themes and Content:** Although the writing style fits a middle-grade profile, the author explicitly notes that this "preferred edition" is darker than the original Young Adult version. It explores existential isolation, the burden of immense power, and the grim realities of death

Trigger Warnings & Sensitive Content

- **Death of Parents/Family:** The protagonist is a lonely thirteen-year-old living in a "mausoleum-like" home following the death of his father and the institutionalization and subsequent death of his mother
- **Grief and Isolation:** Significant portions of the narrative focus on Daniel's extreme solitude and his struggle with being the "last living member of a once proud family"
- **Child Neglect:** The protagonist is left entirely alone in a large estate from age ten to thirteen with only supernatural servants for company
- **Violence and Corpse Handling:** Later chapters include scenes of mass death, specifically the transport and burning of "more than a score of bodies" (both human and witchkind)
- **Physical Pain/Immolation:** A scene describes the protagonist experiencing the sensation of being burned alive by magical fire, described as "searing my skin, boiling my blood, and melting my hair"

Racy, Adult, or Spicy Content

- **Synopsis:** The novel contains **no racy or "spicy" content**. There are no sexual scenes or explicit romantic encounters¹². The protagonist experiences "enraptured" feelings and jealousy when observing a girl from a distance, but these interactions remain entirely chaste and focused on his internal feelings of loneliness

Themes for Parents of Under-18 Readers

- **The Weight of Responsibility:** Daniel is "Chosen" for a powerful role (the Sixth Axis) that involves death and destruction, forcing a young teenager to grapple with the morality of his own power
- **Institutional Corruption:** The "Proctors" and the prison "Witchhold" are presented as cold institutions that failed to help Daniel's mother and left a child abandoned
- **Moral Ambiguity:** The "adherents" of magic often live in solitude and make "sad decisions" that affect whole villages, reflecting a world where there are rarely easy "good vs. evil" answers
- **Family Legacy:** Much of the story revolves around the "sins of the father" and the pressure of living up to (or breaking away from) a family's ancient, sometimes dark, history