



Colorado Book Club Resource

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR ESPERANZA RISING BY PAM MUÑOZ RYAN

1. In the beginning, Esperanza tells Miguel that they are on opposite sides of a river and can never be together because of their social status. How does that "river" dry up or shift once they arrive in California?
2. Esperanza struggles to let go of her luxury items (like her porcelain doll). What did these objects represent to her, and why was it so painful for her to give them away or see them "mistreated"?
3. Esperanza initially feels humiliated by chores like sweeping or washing. Was her attitude purely "spoiled," or was it a defense mechanism to deal with the trauma of losing her father and her home?
4. The book is organized by harvest seasons (Grapes, Papayas, Figs, etc.). How does the cycle of the land reflect the cycle of Esperanza's own emotional healing?
5. Papa's advice was to wait for the fruit to ripen. How does Esperanza apply this patience to her new life? Does "waiting" mean being passive, or is it a form of strength?
6. Abuelita tells Esperanza the story of the Phoenix rising from the ashes. In what ways did Esperanza "burn down" and restart her life?
7. The characters are divided on whether to strike for better wages. Marta is defiant, while Esperanza's family is more cautious. Who did you agree with? Is it better to risk everything for justice or to keep your head down to ensure your family eats?
8. Nature is often a hurdle in this book. How did the dust storm act as a turning point for Mama's health and Esperanza's maturity?
9. The book shows a divide between the established Mexican-American communities and the new "Okie" migrants. How did this internal competition within the working class make life harder for everyone?
10. Abuelita teaches Esperanza that life is like a crochet pattern: "Do not ever be afraid to start over." If you had to pick a hobby or a craft (like knitting, gardening, or cooking) to serve as a metaphor for your own life right now, which would it be and why?

Discussion questions generated by Gemini AI.



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