

Enrique's Journey Reader's Guide Week 2

Chapters 2-3

Community Reading Group
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Readers, please direct questions and comments to jennifer.cooley@uni.edu. I'd really like your feedback about the book and your experiences in the reading group. Just a short note is fine!

Week 2

Introductions. New Participants and Group Leaders. What is your name and, if you'd like to tell us,

- Where are you from?
- Why did you decide to be a part of this study group?
- Have you ever been part of a study group in the past?
- Would you like to receive reading guides? Please just share your e-mail and we'll send you a guide!

Pre-reading.

1. If you were going on a long journey (nobody's sure how long!), and could only take 1 thing with you, what would it be? Why? How do your responses compare to Enrique's and those of other migrants he meets along the way? What essential things travel with them? What does this say to you about their situation in life, and the type of journey on which they've embarked?
2. Describe some of the biggest challenges Enrique faces that drive him to leave Honduras and head for the U.S. Do you think his decision to leave Tegucigalpa on March 2, 2000 (at the end of Chapter 1) is a good way to solve the problems he is facing in Honduras? Why or why not?

Chapter 2. "Seeking Mercy"

1. Is it easy to offer "mercy" to people in need? Have you ever (or do you know anyone who has) lived through an emergency or a tense situation when someone needed a lot of help? How did you react? Can you think of any situations in Iowa (or in the U.S.) where people have showed "mercy"? And when they have not? How does it make you feel when you show mercy? And when you (or someone around you) does not?
2. Enrique recounts 7 attempts to make the journey north through Mexico. What types of challenges does he face? Among the stories reported by migrants, which is the most remarkable, harrowing or shocking to you?
3. On this 7th attempt to travel through Mexico, who are the people who show "mercy", what part of Mexico are they from? What types of people are they and what kinds of help do they offer? Do you think you would do the same if you were in their situation?
4. Why do you think Enrique keeps trying to travel north, even when it almost costs him his life? Is there anything so valuable waiting for him across the border that it would warrant so much risk?
5. In this chapter we discover that back in Honduras, María Isabel is not feeling well. What do you think of her situation? How do you think Enrique's journey will impact her? What do you think María sees in Enrique? How do you think she feels about his decision to go north?

Chapter 3. "Facing the Beast"

1. This chapter begins back at the MX/Guatemala border. What do you know about the dangers of this part of the journey in Chiapas? What else do you know about Chiapas in general, (its ethnic makeup, its natural resources, the political and economic challenges this Mexican state faces, etc.)?

2. This chapter takes some time to describe “La Bestia/The Beast.” What other names do migrants give the train? What are some of the dangers and challenges associated with riding on the trains, as reported here? Is the “beast” just the train ride, or is there a combination of factors?• See below about trains.
3. What do you know about transnational gangs like the Mara Salvatrucha, (or the Zetas, or other organizations)?
http://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/ABC_Univision/mara-salvatrucha-gang-mexican-cartel-united-states-problem/story?id=18920021 For example, what are their origins? What is their mission or goal? What is their current impact on daily life in general and, in particular, on the movements of migrants? (The film *Sin nombre* offers answers to a lot of these questions.)
4. Describe the actions of Olga Sánchez Martínez. If you are interested in her work, there is a lot of information at enriquesjourney.com and also video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmKzhHLGz6Q> and you can donate to her shelter too! <http://www.alberguebuenpastor.org.mx/>
5. On the last page of chapter 3 (p. 100) Enrique sees himself in the mirror. He hardly recognizes the person looking back at him. How has he changed physically, emotionally, mentally? Is he the same boy we see on the first page of Chapter 1?
 - Trains: Have you heard of the “Train to Nowhere?” <http://www.traintonowherefilm.com/>
<http://www.amazon.com/Train-To-Nowhere-Immigrant-Investigation/dp/1888160454> This is a tragedy related to migrants traveling by train that occurred in Iowa.

Conclusions.

1. What do the migrants experiences reported from Chapters 2 and 3 tell you about the relationship between Central American migrants and Mexicans? What do they suggest about human nature?
2. What do the experiences reported in this book suggest to you about Enrique’s character? What are some of the positive qualities that make him stand out? What weaknesses, if any, do you think he has? If he makes it to the U.S., will these characteristics serve him well for future challenges?
3. What is the most memorable thing you read or discovered this week? How did the reading change the way you think about immigration? Will you do anything differently after what you’ve read for today?

Homework.

NOTE: There is no group meeting during the week of UNI’s spring break. The reading for the week after spring break (March 22 and 24) is Chaps. 4-6. If participants share their e-mail, we will send a reading guide.

Please send your comments and questions to jennifer.cooley@uni.edu Thank you!