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Esperanza Rising



Synopsis

A reissue of Pam Munoz Ryan's bestselling backlist with a distinctive new author treatment. 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.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars See all reviews (858 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #96,717 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #51 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Homelessness & Poverty #101 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Hispanic & Latino #160 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1900s

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

He who falls today may rise tomorrow. (Mexican Proverb, quoted from the book's opening) This powerful and realistic novel is set in 1930's. The main character, Esperanza, is a wealthy young Mexican girl that has grown up on a ranch called El Rancho de las Rosas near Aguascalientes, Mexico. She is used to the care-free life of riches and privileges, surrounded by her loving parents, Ramona and Sixto Ortega, parties, dolls, servants, and silk dresses. But everything changes when one night, a day before Esperanza's 13th Birthday, her father is killed by the bandits. Esperanza, her mother, and Abuelita (grandmother) find themselves in a very precarious position - they cannot own

the ranch without Papa, a man, a head of the family. Esperanza's evil uncles take over the land, and one of them suggests that Ramona should get married to him. When Esperanza's mother refuses the proposal, their mansion gets set on fire at night, leaving them with nothing at all. Esperanza and her mother had no choice but to leave Mexico and flee to a migrant camp of agricultural work in California, leaving behind Abuelita and their riches and privileges. Instead, experiences of loss, poverty, separation, prejudice, humiliation and fear surround Esperanza on the way to her new life. She is no longer a princess but a worker. What's even more, her mother gets very sick, and Esperanza has to work hard to pay the hospital bills. Will she manage the long hours of work and months of separation from her mother and Abuelita? Will she find a way to rise from ashes and make a new life for herself? Set against the multi-ethnic, labor-organizing era of the Depression, the story of Esperanza remaking herself is deeply touching and emotional. Most of all, It's a story about hope and perseverance (esperanza means "hope" in Spanish). The author also touches upon the the Dust Bowl, social reform, Mexican Deportation Act, discrimination and prejudice to foreigners. Inspired by the experiences of author's own Mexican grandmother, this compelling story of immigration and assimilation is written in deeply authentic voice. The descriptive writing paints a well detailed picture for the reader. Spanish words, culture and traditions are woven in throughout the story, making it even easier to root for Esperanza. If you liked this book, you might also like: "Ashes of Roses" by Mary Jane Auch, "Drown" by Junot Diaz, "Middlesex" by Jeffrey Eugenides, "From Ellis Island to JFK" by Nancy Foner, "The Namesake" by Jhumpa Lahiri, "Imagining America: Stories from the Promised Land" by Amy Ling, "And the Earth Did Not Devour Him" by Tomas Rivera and Evangelina Vigil-Pinon (translator), "Of Mice and Men" by John Steinbeck, "Bread Givers" by Anzia Yezierska, "Rain of Gold" by Villasenor. Julia Shpak Author of "Power of Plentiful Wisdom". Available on . For more reviews on children's books visit my blog "Julia's Library" at: ForwardQuoteDOTcom

I think *Esperanza Rising* is a great book. It teaches you how to stay calm in times of depression. I also think that people should read this book because it has a wonderful script and teaches you to be kind to others who are mean to you.

Esperanza Rising first takes place in Rancho de la Rosas in Mexico. The main character, Esperanza, is treated like a princess on the ranch. Everything is going well, until the night before Esperanza's father doesn't return home. Learning that her father was killed by bandits, Esperanza and her mother escape on a train that will take them to the United States of America. They find work

on a farm in California with other Mexicans. Wishing she were back home, Esperanza struggles to adapt to her new life. This is a big conflict that takes place in the story between Esperanza and herself. Not wanting to let go of her past and move ahead with her future, she doesn't try to fit in. After Esperanza's mother is put in the hospital, Esperanza finally works hard and tries to make friends. The story ends with Esperanza's mother coming home from the hospital and her knowing that everything will be alright. This book was very entertaining to read. The author held my attention throughout the book because of all of the dramatic events that unfold. An example of this is when Esperanza's father dies. There is so much suspense in that chapter that I couldn't put the book down! When I read this book, I really felt as though I was right there beside Esperanza.

FYI: This book, *Esperanza Rising: Esperanza RENACE*, is in SPANISH! For the ENGLISH version be sure to order simply *Esperanza RISING*. Esperanza Rising is a wonderful coming-of-age novel set in the Great Depression, first in Mexico, then in Southern California. Esperanza is a young Mexican girl from a well-to-family, accustomed to being spoiled and always getting her way. When the family is forced to split up and flee the country for the States, will Esperanza have what it takes to help her family cross the border illegally, farm in the hot California sun and take care of the young children? You must read to find out! P.S. This novel is great for teaching grade school students about the Depression and immigration.

Pam Munoz Ryan's ancestors lived this story, and she has done a great service to write it with such an authentic voice. She has presented a fictionalized account of her own grandmother's fall from wealth and privilege in the aftermath of the revolution in Mexico as she immigrated to the United States to work in a Mexican farm labor camp during the Great Depression. Esperanza, the young protagonist, experiences loss, poverty, separation, prejudice, humiliation and fear on the road to her ultimate rise from the ashes in the manner of the mythical phoenix. Ryan does an excellent job of presenting the dilemma and danger of early attempts to improve the working conditions of the laborer during this period. She points out in the author's notes the grave injustices incurred by the Mexican Deportation Act, which exceeded relocations of the Japanese-Americans during the 2nd World War and of the Native Americans of the previous century. Many of these issues of prejudice and injustice persist today. Adults who enjoy this wonderful children's book should be sure to read "Rain of Gold," by Villasenor.

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