

La Linea

Discussion Questions

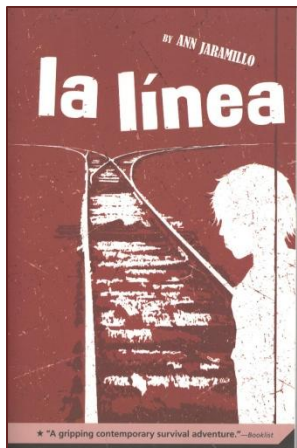
1. Why didn't Miguel and Elena's parents take the kids with them when they first moved to California?
2. Why does Miguel want to come to the United States? Why has it taken his parents so long to send for him? Do you think it's fair that Elena must wait longer before making the trip?
3. Describe Miguel's life in Mexico. Do you think Miguel is right when he says that he will have to leave San Jacinto to have any opportunity for a better life? Why or why not?
4. What debt does Don Clemente owe Miguel's father? Why wouldn't Miguel's father use that debt to get both Miguel and Elena sent to California sooner?
5. What does Miguel pack to bring with him to California? Why does he choose the items he packs? What would you take with you if you were leaving your home forever?
6. Has the journey North become more dangerous since Miguel's parents made it? Why?
7. What did you think of Javier? Was he honest? Why did they decide to trust him? Why did he help Elena and Miguel?
8. How would Miguel's journey have been different if he'd never met Javier?
9. Why did Miguel decide to take Elena with him instead of sending her back to San Jacinto?
10. How would Miguel's journey have been different if he'd sent Elena home? How was Elena helpful during the journey?
11. Why did Javier suggest that Elena disguise herself as a boy?
12. What do you think happened to Javier?
13. Was it worth all the risks that Elena and Miguel took to immigrate to the USA? Would you have the courage to undertake such a journey?
14. Were you surprised to learn that Elena returned to Mexico once she finished her education? Why do you think she chose to go home?
15. Do you know anyone who immigrated to the USA? How were their experiences similar to or different from Elena and Miguel's journey?
16. What do you think is the biggest challenge facing a new immigrant?
17. Before reading this book, what was your opinion on illegal immigration? Did Elena and Miguel's story change the way that you think about immigrants? Why or why not?

About the Author

Ann Jaramillo has been a middle school teacher in Salinas, California since 1971. She has taught new immigrant arrival teenagers from Mexico and students of Mexican descent born in Salinas, California. Her students are her inspiration and her joy. She is proud to be married to her husband, Luis, an attorney representing migrant farm workers, for thirty-eight years. (Don't get her started talking about her writer son Luis and his partner Matthew, or alternative-energy son Mateo and wife Virginia or most of all, new



granddaughter, Carolina Clover.) Her family is famously all about words, from Grandma Petie who could recite poems she had memorized sixty years before, and composed many herself, to Grandma Dorie, champion Scrabble player and poet herself. She wants all young people to know and feel the power of words to both change lives and the world.



According to Jaramillo, she got the idea to write *La Linea* after a conversation with one of her immigrant students. The girl asked Jaramillo whether her sons had always lived with her, and revealed that in Mexico, her grandmother was her mother. When she arrived in the US, she didn't remember her mother because she hadn't seen her in years. Jaramillo says

that her students find very few books that accurately reflect their lives and experiences, so she decided to write one that did.