



Esperanza Rising

Pam Muñoz Ryan

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Esperanza thought she'd always live with her family on their ranch in Mexico--she'd always have fancy dresses, a beautiful home, and servants. But a sudden tragedy forces Esperanza and Mama to flee to California during the Great Depression, and to settle in a camp for Mexican farm workers. Esperanza isn't ready for the hard labor, financial struggles, or lack of acceptance she now faces. When their new life is threatened, Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances--Mama's life, and her own, depend on it.

Esperanza Rising Details

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Author : Pam Muñoz Ryan

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Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Young Adult, Fiction, Childrens, Middle Grade, Cultural

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From Reader Review Esperanza Rising for online ebook

||Swaroop|| says

"*Aguántate tantito y la fruta caerá en tu mano*," her father said. "Wait a little while and the fruit will fall into your hand. You must be patient, Esperanza."

Esperanza Rising is my 2nd book of Pam Muñoz Ryan. The 1st book was the awesome Echo.

Esperanza Rising has been a wonderful read. One of the first thoughts I had, after finishing the book, was that, this book should have been slightly more longer.

Did you know if you lie down on the ground and stay very still, you can feel the Earth's heart beating?

This book is the story of Esperanza Ortega, whose life changes from a Fairytale existence to one filled with hardships and difficulties. It is about the changing attitudes of Esperanza and her understanding of Life.

In Spanish, Esperanza means **Hope!!!**

There is no rose without thorns...

This story is about Faith, Belief, Dreams, Hope and Survival!

The greatest message of this book is:

Do not ever be afraid to start over...

Linda says

I'm well aware of the privileges I hold simply by accident of birth. And I'm also aware that a turn of circumstance, like devastating illness or unemployment, could suddenly take away many of the comforts I take for granted.

Esperanza is an adolescent girl who suddenly has to face a future where all the things in her life are suddenly taken away from her. It's the story of her new perspective, her new path forward.

It's also a story of immigration, of racism, of classism, of family. It's the story of migrant farm workers fighting for decent wages and humane working conditions.

It's a big, beautifully told story, full of hope, packed into a short novel.

I especially liked the author's afterword, where she talked about her own family history that inspired the book.

And it's very concerning that some of the worst attitudes and policies toward immigrants depicted in this book and in the afterword are being propagated again with a vengeance by our current administration.

My daughter thought it was boring.

Whitney Price says

English 425 Submitter's name _Whitney Price_____

Book Bank Book Bank subject: __Group 3_Book_

Reference information:

Title Esperanza Rising

Author Pam Munoz Ryan

Publisher Scholastic Press Year 2000

of pages 253 Genre Fiction

Reading level Interest level 13-15

Potential hot lava:

racism

General response/reaction:

My first response to this book was that I wanted it to be longer. I wanted to read more about the relationships Esperanza makes and to see if anything evolves between her and Miguel. I really enjoyed this book. It would be an amazing multi-cultural book to use in the classroom. It uses Spanish words and phrases but also tells you what each one means. It shows how racism is bad and how it hurts people. It shows how people should not be treated a different way just because of their background. It is not only a great story, but it teaches a great lesson. I think this book would most likely attract teenage girls. The themes seem to be more girl orientated. I also suggest this book to children who understand racism and how it is bad. A good way to introduce this book could be during a social studies lesson about the Mexican culture or about how Hispanics come to the United States and how hard they work for a living.

Subjects, Themes, and Big Ideas:

Family is a huge theme in this story. It shows how much one needs their family. Esperanza almost became the mother once her mom got sick. She had to take care of two babies. She had to rely on another family to help her get through it all. Growing up is a big subject. Esperanza has to grow up fast once she reaches the United States. She had to take care of babies, do chores, watch over her mama, and she eventually goes out and works the fields. Her character developed greatly throughout the story and by the end, you realize how much she does care for those people around her.

Characters:

Esperanza is the main character. She grew up as a very rich girl in Mexico, then after the death of her father, she is forced to move to the United States and live as a poor girl. Romona is her mother who has a heart of gold. Even after she is forced to live the poor life, she still treats everyone kindly and respects everyone. Abuelita is the grandmother, and cannot go to the United States at first due to a swollen ankle she sustained in the house fire. Miguel is the son of Alfonso and Hortensia. He was a couple years older than Esperanza and they grew up together. Alfonso is an old friend of Esperanza's father and was in charge of all the field workers. Hortensia was the wife Alfonso, and the care taker of Esperanza. Senor Rodriguez is an old friend who helps them escape Mexico. Isabel is the cousin of Miguel and quickly becomes Esperanza's friend in the United States. Josefine and Juan are Miguel's aunt and uncle and arranged for them all to come to the United States and to have a place to live. Marta is the trouble maker of the camp, who wants to strike, and makes fun of Esperanza. Irene and Melina are two women who live on the campsite who end up befriend

Esperanza and helping her with the babies

Plot summary:

Esperanza lived a very rich life style in Mexico until her father is killed. They run away to Mexico with the help of their friends, but Esperanza is afraid she will not be able to adjust to the life style of being poor and does not know how she will live without her Abuelita. Her mama gets sick and Esperanza must work to earn money to pay the bills and to save up for Abuelita to come to the United States. Her mom ends up surviving and her Abuelita finally comes to the United States with the help of her friend Miguel.

Strengths (including reviews and awards):

Pura Belpre Award,

2001 ALA Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults

Smithsonian Best Books 2000

Publisher's Weekly Best Children's Books 2000

L.A. Times Best Books of 2000

Drawbacks or other cautions:

A huge caution could be the use of racism throughout the book. It shows how Hispanics were looked down upon and how people did not care. It also shows how other minorities were looked down on and how they were treated unfairly and placed into crowded camps.

Teaching ideas:

- One idea could be based around teaching about Mexico and their different customs.
- One could teach about the Mexican revolution and how it affected the country and all the people.
- Since fruit is a huge part of the story, you could bring in the different types of fruits and vegetables mentioned in the book.
- They could discuss how illegal immigrants cause a strain on the economy but how helpful they can be at the same time.
- One could have the students write a different ending to the story.
- Since family is a huge part of the story, each student could do a little presentation on their family and why they are so important.
- As a class, you could discuss different types of strikes that have happened throughout United States history.
- A teacher could lead a discussion about racism and how it affected the United States and why it is wrong.

Xueting says

What a beautiful and beautifully simple story! I love the angles of perspective, the rich culture and largely ignored history of the Mexican repatriation, that the author explores. It's even better to learn that the author based the story largely on very true events of her grandmother's time. Esperanza is a lovely young heroine who matures so believably and admirably. I really like that she started as a pretty ignorant, hot-tempered and slightly spoiled child, so we can see that the Mexicans don't all suffer and have tragic pasts, they also have wonderful memories of comfort (not luxury but happy times). The Spanish in the book didn't hurt at all too, helped me to learn a bit more. Can't wait to read more from this author!!!

Jenny says

An inspiring story of struggle, hardship, and hope, *Esperanza Rising* gave me and my children much to discuss. This is a great work of historical fiction for children based on the life of the author's grandmother.

Esperanza, the daughter of a wealthy landowner, and her mother must leave their home in Mexico and start over as farm workers in California after the death of her father. Set in the early 1930's, this book gives you a feel for the struggles of the Great Depression as well as California History. Filled with Spanish phrases and words, it's a great introduction to learning Spanish and shows many cultural aspects as well.

This book is rich with ideas for great discussions on empathy, economics, labor unions, race relations, prejudice, rights, family, choices, hope, attitude, work, pride, and kindness. Make sure you keep tissues by as you read. I don't usually cry when reading, but this book brought my tears to the surface again and again making it difficult to read aloud to my kids. It's a sweet book about hard work, love, and hope.

Rebecca says

A wonderful story. I listened to the audiobook but I want to read it again with a paper copy at some point.

Catherine says

I wanted to like this book, but I struggled with liking the characters. There was not one character I really cared about. I found I cared more about the roses they were transplanting than the people who were transplanted. I did like the growth I saw in *Esperanza*.

This story was too didactic. Munoz didn't trust her reader enough to figure out what was right; she felt she had to tell them. She also had too many plot lines going that seemed to go nowhere at all. Murdered father, greedy and mean uncles wanting to marry mom and send child away, illegal immigration, mom in hospital, boy she likes but talks down to, strike and work unfairness, dust storms, Oakies coming to take their jobs, racism, etc - not one of which was addressed adequately. I felt like this story was all over the place. This seemed like a watered-down, rose-colored glasses *Grapes of Wrath*. Did the family end up okay? They now have a new mouth to feed and limited jobs, but everything will be okay? A thirteen year old girl would not have made enough money during that time period to pay her mother's hospital bills, support herself, and save money to bring Grandma to California - too unrealistic.

Naz (Read Diverse Books) says

I adored *Esperanza*, her family, and their story. <3

Michelle says

I just finished this book with my class today...couldn't read that last sentence because I cried...the kids cried too. That hasn't happened to me before with a read aloud...great story.

S says

This book was, I suppose, a good educational read: rather a beginner's *Grapes of Wrath* from a Mexican perspective. It covers very difficult issues of race, class difference, child labor and death with tact and a certain amount of gentleness.

But overall after I was finished I could not help but be faced with the difficult feeling that Esperanza, while being an incredibly strong young woman and a good role model in that sense, often overlooks the immorality and unfairness of her situation in order to continue living and doing what she has to do. I mean, that's a totally valid theme and it's in many ways honorable of her but given the horrible situation she's in, there are a lot of questions that arise. Esperanza is a 13-year old pulled out of school, subjected to backbreaking and agonizing child labor and essentially orphaned. This is a terrible situation for a child to be in, but the close of the book lauds Esperanza for the great, strong person that she has become for her hard work. Look! She knows how to cook now! Look! She knows how to work hard instead of being pampered! Look! She no longer has any selfish wants or needs!

If Esperanza were 18 or even 16 that sort of might fly, but the fact of the matter is that she is 13. She should not be in that situation and there is very little outrage towards the fact that she's in it. What makes it so especially questionable is the way that the strikers were portrayed. They were demonized--Marta, the main girl who attempts to lead the strikes and revolts (? I think that's her name) is looked at as Esperanza's opposite. Lazy, mean-spirited, angry, and violent. And later she is punished for her sins. All of the strikers are. For standing up and saying that children should not have to work, that humane housing and sanitation conditions should be met, that everyone should be paid a living wage. They are all arrested and deported, and afterwards Esperanza and her family are safe, saying, "We are loyal to the company, so the company takes care of us." Oh, is that so? Where is the company when the dust storms happen and the workers are trapped in the blistering wind? Where is the company when the children have blistered hands from peeling starchy potatoes? Where is the company when Esperanza's mother nearly dies because of horrible working conditions and Esperanza is forced to pay for her medical bills?

In fact, every time that there is a fight in the book and the battle between working and dealing with unfairness vs. fighting for a better world, working always wins out. I'm really not comfortable with the fact that the main themes of the book seem to be: "Life sucks--plug on and deal with it," rather than "Enact real, lasting social change so that life doesn't quite suck so bad for future generations." Esperanza in the end realizes that she essentially has no future and will never return to an education--it tops out at if she's lucky, she might be able to buy a very small house. And yet she has learned to be happy with that.

I'm sorry, but I'm not.

Brina says

I read and lesson planned this book when I student taught Spanish I to 7th and 8th graders. Any review I write will not do the book justice because it's been a long time and deserving of a reread. Definitely a great learning tool and Hispanic historical novel to read to middle school students.

Courtney says

Though Esperanza comes from a privileged background, she and her mother are forced to flee Mexico after her father dies. She must work as a farm laborer (despite her upbringing and education) in southern California during the Great Depression.

The characterization is lovely; they are well rounded with realistic concerns and struggles. This novel illuminates the unique plight of Mexican-American laborers during the Great Depression, including forced deportation, labor strikes, competition from the Dust Bowl "Okies," profound discrimination, and horrific living conditions. Marvelous historical fiction!

[Booktalk this!: 10-14 year old girls.]

Kelsey says

This book was wonderful! I started reading it a while ago, but stopped because I thought it was too sad. (I was at the part about the papayas) I just picked it up again and couldn't put it down! This was, by far, one of the best books I've ever read!

Emily says

This book is GREAT! I read it with school and at first to be honest I hated it! Esperanza was annoying and snobby! But in the end she was a really like able person!

Lata says

I really enjoyed this story about young Esperanza, whose life is turned upside down after her father's death. Going from a privileged, comfortable life in Mexico on her father's ranch, or a difficult, hard life in California, Esperanza starts out naive and entitled, but undergoes tremendous growth and strength of character by the end of this novel. Plus, I got to learn a little about Mexican workers in California around the Depression: the racism they encountered, their efforts to gain better rights, and forced deportations by the Californian government in response to these workers attempts to organize.
