

ONE MARYLAND ONE BOOK 2014

TEACHER'S GUIDE



*The Distance
Between Us*

*A Memoir
Reyna Grande*

IMAGINE IF EVERYONE READ THE SAME BOOK AT THE SAME TIME

WHAT NEW THINGS WOULD WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT WITH EACH OTHER?

In its seventh year, One Maryland One Book remains Maryland's only statewide community reading program. It brings together diverse people in communities across the state through a shared experience: the reading and thoughtful discussion of the same book. This year's book selection was guided by the theme of "the American Dream." The Maryland Center for the Book at the Maryland Humanities Council partners with public libraries, high schools, colleges and universities, museums, bookstores, correctional facilities and other organizations to bring book centered discussions and other related events to communities across Maryland.

The Maryland Humanities Council has at the core of its mission a deep commitment to provide Marylanders with an opportunity to gather and discuss issues important to their lives and communities, believing that a great work of literature provides an excellent springboard to do so. One Maryland One Book is not just about reading or literature, though; it is also about bringing people together for meaningful dialogue.

The book selected for 2014 is *The Distance Between Us: A Memoir* by Reyna Grande.

GET THE BOOK

Pick up a copy of *The Distance Between Us* at your local public library or bookstore and start a conversation with your family, friends, coworkers, or even the person sitting next to you as you ride the bus or train. This is your chance to take a moment to have a great conversation with friends old or new.

JOIN IN

We invite you to join our Honorary Chair, Maryland First Lady Katie O'Malley, and thousands of other Marylanders at one of the many book discussions and related events happening around the state in September and October.

If you're out and about, you might find copies of *The Distance Between Us* in unexpected places. Our Wandering Books can be found in public spaces such as parks, buses, malls, county fairs, and doctor's offices. If you find a copy, it's yours for a short time. Register the book online so we can see how far it travels (instructions are included with the book). Read it, review it, and then release it for someone else to enjoy.

To find One Maryland One Book programs in your area, go to www.onemarylandonebook.org and click on the Calendar.

For all the latest information, "Like" or follow us:



Look for Reyna Grande at venues across the state in late September, including the Baltimore Book Festival on Sunday, September 28.



Scan this code with your smartphone to hear Reyna Grande read the Prologue of *The Distance Between Us*.

LETTER FROM HONORARY CHAIR MARYLAND FIRST LADY KATIE O'MALLEY



Thank you for joining me and the Maryland Humanities Council for One Maryland One Book, our state's community reading project. Reading is a solitary pursuit—yet each year thousands of Marylanders become a part of something much bigger. They enjoy reading the same great book, selected by a devoted group of enthusiastic volunteers, and then take time to gather as a group and talk about the book and how it relates to their lives. If you're new to this program, welcome! If you've had the pleasure of reading along with us in years past, welcome back.

This year's book, *The Distance Between Us*, offers access to a very personal, modern immigration story. Ms. Grande's story is unique, yet universal. In the book, she recounts her challenges and experiences before and after entering this country as an undocumented immigrant. She gained legal status after a few years, during the amnesty program offered during the administration of President Ronald Reagan. As she states frankly, she just wanted to be with her father. For her and her siblings, that meant coming to the United States, but the journey and subsequent acclimation were arduous. Her story will resonate with many in Maryland, which is home to more than 800,000 immigrants—that's nearly 1 in 7 Marylanders—and will offer new insights for many others. Seeking the American Dream has been the motivation of those from near and far for centuries. As a nation built in part through the strength and perseverance of those who came here from other countries, we find ourselves today looking to continue the important discussion of what each of us can contribute to the success of a nation.

We encourage you to pick up a copy of *The Distance Between Us* and join the conversation. A program of the Maryland Humanities Council's Maryland Center for the Book, One Maryland One Book is made possible each year through the generosity of our sponsors and community partners. We greatly thank them for their support. Find out how to get involved at www.onemarylandonebook.org.

Sincerely,

Katie O'Malley
First Lady of Maryland

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



photo by Imran Chaudhry

Reyna Grande is an award-winning novelist and memoirist. She has received an American Book Award, the El Premio Aztlán Literary Award, and the Latino Book Award. In 2012 she was a finalist for the prestigious National Book Critics Circle Awards. Her works have been published internationally in countries such as Norway and South Korea.

Born in Mexico, Grande was two years old when her father left for the U.S. to find work. Her mother followed her father north two years later, leaving her and her siblings behind in Mexico. In 1985, when Grande was nearly ten, she entered the U.S. as an undocumented immigrant. She went on to become the first person in her family to graduate from college.

After attending Pasadena City College for two years, Grande obtained a B.A. in creative writing and film and video from the University of California, Santa Cruz. She later received her M.F.A. in creative writing from Antioch University. Now, in addition to being a published author, she is also an active promoter of Latino literature and is a sought-after speaker at high schools, colleges, and universities across the nation.

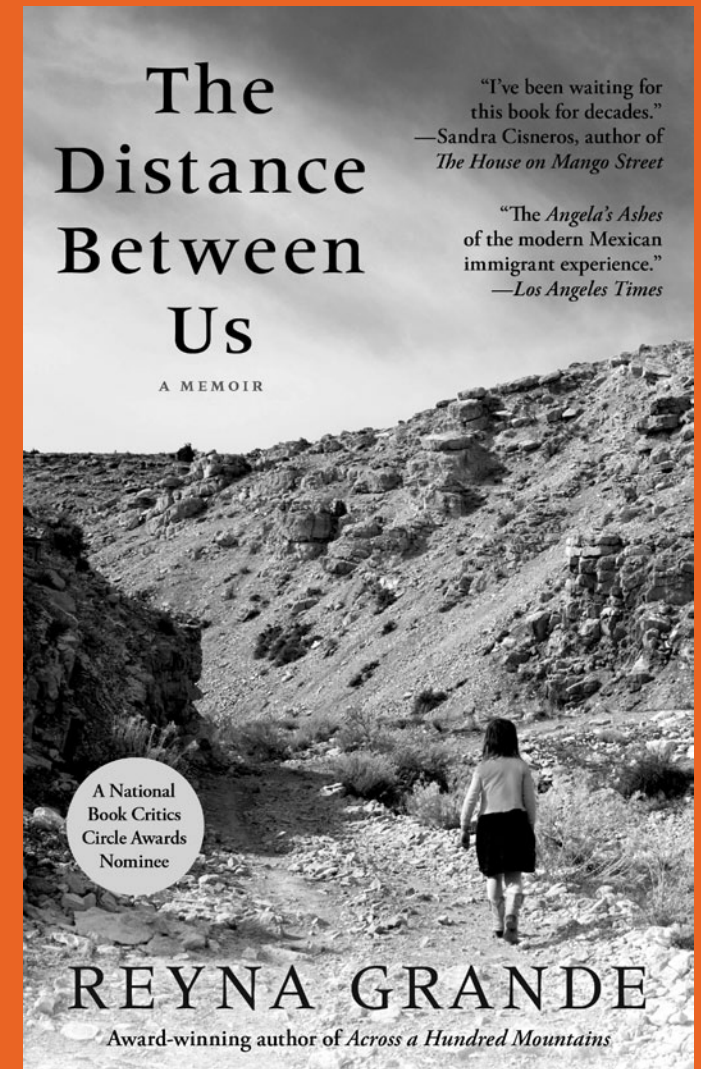
Her novels, *Across a Hundred Mountains* (Atria, 2006) and *Dancing with Butterflies* (Washington Square Press, 2009), were published to critical acclaim and have been read widely in schools across the country. A National Book Circle Critics Award finalist, *The Distance Between Us* was hailed by the *Los Angeles Times* as “the Angela’s Ashes of the modern Mexican immigrant experience.”

Currently Grande teaches creative writing at UCLA Extension and is at work on her next novel. Learn more at www.reynagrande.com.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Reyna Grande vividly brings to life her tumultuous early years in this “compelling....unvarnished, resonant” (*Book Page*) story of a childhood spent torn between two parents and two countries. As her parents make the dangerous trek across the Mexican border to “El Otro Lado” (The Other Side) in pursuit of the American dream, Reyna and her siblings are forced into the already overburdened household of their stern grandmother. When their mother at last returns, Reyna prepares for her own journey to “El Otro Lado” to live with the man who has haunted her imagination for years, her long-absent father.

Heartbreaking and lyrical, *The Distance Between Us* poignantly captures the confusion and contradictions of childhood, reminding us that the joys and sorrows we experienced are imprinted on the heart forever, calling out to us of those places we first called home.



MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMON CORE STANDARDS

RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

RH.11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

RH.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.

RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

RI.2 Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.11-12.1C Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

SL.11-12.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.11-12.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

TEACHER NOTES: Common profanity, sexual references and descriptions of abuse are found throughout the text. None are especially graphic.

- Due to Grande's frequent use of Spanish phrases and expressions, students might need to use an online Spanish/English dictionary or Google Translate in order to define words/phrases (<http://translate.google.com/>). Note that using online translators can often yield inaccurate results.
- Definitions for vocabulary found in this guide are downloadable at www.onemarylandonebook.org.

BEFORE READING:

DISCUSSION

- 1 Describe how you felt when you were left behind or abandoned. How did you react? What did you do to assuage your feelings?
- 2 What traditions do you practice in order to celebrate your culture? Are there traditions that have been forgotten but were once practiced by older family members? What are they? Do you miss those traditions, or are they outdated in today's society?
- 3 What people in your life have had the most influence on the person you are? Explain how their influence has shaped who you are today.
- 4 Are your motivations to succeed at a task internal, external, or both? Explain.

ACTIVITY 1: SETTING

- Study the map provided in the front of the book to locate the route Reyna and her family took in order to immigrate to the United States.
- Use Google Maps to locate the colony of La Guadalupe, the city of Iguala de la Independencia, the state of Guerrero. (Street view is also available.)
- Research current statistics and demographics of Iguala and the state of Guerrero, such as population, high school graduation rate, average income, life expectancy, etc.
- Utilize the Terrain maps to analyze the Grande-Rodriguez's journey over the border to the United States, while noting the geographic hardships the family endured on their journey.
- Based on what you have learned about Reyna's country, could you have made this trek at age 9 to the United States?

ACTIVITY 2: IMMIGRATION LAWS

- Research current immigration laws and consequences for breaking those laws.
- Compare and contrast the current immigration laws with the immigration laws in 1985.
- Create a PowerPoint highlighting the similarities and differences.

ACTIVITY 3: STEREOTYPES AND "THE SINGLE STORY"

- After reading the Prologue and Chapters 1–7, show the students the speech titled "The Danger of the Single Story" by Chimamanda Adichie that she gave at the October 7, 2009 TED Conference: http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html

Pre-viewing:

- What judgments might people make about you before they get to know you? Why?
- Have you ever been guilty of stereotyping others? In what ways? Explain.

During viewing:

- What does Chimamanda Adichie mean by “the single story?”
- What examples does she give to support her argument?
- What does she say about stereotypes?
- What parts of her speech stand out to you as particularly interesting or powerful?

Post-viewing:

- Consider the role that the “single story” has played in your own life.
- Perhaps you have had the experience of being judged or treated based on the “single story” version of some aspect of who you are. Or perhaps you have also had the experience of judging or treating others based on expectations created by a “single story” of who they are.
- Write briefly about either or both experiences and how they have impacted you and/or your view of the world around you.

Written response in relation to *The Distance Between Us*:

- Based on what you have read so far, how does Reyna Grande seem to be combating the “single story” of Mexican culture in the novel?
- Do the characters and events in the novel so far defy any stereotypes you may have had regarding Mexican culture? Explain your response.

DURING READING GROUP ACTIVITIES:

Students work in groups on one activity provided below.

Activity A: Define “memoir.” Identify characteristics of a memoir and support those characteristics with examples from the text.

Activity B: Research the historical impact of gangs in Los Angeles and compare them to gangs in Maryland. Focus on the gangs of the 1980s and today.

Activity C: Research the current legal process a person must go through who is immigrating to the United States from Mexico.

Activity D: Research Quinceañeras and then discuss the importance of these traditional celebrations in Mexican society.

Activity E: Debate whether or not the current Immigration Reform Bill should be passed. Research the current bill, finding articles for and against immigration reform and examples from the text for support. (Students may use sites such as <http://www.c-spanclassroomdeliberations.org/> to conduct research).

Activity F: Research the positive and negative impacts of President Reagan’s ICRA Amnesty Program in 1986 (see pages 228 and 236 in the novel).

Activity G: Discuss the challenges of a student whose second language is English. Support your response with examples from both Mago’s and Reyna’s experiences in the novel.

Activity H: Read several other Latino authors’ short stories in order to compare and contrast the characters’ experiences in *The Distance Between Us* to the characters in the stories. Examine stories by such authors as Sandra Cisneros, Anna Castillo, Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel García Márquez, Isabel Allende, Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, Roberto Bolaño, etc. (Teachers might want to direct their students to websites such as <http://sergiotronicoso.com/literature/index.htm> in order to locate authors and some short stories, essays, or novels.)

Activity I: Research Mexican traditions that occur throughout the novel. In your response, discuss the importance of traditions as a part of one’s culture and identity.

Activity J: Create a poster advertising a film version of Reyna Grande’s memoir. Since no film of this novel actually exists, you are imagining what this film would be like if you were the one to produce it. Detailed assignment instructions can be found at www.onemarylandonebook.org.

Activity K: Choose one chapter to rewrite from another character’s point of view. Explain why you chose this character and the reasons for the changes you made in the text.

CHARACTERS

- **Reyna Grande** - the narrator/protagonist of the novel
- **Magloria (Mago) Grande** - Reyna’s older sister
- **Carlos Grande** - Reyna’s older brother
- **Papi (Natalio Grande)** - Reyna, Carlos, and Mago’s father who left Mexico to live in America
- **Mila** - Papi’s wife from America; Reyna’s father left her mother for Mila
- **Mami (Juana Rodriguez)** - Reyna, Carlos, and Mago’s mother
- **Abuela Evila** - Papi’s mother/Reyna’s Grandmother
- **Tía Emperatriz** - Papi’s sister/Reyna’s aunt
- **Élida Felix** - Reyna’s older cousin/granddaughter of Abuela Evila/daughter of Maria Felix who left Mexico to live in America
- **Abuelita Chinta Rodriguez** - Mami’s mother/Reyna’s Grandmother
- **Tío Crece Rodriguez** - Abuelita Chinta’s son/Mami’s brother/Reyna’s uncle
- **Tío Gary Rodriguez** - Abuelita Chinta’s son/Mami’s brother/Reyna’s uncle/Catalina’s father
- **Betty Grande** - Reyna’s sister who was born in America
- **Leonardo** - Reyna’s half brother (his father is Rey)
- **Dr. Diana Savas** - Reyna’s mentor whom she meets when she attends Pasadena City College
- **Rey** - Mami’s husband with whom she moves to America

GENRE: Memoir

GENERAL THEMES: search for identity; the rite of passage; independence; coming of age; culture; the importance/role of family; forgiveness; trust; hope; determination; acceptance

READING ASSIGNMENT #1 - PROLOGUE, BOOK ONE "MI MAMÁ ME AMA" (Chapters 1–7)

VOCABULARY:

threshold (p. 6)	peso (p. 6)	terra-cotta (p. 8)
bougainvillea (p. 8)	abuela (p. 9)	pungent (p.10)
unwavering (p. 12)	cantina (p. 15)	obscenities (p. 15)
defiance (p. 20)	brassiere (p. 20)	umbilical cord (p. 21)
kerosene (p. 27)	huaraches (p. 38)	crinoline (p. 43)
jacaranda (p. 53)		

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Chapter 1

- Who is "The Man Behind the Glass," and what does he symbolize?
- Locals of Iguala named the closest mountain the "Mountain That Has a Headache" because "during the rainy season it had a ring of clouds on its peak and looks as if it had tied a white handkerchief around its head" (9). What is actually on the other side of the mountain? What is the possible symbolic significance of the name?

Chapter 2

- Discuss Mago, Carlos, and Reyna's relationship with Abuela Evila and Abuelo Augurio. In your response include the siblings' original expectations and then their disappointments. Why do you suppose they were treated as such by their grandparents?
- What information does Mago share with Reyna about her umbilical cord? Why does Mago tell her younger sister the story and how does it affect Reyna?

Chapter 3

- Who is Érida and how do Mago, Carlos, and Reyna feel about her? Why does Érida behave the way she does toward the three siblings? Use specific examples from the text for support.

Chapter 4

- What new information do Mago, Carlos, and Reyna learn from Mami's phone call? What is their reaction to the news, and why do they react in such a way?

Chapter 5

- Discuss the relationship the siblings have with Tía Emperatriz. What does she do for them? Could she do more than she does? Support your opinion with examples from the text.

Chapter 6

- In the last sentence of this chapter Reyna is sitting at her desk in school. She reaches for her pencil and "clutched it tightly" in her left hand (54). What do Reyna's actions tell the reader about who she is becoming as a person, even though she is only in first grade?

- What is ironic about the Christmas gifts the siblings receive from their parents? What is significant about the realizations Reyna has about her relationship with her parents?
- How is El Otro Lado, or The Other Side, personified for Reyna and her siblings throughout the first seven chapters? Provide examples from the chapters to support your answer.

READING ASSIGNMENT #2 - BOOK ONE "MI MAMÁ ME AMA" (Chapters 8–14; pages 58–111)

VOCABULARY:

emigrate (-ing) (p. 58)	mescal (p. 63)	chorizo (p. 63)
corrugated (p. 72)	harbor (-ed) (p. 78)	rift (p. 78)
immune (p. 79)	recession (p. 79)	

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Chapter 8

- Throughout the novel, Grande uses figurative language in order to allow the reader to visualize her experiences in a vivid and imaginative way. For example, in Chapter 8, Grande writes "Then we headed to school, where all we did was look out the window and sigh the hours away, leaning our sorrow on our elbows" (60). What is the effect of the phrases "sigh the hours away" and "leaning our sorrow on our elbows?" What do they help us envision and feel? As you read these Chapters 8–14, list other examples of figurative language and the effect of each example.
- How is the three siblings' "dream of having a real family again" squelched by their parents' American Dream?

Chapter 9

- Mexico has always had a fear and a fascination with the scorpion, and famous legends have been passed on from generation to generation, such as one titled "the death cell." As legend has it, in 1884, "a man named Juan was unfairly jailed in Durango [Mexico] for accidentally killing a woman. He was put in the death cell, where no one had survived a single night because of a monster scorpion. The valiant Juan caught the "killer scorpion of the death cell" and survived. He was then pardoned and set free" (Smith). How do the inescapable scorpions affect the lives of the Grande-Rodriguez family? Although scorpions are a real threat to the people of Mexico, could these scorpions be a metaphor for a larger threat or fear to Reyna, Mago, and Carlos?

Smith, James F. "Durango's Cult of the Scorpion." *Los Angeles Times*, December 22, 2000.
<<http://articles.latimes.com/2000/dec/22/news/mn-3365>>

- Discuss why Reyna is blinded to the harsh realities of the world. How does Tía Emperatriz view the world, especially on page 64, and why do you suppose she views it in such a way? Why does the author state that her homeland was "a place of broken beauty" (65)?

Chapter 10

- Describe each of the siblings' reactions to their mother's return. How have they changed emotionally in her absence? How do they believe she has changed after returning from the U.S.?

Chapter 11

- What do the events surrounding La Quinta Castrejón reflect about Mexico's extremes between the economic and social classes? Do these differences affect Reyna's outlook on life as a child? How do you know?

Chapter 12

- In regards to Mami's actions at the end of the chapter, do you think Mami loves her children? Does she choose her own needs over those of her children? How would you feel if you were one of her children? Would you have the ability at a young age to sympathize with your mother's needs? Explain your responses.

Chapter 13

- Discuss Tío Crece's character and what impact he has on Carlos. Why do you think Carlos reacts to him in this way?

Chapter 14

- The tragedy of Catalina raises several dreadful questions for Reyna. Are her concerns valid, or are they just the worries of an immature, little girl? Discuss a time when a tragedy either in your family or in society caused you to ponder legitimate concerns or questions for your personal well-being.

READING ASSIGNMENT #3 - BOOK ONE "MI MAMÁ ME AMA" (Chapters 15–20; pages 112–159)

VOCABULARY:

crestfallen (p. 112)

reproachfully (p. 118)

delouse (p. 119)

engulf (p. 121)

smuggler (p. 159)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Chapter 15

- When Mago is selling quesadillas at one of the food stands near the train, she gets onto the train as it is leaving and Reyna cannot find her. Reyna realizes that "it would be so easy" for her to "leave this place and not come back" (118). Describe Reyna's relationship with her sister Mago, and discuss why Mago feels responsible for Reyna.

Chapter 16

- What does the opportunity to acquire free government land provide Reyna's family? What happens to this opportunity, and why does Mami react in the way she does?
- How are the dreams of Mexico and the United States vastly different? How are they the same?

Chapter 17

- Reyna reflects on Mago's graduation party at Don Oscar's house and compares it to her experience when she returns as an adult. What do her realizations teach the audience about her disadvantages as a child and her advantages as an adult?

Chapter 18

- How did Reyna's family make the most of the Christmas holiday? What ruined their holiday celebration, and what does it provoke Mago to do? What does this imply about Mago's relationship with her mother?

Chapter 19

- Of what is Reyna jealous in regards to Papi? Why does she feel this way?
- How does the situation with Papi reflect the close relationship between Mago, Reyna, and Carlos? How does the situation reflect their relationship with their mother? Support your answer with examples from the text.

Chapter 20

- Describe the traumatic journey they experience as they leave Mexico for the United States. Can you empathize with the children's determination to leave their life in Mexico to start anew with their father? Explain your response.

READING ASSIGNMENT #4 - PROLOGUE, BOOK TWO "THE MAN BEHIND THE GLASS" (Prologue & Chapters 1–9; pages 163–218)

VOCABULARY:

immensity (p. 168)

eroding (p. 169)

bilingual (p. 169)

apprehension (p. 169)

nostalgic (p. 174)

shun (-ned) (p. 180)

rite of passage (p. 199)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Prologue

- Why do you suppose the author starts the section about life with her father by describing him on his deathbed? What is the effect of this technique?
- What does Reyna mean when she says "He didn't know about all the times I had already lost him" (163)?

Chapter 1

- Describe the significance of Reyna's first time experiencing the ocean. Could the ocean be symbolic of something else in Reyna's life?
- How is Reyna's identity challenged on her first day at school? Why is this significant?
- Why does Reyna have such a "desperate desire" to make her father proud (173)? Why does she feel she is indebted to him?

Chapter 2

- Why has Carlos wet his bed since he was a young boy? Why does Papi get so angry at Carlos for doing so? Why do you suppose Papi never apologizes for any of his actions?

Chapter 3

- Why does Mila tell Reyna not to call her “Mama Mila,” and why does Mila tell Papi that she will never “do that again” (187)? What won’t she “do again,” and why does she say this?

Chapter 4

- How is Reyna’s view of her father changing, and why is he no longer “The Man Behind the Glass?”

Chapter 5

- How were the three siblings misled by the commercial about Santa Claus on TV? How does this highlight the challenges that children with language barriers might have in a new country?

Chapter 6

- What does it mean to become a señorita, literally and figuratively, to Mago and Reyna?

Chapter 7

- Why is the story Papi tells Reyna about when she was young so momentous for her?

Chapter 8

- Why do Reyna and Mago go to the closest Catholic church? Are their motives the same? Does religion play a role in the siblings’ lives?
- What caused Mago to react to Maria in such a violent way? Does the violence in Mago’s household play a role in her actions?
- How is Papi’s violence viewed by Reyna, Mago, and Carlos? Why doesn’t Mila do anything about Papi’s violent actions towards his children?

Chapter 9

- What causes great disappointment for Reyna in this chapter? Can you relate to her experience? Explain with support from the text and personal recollections.
- What is Reyna’s perception about how she is received by her teachers and by her classmates? What accounts for her ability to succeed?

READING ASSIGNMENT #5 - BOOK TWO “THE MAN BEHIND THE GLASS” (Chapters 10–18; pages 219–273)

VOCABULARY:

amnesty (p. 228)

mortar (p. 239)

reverie (p. 244)

defiant (p. 267)

churned (p. 230)

coerce (p.239)

tibia (p. 255)

accrued (p. 269)

palpable (p. 237)

azure (p. 243)

fibula (p.255)

unrefined (p. 270)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Chapter 10

- How do the differences between Mami’s new life and Reyna and her siblings’ new life widen the gap in their relationship? Do you think the children will be able to get close to their mother now that she is living in the United States? Why or why not?
- Have you ever felt like you were living a “double life” as Reyna feels she is living (226)? Explain your response with specific examples.

Chapter 11

- Papi believes that education is the key to success in the United States and wants his children to be able to have a career and eventually rely on themselves. How does Reyna view her education thus far in the novel? Who and what have been influences on her opinion of education to this point?
- Discuss the reasons Reyna’s saxophone is so important to her.

Chapter 12

- What does Papi’s desire to learn English tell the reader about his character? Has your view of Papi’s role as a father changed from the beginning of Book Two? Explain your answer with support from the text.
- What crushes Papi’s dreams and desires? Is he trying to achieve what he believes to be the American Dream or has his dream been extinguished? Explain your answers.



Chapter 13

- Discuss one of the books mentioned in this chapter that inspired Reyna to read and write. What connections did she make to the characters in that book? Are there any characters in books you have previously read to which you have made a connection? Elaborate.
- How is Reyna let down by her father? What are these repeated disappointments doing to Reyna as she becomes a young adult?

Chapter 14

- Reyna uses vivid imagery to describe the first boy she loved: “My first love had velvety eyes the color of the mountains in Iguala” (245). List other examples of the author’s use of the senses to describe images throughout this chapter. What is the effect on the reader when an author uses sensory imagery?
- Of what is Reyna ashamed? Has she felt this shame in the past?

Chapter 15

- Why does Reyna accept Papi’s abuse? What excuses does she make for the verbal and physical abuse she receives? Why do you think she accepts and repeatedly forgives his behavior?

Chapter 16

- How is Mago changing, and what are the various catalysts for these changes?
- Describe Reyna’s Quinceañera, and discuss Reyna’s mixed emotional reactions to her special day.

Chapter 17

- What are Reyna’s insecurities in regards to Axel? What do you believe has caused her to feel the way she does about the boys in whom she is interested?

Chapter 18

- Why is Papi so angry at Carlos? Does Papi have a right to be angry at him, or does Carlos have the right to make his own decisions about his life?

READING ASSIGNMENT #6 - BOOK TWO “THE MAN BEHIND THE GLASS” (Chapters 19–Epilogue; pages 274–322)

VOCABULARY:

swap meet (p. 275)

stagnant (p. 276)

mapped (p. 278)

pacified (p. 294)

haggard (p. 310)

immersed (p. 317)

tyrant (p. 275)

putrid (p. 276)

leukemia (p. 279)

expository (p. 299)

unbiased (p. 311)

yearning (p. 276)

pang (p. 277)

mustered (p. 290)

preposterous (p. 309)

allegiances (p. 312)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Chapter 19

- What was Reyna’s experience when she returned to Mexico with Mago and her mother? Provide examples that support her emotional reaction.
- Why is Reyna shocked about the train station? What does it tell the reader about the “open wound” Reyna has always felt in regards to Mexico (277)?
- During her visit with her friend Meche, Reyna says, “She looked past me...her cheeks reddened with the shame of knowing that no matter how hard she wiped, the layer of dirt would never come off” (281). Why does Reyna describe her friend like this? What does it tell the reader about how Reyna has changed?
- Describe the interaction with Reyna and Mago and discuss the significance of this interaction. How would you have felt in Reyna’s position?

Chapter 20

- Why does Papi call Mago “an ungrateful daughter” (286)? Does he have the right to say this to Mago? Why or why not?



- How does Papi squelch Reyna’s American Dream? Why does he do this if he has reinforced the importance of education throughout Reyna’s young adult life?
- Why does Papi beat Reyna? Is there another unspoken reason that Mago does not come upstairs to help when Reyna is calling her? How do Mago’s actions make Reyna feel?

Chapter 21

- Reyna remains a prisoner under her father’s roof. Can you relate to Reyna’s actions? Describe a time when you felt that making yourself “invisible” was easier than interacting with others. What are the advantages and disadvantages of doing so?
- What does the situation with the “Italian mobsters” tell the reader about Reyna at this stage in her life? Did she learn from this experience? If so, what did she learn?

Chapter 22

- Discuss Reyna’s relationship with Diana and analyze how this relationship is different from those with other adults in the novel.

Chapter 23

- What is the source of Reyna’s guilt? Did she make the right decision to leave? Support your response with examples from the text.
- How has Reyna’s view of Mila changed? How has Reyna’s relationship with her father changed? Do you think Reyna’s desire to make her father proud has anything to do with their relationship in this chapter? What about their relationship throughout her life in the United States?

Chapter 24

- Describe Reyna’s first experience at UCSC. How does the campus make her feel? What imagery does she describe that allows her to envision holding her father’s hand and then “let it go” (318)?

Epilogue

- As an adult, Reyna Grande discusses “the cycle of leaving children behind” in Mexico. Compare and contrast the ways in which Reyna, Mago, and Carlos deal with the on-again, off-again relationships with their parents. What accounts for their different responses?
- Identify and analyze a passage in the book that reflects Reyna’s growth in her understanding of her father’s strengths and weaknesses.
- To whom does Reyna owe gratitude for her success? Support your choice with examples from the text.
- What does Reyna Grande’s memoir teach the reader about the struggles of second-language acquisition students in American schools?



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