

PinkMonkey Literature Notes on . . .

<http://monkeynote.stores.yahoo.net/>

Sample MonkeyNotes

Note: this sample contains only excerpts and does not represent the full contents of the booknote. This will give you an idea of the format and content.

Esperanza Rising

by

Pam Muñoz Ryan

2000



MonkeyNotes by Laurie Lahey

<http://monkeynote.stores.yahoo.net/>

Reprinted with permission from TheBestNotes.com Copyright © 2005, All Rights Reserved
Distribution without the written consent of TheBestNotes.com is strictly prohibited.

KEY LITERARY ELEMENTS

SETTING

Aguascalientes, Mexico and Arvin, California, during the Great Depression

CHARACTER LIST

Major Characters

Esperanza Ortega - Thirteen-year-old Esperanza is the main character and protagonist of this story. She has lived her entire life on her parent's beautiful.....

Miguel - Miguel is the son of Alfonso and Hortensia, who work for Esperanza's family. Esperanza and Miguel grow up together at the ranch. Miguel believes that.....

Minor Characters

Ramona Ortega - Ramona is Esperanza's mother. She is devastated by the loss of her husband and her home. However, she refuses to marry her cruel brother-in-law, Tío Marco, because.....

Sixto Ortega - Sixto is Esperanza's father. He is a good man who is very generous to.....

Abuelita - Abuelita is Esperanza's grandmother and Ramona's mother. She lives with the family on.....

Marisol Rodriguez - Marisol is Esperanza's best friend in Mexico. Esperanza cannot say

Alfonso - Alfonso is Miguel's father. He worked on Papa's ranch.

Hortensia - Hortensia is Miguel's mother. She worked in the house on the ranch. Among her

Tío Luis and Tío Marco - Tío Luis and Tío Marco are the antagonists of the story. They are Papa's

Juan and Josafina - Juan and Josafina are relatives of Hortensia and Alfonso in California. They

Isabel - Isabel the eight-year-old daughter of Juan and Josafina. At first she annoys Esperanza. However,

Pepe and Lupe - Pepe and Lupe are Isabel's twin baby brother and sister. One of.....

Marta - Marta is a girl who is not very nice to Esperanza when they first meet. Marta pushes

CONFLICT

Conflict - The conflict of a plot is the major problem experienced by the protagonist. In *Esperanza Rising*, Esperanza must learn to live a new life as a poor migrant in California after her father..... is

Protagonist - The protagonist of a story is the main character who traditionally undergoes some sort of change. He or she must usually overcome some opposing force. In this story, Esperanza must rise above.....

Antagonist - The antagonist of a story is the force that provides an obstacle for the protagonist. The antagonist does not always have to be a single character. In this plot, Tío Luis and Tío Marco work together.....

Climax - The climax of a plot is the major turning point that allows the protagonist to resolve the conflict. The

climax of *Esperanza Rising* occurs when Miguel brings Abuelita to California. This is the most significant turning.....

Outcome - The outcome, resolution, or denouement occurs in the final chapter when Esperanza and Miguel listen to the earth. This happens a full year after the.....

SHORT PLOT / CHAPTER SUMMARY (Synopsis)

On the eve of her thirteenth birthday, Esperanza's father is murdered. Her cruel uncles, Tío Luis and Tío Marco want Mama to marry Tío Luis (who has inherited the land) or sell the house to him for much less than it is worth. Mama refuses. Soon after, the house burns down. Mama tells Tío Luis that she will marry him in order to stall him until they can escape from Mexico.

Mama and Esperanza, along with their former servants Alfonso, Hortensia and Miguel, leave for California in the middle of the night. They must leave Esperanza's grandmother, Abuelita, behind because she hurt her ankle in the fire.

After a long trip to California, Esperanza is shocked to see where they will be living. They must share two small cabins at a workers' camp with Alfonso's brother's family of five. Esperanza's first duty is to watch baby Lupe and baby Pepe while their parents work, as well as to sweep the platform. Esperanza must learn to do many things she has never done before.

One day, there is a dust storm and Mama gets very sick with Valley Fever. Mama must go into the hospital. Esperanza begins doing adult work so she can pay Mama's medical bills and.....

THEMES

Major Theme

He who falls today may rise tomorrow - This idea is expressed in the story's epigraph and conveys the major theme of the plot. This story shows how, despite set backs, people can.....

Minor Themes

The rich person is richer when he becomes poor, than the poor person when he becomes rich - This theme is also expressed as an epigraph to the novel. It is a Mexican proverb. Throughout much of this story Esperanza wonders how poor people can be happy with such simple things. She cannot understand the people on the train who are content as long as they have their families and their faith. When she

Additional themes are outlined in the complete MonkeyNotes

MOOD

Inspirational. The overall feeling of this story is inspirational. Because of the metaphorical.....

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - BIOGRAPHY

Pam Muñoz Ryan was born in Bakersfield in California's San Joaquin Valley on December 25th, 1951. She comes from a very large family of four children and twenty-three grandchildren, and her aunts, uncles, and grandparents were always nearby. As a child, Muñoz Ryan spent a lot of time at the air-conditioned local library in order to keep cool. She became very interested in reading and books during her childhood. She earned her bachelor's degree at San Diego State University. She decided that she wanted to do something that had to do with her love for books, so she later became a bilingual teacher. She was married and had four

children of her own. When she returned to college to get her master's degree in education, a professor suggested that she should consider writing books. Her new career asa

Pam Muñoz Ryan's works include:

One Hundred is a Family, 1994

The Flag We Love, 1996

Armadillos Sleep in Dugouts: And Other Places Animals Live, 1997

California, Here We Come! 1997

A Pinky is a Baby Mouse: And Other Baby Animal Names, 1997.....

LITERARY / HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The plot of this novel unfolds from 1930-31 (with one chapter taking place in 1924). The two major historical forces that shape the plot are the Mexican Revolution and the Great Depression.

The Mexican Revolution began in 1910 and ended in 1917. Throughout much of its history Mexico, like many countries, was controlled by a small number of wealthy families. Most of the people who lived in Mexico were very poor and had no opportunity to get out of poverty. Various men battled for leadership of

GENRE

Young Adult Fiction

CHAPTER SUMMARIES AND NOTES

NOTE - Instead of numbering the chapters in *Esperanza Rising*, Pam Muñoz Ryan names them after the harvests. Muñoz Ryan says she decided to do this after the book was finished because she.....

Pam Muñoz Ryan has described this book as being loosely based on her own grandmother Esperanza's life in Mexico and the United States. As a child, her grandmother would describe her life in the

Aguascalientes, Mexico

Summary

Papa tells seven-year-old Esperanza that the earth is alive and she can feel its heartbeat if she listens. Esperanza is impatient at first. Papa tells her she must be quiet and still. Papa says "wait a little while and the fruit will fall into your hand." Esperanza feels happy as she lies on the ground and hears the earth's heartbeat.

Notes

This chapter is a prologue to the plot. In a story, the prologue is a section that offers introductory information before the exposition. Unlike the exposition--which offers background information on the main characters and critical aspects of the plot-- this prologue works to grab the reader's attention.

This prologue establishes an important theme in the book:"wait a little while and the fruit will fall into your hand."

This statement is repeated throughout the rest of the book. All through *Esperanza Rising*, the reader sees how patience and hard work pay off. Esperanza works hard at her new life and patiently saves to pay Mama's medical bills and buys money orders for Abuelita's return. In time, Esperanza also learns to appreciate the simple aspects of her life. Esperanza's patience and diligence pay off and she is rewarded greatly. Mama grows healthy, Abuelita returns, and it seems that Esperanza finds a renewed love in Miguel.

Las Uvas, Grapes

Summary

Esperanza is allowed to cut the first bunch of grapes to begin the harvest. This is Esperanza's favorite time of year because it is also her birthday. Each year Mama and Papa hold a big party to celebrate the harvest and her birthday.

Three weeks later, after the harvest is complete, the party preparations begin. Esperanza waits for Papa in the rose garden. While picking a rose, Esperanza cuts her thumb and notes that it is bad luck. Esperanza cuts more flowers. Even though Papa does not meet her, she leaves the garden. Inside the house, Mama reminds Esperanza that a cut from a rose signals bad luck. Esperanza and Mama are nervous that Papa has not returned yet. Bandits roam the land and attack wealthy landowners. Even though Papa is kind to his workers, often giving them land, the bandits kill anyone who is rich because so many are poor in Mexico.

Esperanza sits with Abuelita in Papa's study. Abuelita teaches Esperanza how to crochet a zigzag pattern. Mama and Hortensia join Abuelita and Esperanza in the study. Tío Luis and Tío Marco arrive with Papa's one-of-a-kind belt buckle, which someone has found. Every one becomes worried. Soon, Miguel and Alfonso return. They have Papa's body in the back of their wagon. Papa has been killed.

Notes

This chapter provides the book's exposition. The exposition is the section of a novel in which the main characters and main conflict are introduced. Any relevant background information is also given in this section. Here we learn that Esperanza is the only child of a wealthy landowner and that there has been an on-going dispute between the rich and poor in Mexico.

Esperanza's cut finger, which signals bad luck, foreshadows Papa's death. Foreshadowing provides a hint about what will happen later in the plot.

Papa's death is the beginning of Esperanza's conflict. She will have to learn to live a new life, which begins with Papa's death.

Las Papayas, Papayas

Summary

Esperanza's days are filled with grief and mourning. Everyone comes to pay their respects to Papa. Tío Luis and Tío Marco come each day to take care of business in Papa's study.

A lawyer comes to talk to Mama about Papa's will. He has left the house and the income from the grapes to Mama and Esperanza. However, Papa left the land to Tío Luis since he is the bank president and the banker on the loan. Tío Luis tells Mama that he wants to buy the house from her because he wants to live on the beautiful land that he now owns. Mama is outraged by Tío Luis's offer because she does not want to leave her home and it is worth much more than he offers. Tío Luis tells Mama that he thought she would refuse his offer; he asks her to marry him instead. Mama tells him that she will never marry him and that she is offended by his offer. Tío Luis tells Mama that she will regret her decision and leaves.

That evening Mama discusses the situation with Abuelita, Hortensia and Alfonso. She decides that if the income from the grapes can support the house and servants she will stay. Abuelita says she has money in Tío Luis's bank, but they all know he will prevent her from taking it.

Esperanza goes outside and meets Miguel. Miguel tells her that his family will probably go to the United States because her uncles are unfair men and his family will not work for them. When Miguel takes Esperanza's hand, she gets nervous and pulls it away. Miguel is offended and leaves.

Esperanza goes to bed, hugging the doll her father bought for her birthday.

Notes

In this chapter the main conflict becomes more developed. It is apparent that the uncles are not going to let Esperanza and Mama live in peace. Something will happen. Tío Luis and Tío Marco become clearly defined as the antagonists. The antagonist of a story is the force that provides an obstacle for the protagonist. In this case, the brothers work collectively to destroy Esperanza's lifestyle.

OVERALL ANALYSES

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Esperanza - Esperanza is a thirteen-year-old girl who has spent her entire life on her parent's beautiful ranch in Mexico. Esperanza has never wanted for anything; she has lived as a queen. Everything changes.....

Miguel - Miguel's parents worked for Esperanza's parents on their ranch in Mexico. Miguel represents the other side of Mexican society—those who are poor and cannot rise above their

PLOT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

Exposition - The exposition of a plot is the place where the reader is introduced to the main characters and any important information necessary to understand what is currently happening. In this book, the exposition occurs in the second chapter where we learn about.....

Rising Action - Rising action is the action that will lead to the climax (or the major turning point in the plot). In this novel the rising action is everything that happens before Abuelita comes to California. This includes all of the.....

Climax - The climax of a plot is the major turning point that allows the protagonist to resolve the conflict. The climax of *Esperanza Rising* occurs when Miguel brings Abuelita to California. This is.....

Outcome - The outcome, resolution, or denouement occurs in the final chapter when Esperanza and Miguel listen to the earth. This happens..... a

THEMES - THEME ANALYSIS

He who falls today may rise tomorrow - An epigraph, or quotation at the beginning of a literary work, typically conveys the work's major theme. At the beginning of *Esperanza Rising*, the author presents two Mexican proverbs. Each proverb is an important theme of the book, but the first proverb is the story's major theme.

This story shows how, despite set backs, people can overcome anything. This theme is.....

POINT OF VIEW

Third person. This novel is told by a narrator, who only has access to Esperanza's thoughts.

IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS - QUOTES AND ANALYSIS

1. "Wait a little while and the fruit will fall into your hand." – Papa, p. 2.

This quotation is significant because it becomes an important theme in the novel. Papa says this to Esperanza when she is a child and he is teaching her to listen to the earth. This statement is repeated throughout the story by various characters. By the story's conclusion Esperanza learns the importance of patience and hard work. She learns the value of the simple things.....

SYMBOLISM / MOTIFS / IMAGERY / SYMBOLS

The zigzag pattern - Abuelita teaches Esperanza a zigzag pattern with which to crochet a blanket. This becomes an important symbol of the ups and downs everyone experiences in life. Esperanza.....

IMPORTANT / KEY FACTS SUMMARY

Title: *Esperanza Rising*

Author: Pam Muñoz Ryan

Date Published: 2000

Setting: Aguascalientes, Mexico and California, during the Great Depression.....

VOCABULARY LIST

Campesinos - Farmers / Field workers

Capricious - impulsive

Chorizo - A spicy sausage.....

STUDY QUESTIONS / MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ

Multiple Choice

1. Esperanza's father owns:
 - A. A railroad station
 - B. A ranch
 - C. A shipyard
2. What gift does Papa give Esperanza for every birthday?
 - A. A doll
 - B. A piñata
 - C. A bushel of peaches.....

Answer Key

1. b 2. a

ESSAY TOPIC IDEAS / BOOK REPORT IDEAS / STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Write an essay describing fire at the ranch from Miguel's perspective. Is he sad that his old life is over or is he happy that he can go to America?
2. Do you think Miguel is right when he argues that anyone can get ahead in America as long as he works hard enough? Does everyone have the same opportunities in America?.....

Copyright ©2005 TheBestNotes.com.

Reprinted with permission of TheBestNotes.com. All Rights Reserved.

Distribution without the written consent of TheBestNotes.com is strictly prohibited.

END OF SAMPLE MONKEYNOTES EXCERPTS

<http://monkeynote.stores.yahoo.net/>