

Reading Questions for The House on Mango Street, Part 2

"Darius & the Clouds"

What is the theme of this prose poem?

"And Some More"

Who is the speaker of each line? Can you attach a name to each? What is the destructive element involved in this scene?

"The Family of Little Feet"

What is happening in this vignette that is so powerful that the girls want to forget that it happened? Where does the power lie?

There are many things that are dangerous that are described here. Mr. Benny from the corner grocery notices one danger. Are there others? Think back to "Marin" and "Alicia Who Sees Mice" or look forward in the book follow the character of Sally. What are the dangers are there in Esperanza's world?

"A Rice Sandwich"

Esperanza tries to be part of something she sees as special. What was the reality of the canteen? Describe Esperanza's shame.

"Chanclas"

What is the significance of the last two lines of this vignette?

Consider the events in "The Family of Little Feet." What is the ambivalence the character has about her growing sexuality?

"Hips"

This is another story in a series about the burgeoning sexuality of the girls. Why does the author contrast the talk of developing bodies with the songs of the jump rope? What is the purpose of the juxtaposition of these two topics?

How has Nenny separated herself from the group?

"The First Job"

Which quality of Esperanza's personality shows up while she is at her first job? What information do you have from previous stories about Esperanza and other women in the book that would account for Esperanza's shyness and reticence?

"Papa Who Wakes Up Tired in the Dark"

What phrase does Esperanza use that indicates she feels more an American than a Mexican?

"Born Bad"

This is the first story to indicate the path of escape for Esperanza. What is it? Who encouraged her?

What do you think will be one of your paths to your future? What gift do you have that "will keep you free"? Have you begun "to dream the dreams"?

"Elenita, Cards, Palm, Water"

Why does Esperanza seek a home? Remember back to "The House on Mango Street." Is there anything in the story to indicate that Esperanza is still a little girl?

"Geraldo No Last Name"

They never saw the kitchenettes. They never knew about the two-room flats and sleeping rooms he rented, the weekly money orders sent home, the currency exchange. How could they? ((66))

If Marin did not know Geraldo very well. If she did not even know his last name, how does she know about his life?

Who else has no last name in the story? Why is this so?

The use of an anonymous character is a popular technique used by writers. If the character can be anyone then the character can also be the reader. Giving a character a sense of universality is important when the writer wants to impress her theme on the reader. Is Geraldo like you? If you think the answer is No, please think about whether or not you carry any identification with you when you go out. If you were hurt and unable to communicate, would strangers be able to tell who you were? Would you even have a first name?

"Edna's Ruthie"

The narrator does not know what is wrong with Ruthie. Any answer about her problem

would be speculation, but good readers have good speculations. What do you think?

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