



### *Enrique's Journey:*

### *The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with His Mother*

By Sonia Nazario

**Overview:** *Enrique's Journey* explores dangers of child migration through Central America by following a young man on the journey to America and documenting his story. Enrique leaves Honduras to find his mother who left him at age five to provide for him in America. Enrique must travel by train hopping illegally, facing gang violence and more importantly the fear of deportation. After eight attempts to reach the United States, Enrique finally makes it to his mother but his story is far from over. His relationship with his mother is strained from the many years apart and both parties must

make an effort to coexist peacefully and, eventually, lovingly.

**Recommendation:** To teach this book, I would suggest connecting it to the essential question, “*What does it mean to persevere in the face of adversity?*” Each student in a high school classroom will have faced some sort of adversity in their life, be it major or minor. By connecting students with this novel, you expose them to one way in which they might handle adversity. The book does not sugarcoat the difficulties and dangers associated with this type of perseverance and may not even promote perseverance but it is one way for students to begin thinking about adversity in their own lives and how to overcome it. You could explore this question by reading the whole text or by focusing on Chapter 3-5. I would suggest connecting some of the following supplemental materials to your teaching of this novel and the aforementioned essential question.

#### **Connections to other works:**

Non-fiction: *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Anne Frank), “I have a dream” (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.) *Three Cups of Tea* (Greg Mortenson)

Fiction: *Les Misérables* (Victor Hugo), *The Miracle Worker* (William Gibson), “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” (Robert Frost), *Remember the Titans* (Boaz Yakin)

#### **Assessments:**

**Formative:** Students may be asked to keep a journal in which they reflect on the types of adversity they have faced and how they handled it. Guiding questions may include: When have you ever faced adversity? How did you react in that situation? How could your future have been changed had you acted differently? Do you see adversity affecting other people? What do you think they should do in these contexts?

**Summative:** Students will work in pairs to research immigration in the United States. Each group will choose a different home country of immigrants and answer the following questions: What are some reason for immigration? What are the living conditions like in this country? How do American citizens respond positively and/or negatively to this country's immigrants? What aspects of their culture do these immigrants bring to the United States? Each pair will then create a Web 2.0 presentation that reflects this information and any other information they deem necessary for their research. A day will then be spent presenting this research to the class so that all students will learn about immigration from a variety of viewpoints.

**Diversity, Difference and Social Justice:** This book raises awareness for what so many immigrants go through on their journey to the United States. Not only does it portray the journey but the fear and risk that comes with staying in the U.S. Students in America come from a variety of backgrounds and it is important that everyone has some insight into what goes on in other people's lives. By getting a glimpse into a situation that members of a different culture may face, students are able to develop a better idea of where they fit into the world and can understand that their cultural background is not the only one that exists. As teachers, we have a responsibility to provide students with information about the world they live in and challenge them to ask the important questions such as: Is it ok for people to move to the U.S. if the conditions in their native country are poor? How can we better understand a variety of cultural backgrounds so that we are treating all people justly?