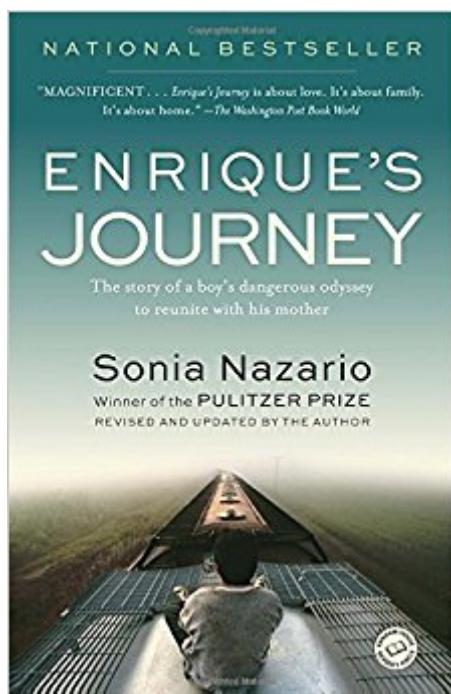


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# Enrique's Journey: The Story Of A Boy's Dangerous Odyssey To Reunite With His Mother



## Synopsis

An astonishing story that puts a human face on the ongoing debate about immigration reform in the United States, now updated with a new Epilogue and Afterword, photos of Enrique and his family, an author interview, and more—*the definitive edition of a classic of contemporary America*

Based on the Los Angeles Times newspaper series that won two Pulitzer Prizes, one for feature writing and another for feature photography, this page-turner about the power of family is a popular text in classrooms and a touchstone for communities across the country to engage in meaningful discussions about this essential American subject.

Enrique’s Journey recounts the unforgettable quest of a Honduran boy looking for his mother, eleven years after she is forced to leave her starving family to find work in the United States. Braving unimaginable peril, often clinging to the sides and tops of freight trains, Enrique travels through hostile worlds full of thugs, bandits, and corrupt cops. But he pushes forward, relying on his wit, courage, hope, and the kindness of strangers. As Isabel Allende writes: “This is a twenty-first-century Odyssey. If you are going to read only one nonfiction book this year, it has to be this one.”

Look for special features inside. Join the Random House Reader’s Circle for author chats and more.

“Magnificent . . . Enrique’s Journey is about love. It’s about family. It’s about home.” —The Washington Post Book World

“[A] searing report from the immigration frontlines . . . as harrowing as it is heartbreaking.” —People (four stars)

“Stunning . . . As an adventure narrative alone, Enrique’s Journey is a worthy read. . . . Nazario’s impressive piece of reporting [turns] the current immigration controversy from a political story into a personal one.” —Entertainment Weekly

“Gripping and harrowing . . . a story begging to be told.” —The Christian Science Monitor

“[A] prodigious feat of reporting . . . [Sonia Nazario is] amazingly thorough and intrepid.” —Newsday

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Soon to be turned into an HBO dramatic series, Nazario's account of a 17-year-old boy's harrowing attempt to find his mother in America won two Pulitzer Prizes when it first came out in the Los Angeles Times. Greatly expanded with fresh research, the story also makes a gripping book, one that viscerally conveys the experience of illegal immigration from Central America.

Enrique's mother, Lourdes, left him in Honduras when he was five years old because she could barely afford to feed him and his sister, much less send them to school. Her plan was to sneak into the United States for a few years, work hard, send and save money, then move back to Honduras to be with her children. But 12 years later, she was still living in the U.S. and wiring money home.

That's when Enrique became one of the thousands of children and teens who try to enter the U.S. illegally each year. Riding on the tops of freight trains through Mexico, these young migrants are preyed upon by gangsters and corrupt government officials. Many of them are mutilated by the journey; some go crazy. The breadth and depth of Nazario's research into this phenomenon is astounding, and she has crafted her findings into a story that is at once moving and polemical.

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Adult/High School Seeking to understand why Latina single mothers leave their children to come to the U.S., and why many children undertake the hazardous journey to reunite with them, Nazario traced one family's story. Enrique was determined to find his mother, who left him in Honduras when he was five. At 16, after seven attempts to make it to Texas, robbed by bandits or police, beaten, jailed, and deported again and again, he finally reached the Rio Grande and earned enough to call her. She sent him money to pay a coyote to smuggle him across the border and the two were reunited, but they are strangers now, their relationship strained. Meanwhile, Enrique's girlfriend in Honduras bore his child. Ultimately, she joined him, leaving their three-year-old daughter behind. Mothers leave their children to send back money for better food, clothing, and schooling, yet years of separation strain family ties. The author retraced Enrique's journey by traveling on top of trains,

hitchhiking, taking buses, facing the dangers the teen faced. Photographs and interviews with him, family members, other children, and those who provide aid along the way document the hazards of migration. Descriptions of rapes, beatings, and jailing of immigrant children and accounts of those who suffered loss of limbs falling from freight trains are graphic and disturbing. But no one can doubt the authenticity of this reporting. Molly Connally, Chantilly Regional Library, Fairfax County, VA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.  
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The book was very interesting and put me in the shoes of kids who's mothers had left them in Nicoragua, Mexico, or Guatemala to go to the United States. It is a story of this boy named Enrique, and his mother had left him to go to the U.S. to make more money. Their mothers would send them money back to keep them going. Kids couldn't handle not being with their parents so they would travel on trains for thousands of miles in hope to one day find their mother. In the book it talks about kids jumping from trains to trains while they are moving. Many kids would die trying to jump. That wasn't the only hard part of the travel, there are gangs that are at train stations and on top of the trains taking control. If anyone is curious about what these kids go through, this would be a great book to learn from.

Excellent book about a 12 year old boy from Honduras who sets out on his own to find his mother in the U.S. It is a true story, written by a journalist, who interviewed him and visited all the places along the way. His plight in crossing Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico and all the suffering, hunger, beatings, assaults that he experienced along the way left me speechless and gave me a better understanding of what the immigrants trying to cross into the U.S. go through. Enrique never gives up in spite of being caught many times and being sent back to Honduras. He tries again and again because he misses his mother who left him and his sister with their grandmother when Enrique was 4 years old. She left seeking work as a domestic in the U.S. in order to be able to send money back home so that Enrique and her sister could buy shoes so they could walk several miles to school.

Enrique's JourneySummaryEnrique's Journey by Sonia Nazario tells a odyssey of a Honduran boy named Enrique who was born in Tegucigalpa Honduras. He lives with his mother Lourdes and his sister Belky. Enrique's father has long left; since Lourdes hardly can provide food for her children, she decides to leave for the United States to earn money to send back to her children. Enrique and Belky become separated; Enrique stays with his

father and Belky with Lourdes's mother and sister. Ever since his mother left, Enrique misses his mother and always asks when she is coming back. Meanwhile, Lourdes is living in California, misses her children but continues to provide for them. While Lourdes tries many jobs, she meets Santos, becomes pregnant and gives birth to Diana. Enrique goes through difficult time as well. He goes through a series of rejections. First his mother, next his father, and then his grandmother, finally his uncle. Enrique's only dream is to be with his mother once again, and so he set out on a journey in search for his mother. Enrique makes numerous attempts to get north and on his seventh, he is found bleeding and naked. Enrique is able to escape from the people who attacked him on the train and stole everything he had, including his mother's telephone number, Enrique receives help from a mayor, and then, other people help him and recommend him to not risk it again. Many young people have died trying to get to the USA riding on top of train, which is not safe. Their families never learn what happens with their loved ones. However, Enrique still desires to travel north to look for his mom. Enrique tries again using his prior experience. However, he is caught by the police in Tapachula, and taken to jail. He escapes and makes it to the train, reaches Chiapas in *el Tren devorador* which is known as the train Devours, which is one of the hardest part, so Enrique is proud of himself. In Veracruz, Enrique sees the Jesus statue, most of the migrants that are on top of the train bend down and say a prayer. Enrique does not think he should do it because all of the things that he has done in the past. On his journey through the state of Oaxaca and Veracruz, Enrique discovers that people there are nice to migrants; most of them give the immigrants clothes and food. Also the priests at the parishes encourage the members to help the migrants so they can get to the destination safely. The train enters a few tunnels, *El Mexicano* is the longest, the diesel smoke rises and the migrants had a hard time, Enrique's face and arms turn gray. In Mexico City, everything changes, people from there are scared of the migrants, they think that migrants are all bandits. Now Enrique has to hide from the state police and the people that live in la Lecheria. Back in the train, he feels as sleep. Enrique and few more boys get caught by the police that bring them to their jefe, he checks them and luckily lets them re board the train and tell them to get off the train before San Luis Potosi. Once there, Enrique works a little to get some money for food and for the rest of his trip. In Nuevo Laredo, Enrique finds a camp for migrants, he feels safe there. However, it is not the safest places to be, there is all kind of things going around like drugs, criminals, smuggling network, etc. Enrique does not forget about his mom. One late afternoon, Enrique is able to get his mom phone number. He collects calls her. He feels her love, Enrique tells his mom that he is in Nuevo Laredo and that he needs to pay a smuggler to help

him to cross the river. After el Tirano helped Enrique to cross the river and get to the USA, Lourdes' husband gets Enrique and drives him to see his mom in North Carolina. Happiness did not last too long. Lourdes wants it to tell Enrique what to do and how to do it, but Enrique did not like it, their confrontation started getting very often and Enrique started to spend his money in drugs, alcohol instead of sending it to his daughter in Honduras. Time passes by and Enrique decides to move out of the house. He tries to get his life back on track by saving money for a smuggler to bring Maria Isabel to the USA. Maria Isabel Travels north with a smuggler, with her there are more immigrant traveling. Jasmin, Enrique and Maria Isabel daughter's stays with Belky Enrique's sister. Enrique and Lourdes are invited to participate in a show call "Don Francisco". It is very popular in Latin America. Don Francisco asks Enrique about his past as well as Lourdes, also he asks Enrique why he wanted to come to the United States and by the end, Don Francisco tells Lourdes that "he knows that one of Lourdes biggest dream is to see her daughter Belky after not seeing her for seventeen years". Lourdes voice gets tight. Then through the same door that Enrique and Lourdes used moments before, Belky enters. This was the first time that Lourdes and her three children have been together. After few days, Belky goes back to Honduras were her baby son and husband are waiting for her return.

Thoroughly enjoyed reading the book, I found myself rooting constantly for young Enrique to make it to his goal to his mother in the USA. The author put a lot of work into researching for her newspaper articles and book. He had horrible, excruciating experiences on his long journey, being robbed, beaten and sent back several times before he finally made it. There were even positive experiences, such as people throwing food to the train riders as the train passed by. There were other people who helped Enrique and others on their journey north. My favorite helper was Padre Leo in Nuevo Laredo. He exemplified Christian values. He is definitely not typical. He would give the shirt off his back and sold a car given to him. He drove an old vehicle when need be but rode his bike mostly; even across the bridge to Laredo to bring back clothing to help the young migrants. He gave up his apartment so that female migrants would have a place to stay. He regularly donated blood when a young migrant was in need. There were many other examples of how he helped the migrants in a difficult environment. Enrique of course idolized his mother, his memory of her from when he was five. Their reunion was doomed to be disappointing for both Enrique and his mother Lourdes. The story meant more knowing it was a true story. There are certainly many more versions, one for each migrant. The story was also

reminiscent of the Swedish novel series “The Emigrants” by Wilhelm Moberg (1949) a classic epic that follows a family on their journey from Sweden to America for much the same reason, to be able to feed their children and give them a better life.

This book was on my daughter’s summer reading list for school. I decided to read it as well. This book really made me think about life from the immigrant’s perspective. It also made me feel guilty for all I have and times when it’s hard to make ends meet at my house. Wonderful book that I think everyone living in America should read. It may or may not change your beliefs but it will wake you up on how good you have it.

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