

Esperanza rising book review

Literature



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Lesson 97 Book Review Esperanza Rising Author: Pam Munoz Ryan (2000)

Page Length: 262 Reading Level: 5-7 Genre: Realistic Fiction PLOT

SUMMARY: As the story begins, Esperanza Ortega, the daughter of Sixto and Ramona Ortega, rich land owners of the Rancho de Las Rosas, is living in Mexico. Esperanza is six years old and loves spending time with her father who teaches her how to be patient and feel the earth. The story, set right after the end of the Mexican Revolution quickly moves to six years later, on the eve of Esperanza's 13th birthday. Esperanza is anticipating her father's arrival home after a long day at the fields.

However, her father does not return and Alfonso, the boss of the field workers, delivers the bad news to Esperanza, her mother, and abuelita that her father has been ambushed and killed by bandits who roam the fields. Many people come to mourn Sixto Ortega's death and give their condolences for their loss. Esperanza's two uncles, Tio Luis and Tio Marco come every day to "sort" through her father's paperwork. They bring the news to Esperanza's mother that they have inherited the land and that she can remain on the ranch only if she agrees to marry Tio Luis. Tio Luis, the local bank director, plans to send Esperanza away to boarding school.

After their house burns down to the ground, Ramona takes action to protect herself and her daughter from Tio Luis. Ramona tells Tio Luis that she will marry him to stall him from acting up on his threats. Ramona and Esperanza must leave abuelita behind her ankle when the house burned down. She decides to move to California with Alfonso, Hortensia, and Miguel to find work and a build themselves a better life. Ramona plans to work in the fields

helping with the various crops that are grown in California. This offers a better life to Alfonso's family, but not to Esperanza and her mother.

They are leaving a life of prominence, luxury and wealth to live with their former employees in dirt floor cabins. Esperanza has a very hard time dealing with the loss of her father, separation from her grandmother and living in poverty. All the people of the camp know her story and she is ridiculed by some of the girls. She quickly learns to do household chores and to help watch the twins. After her mother becomes ill, Esperanza starts to work so she can pay her mom's hospital bills and support herself. She works hard and saves her money so that she can bring her abuelita from Mexico to California to join them.

Miguel who worked for her family all of his life risks it all to bring her abuelita to California. "Esperanza Rising," by Pam Munoz Ryan, tells a story of hope and survival. Through many trials, Esperanza learns about the important things in life. REVIEW: I enjoyed this book very much. It is highly recommended. It is a story of set in the United States during the Great Depression Era and it shows how Esperanza overcame the obstacles of living in a new country despite losing everything. The book is written in English, but several Spanish words are used, which would be good to use in vocabulary development.

Pam Munoz Ryan has described this book as being based on her own grandmother's Esperanza's life in Mexico and the United States. As a child, her grandmother would talk about her life in the farm camps. These stories inspired the book Esperanza Rising which tells a story of hope and survival. This book has an interesting story line and real-life characters. It brings forth

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the struggles of Mexican immigrants, racism, difficult and substandard working and living conditions of migrant farm workers in San Joaquin Valley, California and the history of the Great Depression.