

# La linea by anna jaramillo book review

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Crossing the border has metaphorically demonstrated the determination one can develop for a better future. Ann Jaramillo uses her ground-breaking novel, *La Linea* to talk about the life of a boy named Miguel who lived in San Jacinto, Mexico with his grandmother and thirteen year old sister Elena. At a young age, Miguel's parents left Mexico to cross the US border for a brighter future for their children. Ever since his parents left Mexico it has been Miguel's dream to cross the border and unify with them. Addendum to this dream, he also sees himself as a rich man playing soccer for Cruz Azul or Chivas. This obviously shows the willpower he has to drive change for his family. Surprisingly, on his fifteenth birthday Miguel receives a letter from his father saying "it's time to cross La Linea," the border. Grafted by nervousness because of the many gruesome stories of people getting caught or dying in the desert, his determination to give himself and his parents a good life is too strong to be overwhelmed. Clenched to this impulsive dreams coupled with the invaluable support of Don Clemente, Miguel sets off on the journey to the Northern promised land. Surprisingly, his sister Elena secretly follows him. Unbeknownst to Miguel, Elena also shares similar dream of crossing the border. She is determined no to be left, and if Miguel refuses to travel with her, she will go alone. On recognition, this stirs Miguel's anger towards her. However, they have to endure hardships and jeopardy throughout their longing journey of desperation toward the border. Unfortunately their hopes dash as their money is gone, they don't have otherwise but to jump to the infamous Mata Gente or the people killer cargo train as it rushes toward the border. Even though they survive this part of the journey, they aren't left unscathed since they are still on the Southern

part of the border. Consequently, this forces them to take on the ultimate part of the journey through the scorching desert of Arizona with the guide of a coyote apparently named Moises. Finally, both Miguel and Elena realize that crossing La Linea will forever change the way they look at themselves and the world. It's evidently allowable to deduce that a new life has just begun for these young teenage illegal immigrants.

For a long period Mexicans have illegally crossed the border into the United States. La Linea comes as a help to the readers to allow them think about the issue from the side of the immigrants. The major reason for the high rate of migration from Mexico apart from close proximity to the United States border is the noticeable difference in the quality of life between the two countries. The author expressly identifies the reason and applies it in relation to Miguel's parents' dreams of illegally immigrating to the California to achieve the " American dream." The author also tries to display in vivid images how the security measures have been implemented at and around the Mexico-US border, " We will stop before the bridge for procedures. You know the usually paperwork. They will take us out of the bus to escort us across" (Jaramillo, 46). Additionally, the book also shows that not only Mexican citizens are involved in the illegal immigration but also Guatemalan citizens, " The first time I tried to come north, they tricked me with one of their questions, the ones they use to separate people like me from Mexican citizens. They asked me how many stars the Mexican flag has. I guessed and said three. They laughed at me and sent me right back across the border to Guatemala" (Jaramillo, 38). Summarily, the author tries to prove a point that even though the illegal immigrants who come to America have varied

intentions; many agree that their main desire is to come to the United States in search for a better life.

Moreover, Jaramillo uses the crossing of Miguel and his sister Elena across the border to expose her readers to the unspeakable truths that surround children's immigration to the United States. She then exemplifies the hazards, risks and struggle that surround immigrants on their desperate expeditions for a better life. Whereas the ending of the story seemed a bit incomplete and some of the characters underdeveloped, she is successful in shedding a light on a reality that is far neglected in contemporary media and literature. She arguably puts forth the theme of determination and persistence through a strong character, Elena. This builds great hope for targeted young readers. Furthermore she weaves animosity among brother and sister, sacrifice, irony, humor and drama into a fiction novel that both informs and enlightens the reader about the dangerous journey that many Mexican-Americans have taken to come to the United States. While the story is fast paced and told quickly, the idea of the length and hardship of the journey is brought across clearly to the reader. The book also touches on issues as rape in a general context as Elena is urged to masquerade her identity to hopefully keep her from being raped as she and her brother ride the dangerous rails northward. Even though the epilogue illuminates their lives as adults, the novel ends abruptly, leaving readers without the anticipated emotional release of their reunion with their parents. Conclusively, this timely novel reflects the journeys of young people who have immigrated to the US illegally, thereby changing the perspective of readers who don't know anything about immigration.

## **Work Cited**

Jaramillo, Ann. *La Linea*. 1st ed. Connecticut. Roaring Brook Press. 2006