

Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Esperanza mean when she tells Miguel that there is a deep river that runs between them? Did that ever change?
2. How are Tio Luis and Tio Marco different from Esperanza's Papa?
3. On the train Esperanza won't let the peasant girl touch her doll, yet later she gives the doll to Isabel. Why did she change?
4. Describe Esperanza's feelings about Marta. Do her feelings about Marta ever change? Why or why not?
5. How is Esperanza's life different in Mexico and in America? How is her life the same?
6. Why do they shop at Mr. Yakota's store? What does Alfonso mean when he says that Mr. Yakota is getting rich on other people's bad manners?
7. Why does the author name each chapter for a fruit or vegetable?
8. How much control does Esperanza have over her life? What does she have control over?
9. Who was most helpful to Esperanza?
10. Esperanza liked her grandmother's scent of face powder, garlic, and peppermint. Do you have a special aroma that brings back memories?
11. What part of the story was the saddest?

12. Did anything in the story make you angry?

13. Did something in the story make you smile?
14. When she arrives, Esperanza finds comfort in finding ways that America is like her home. Have you ever been in a strange place and done the same?

15. Isobel shows Esperanza the camps where people of different ethnic backgrounds live. She says, "We all live separate and work separate. They don't mix us." What did you think about that?

16. Is there a character you admire? Why?

17. Did you notice when Esperanza realizes that she is really poor now and is never going back to the old life?

18. Esperanza asks "How was it that the United States could send people to Mexico who had never even lived there?" Do you have an answer for her?