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#### **DEAR FIRST STAGE FRIENDS,**

Two young storytellers, with the help of an ensemble of actors, take the stage and begin to weave the tale of Esperanza – a wealthy Mexican girl whose privileged existence is shattered when tragedy strikes, and she and her mother must flee to California. Forced to work in a migrant labor camp, Esperanza must learn to rise above her difficult circumstances and discover what she's truly made of. Set in the turbulent 1930s, and based on the popular book by Pam Muñoz Ryan, ESPERANZA RISING is a poetic tale of a young girl's triumph over adversity.

Enjoy the show,

Brinn Hill

**Education Director** 

Brinn Hill

(414) 267-2919

bhill@firststage.org

#### **CONTENT ADVISORY**

#### Best enjoyed by independent readers!

Every child is different and may or may not be ready for certain elements of each production. Read more about this show's age recommendation below.

Audiences will be captivated by this classic story of family, friendship, history and hope.

The performance is expected to run approximately 75 minutes plus a brief intermission - very young audiences may have difficulty staying connected for the full length of the show.

The show explores relationships between family members and friends; audiences may feel anxious as Esperanza experiences these difficult situations but will learn how to empathize and understand others along the way.

Esperanza and her family experience the loss of her father early in the play, which may be sensitive for some audience members.

Esperanza and her family and friends experience some tough things during their time in the migrant camps of California. They experience tension between the different ethnic groups in the camps. A girl named Marta wants the workers to strike for better wages, but Esperanza's family and friends disagree. This leads to lots of tension in the camp. During the strike, Marta must hide from immigration officials. These events may be sensitive for some audience members.

There will be flashing lights, scary moments, and loud music and sounds that may be overwhelming for those with sensory sensitivities. We offer sensory friendly performances and sensory kits for patrons who may need them.

Our story begins on a Mexican grape ranch named El Rancho de las Rosas in Aguascalientes, Mexico. The year is 1930 and this ranch is the home to our main character; Esperanza Ortega, her Mama, her Papa, and her grandmother who she calls Abuelita. Many servants also live on the ranch, including Miguel and his parents Alfonso and Hortensia. There is a fiesta (a party) happening this evening to celebrate both the plentiful harvest of uvas (grape) and Esperanza's 13th cumpleaños (birthday)!

Esperanza is daydreaming about her birthday gifts while picking roses in the garden when Mama checks on her. Esperanza tells Mama that a thorn pricked her finger while picking roses, and Mama tells her it's bad luck. Mama wonders where Papa is and Esperanza shares that the neighbors warned Papa last night about los bandidos (bandits) roaming the area. After the revolution in Mexico which ended more than ten years ago there are bad feelings regarding those who own lots of land like Esperanza's Papa. Papa has given land to many of his workers, but is still threatened by bandits. Mama tells Esperanza that they should wait inside for Papa. While Abuelita and Esperanza crochet, Mama paces back and forth nervously waiting for Papa to return home. Mama hears riders coming but it's just Tio Luis and Tio Marco (Papa's step brothers). They haven't found Papa but they did find his belt buckle. Miguel then enters, looking incredibly forlorn and we discover that Papa had been attacked by bandits and did not survive. Esperanza and her family mourn the loss of Papa as well as other vaqueros (cowboys) who didn't survive the attack.

Tio Luis and his lawyer arrive, saying it's not customary to leave land to a woman, so Papa left his land to Tio Luis instead of to Mama, although the house still belongs to Mama. Tio Luis offers to buy the house, and Mama refuses. Then, Tio Luis asks Mama to marry him but she denies the proposal. Miguel shares that there are rumors of Tio Luis planning on taking over the ranch one way or another, and Miguel and Alfonso will not work for Esperanza's Tio, and says that they will go north if he ever takes charge of the ranch to los Estados Unidos (The United States).

Esperanza pleads for Miguel to not leave the ranch, and Miguel asks if she remembers when she said that a deep river runs between them because Miguel is the son of a servant and Esperanza is a ranch owner's daughter. Miguel says that here in Mexico, she is correct, they stand on different sides of the river.

That night, Esperanza wakes to her mother telling her their house is on fire! As their home is engulfed in flames, Esperanza and Mama sleep in the servant's cabins that night. The next day, Tio Marco and Tio Luis arrive at the ranch. Tio Luis tells Mama that he will build an even bigger house for her and replant all the vines that were lost in the fire if she accepts his proposal. Mama says she needs to think about it. Mama asks Alfonso if she and Esperanza can join him in traveling to the United States to escape, and he agrees. Abuelita cannot go with them now, but she'll join them later. Miguel says there is only field work in California but Mama says that she is stronger than he thinks. Abuelita assures Esperanza that the family is like a phoenix, rising from the ashes to a new beginning.

Esperanza and Mama must hide in a wagon driven by Migeul and Alfonso to get to the train that will take them to the United States. Abuelita gives Esperanza her crocheting and asks Esperanza to finish the project while she waits for Abuelita to reunite with her. When Mama tells Esperanza to put on a hand-me-down dress from a trunk of donated clothes, she realizes that her life is about to change forever.

On the train, Esperanza and Mama cannot afford to ride in the fancy car with leather seats, but instead they ride in a dusty car with wooden benches. Esperanza doesn't trust the other poor people in their train car and tells Mama that Papa would never let them sit in this car. Mama explains that when she scorns these poor people in the car, Esperanza is also scorning Miguel and his family. Mama says their lives are different now and they are just like everyone else in this train car; peasants.

After a few days' travel, their train finally reaches the border of Mexico and the United States. Mama has their immigration papers that will allow her and Esperanza to enter the United States. The angry immigration officer begrudgingly lets them through the border and welcomes them to the United States. Mama and Esperanza cannot celebrate yet, they must catch their next train to Los Angeles!

Once they arrive in Los Angeles, Esperanza meets Isabel; Miguel's cousin. Isabel asks Esperanza if it's true that she was wealthy, always got her way, and had all the fancy dresses she ever wanted? Esperanza asks Miguel if he told Isabel those things about her and Miguel asks, "Is it not true?".

Esperanza discovers that she will be living in a migrant camp in one small cabin with Mama, Hortensia, Alfonso, and Miguel. Esperanza is not happy, but Mama explains that if they stayed in Mexico, they'd have been separated. However, here in the United States they have two choices: be together and miserable or be together and happy. Mama says she chooses to be happy, and asks Esperanza what she will choose.

One day, Esperanza is exploring the camp with Miguel and Isabel when they meet Marta. Marta is another migrant worker kid, and is passionate about fair working and living conditions for migrants. She says the workers could go on strike if they band together. Isabel shares that Esperanza comes from a wealthy family, and Marta calls Esperanza Cenicienta (Cinderella). Marta shares that her Papa died fighting against people like Esperanza's father who owned all the land. Esperanza does not like Marta.

The next morning, Esperanza awakes to Mama and Hortensia getting ready to work. Mama explains that Esperanza is too young to work in the sheds, and must stay behind with Isabel and watch the babies. While Isabel teaches Esperanza how to change a baby's diaper, Isabel learns that Esperanza has never washed clothes.

Isabel asks if Esperanza knows how to sweep, so Esperanza grabs a broom and dustpan and runs to the platform in the middle of camp to prove herself. Esperanza does not know how to sweep, however, and a group of women, including Marta, laughed at her. Isabel asks Esperanza to tell her all about her old lavish lifestyle. Esperanza agrees to share stories in exchange for learning how to pin diapers, wash clothes and put the babies to sleep. That night, Esperanza attends the Jamaica, a fiesta (party) that the workers put together to let loose and share food. At the Jamaica there is dancing and bingo, tamales, desserts and Aquas de Jamaica which is a punch made from red hibiscus flowers. Marta arrives explaining that the workers must all go on strike for better living conditions and pay, but Hortensia explains that if they go on strike, the people who own the land will simply hire other people, and then what?

Una tormenta (a storm) approaches, causing dirt to fly everywhere, and Esperanza stuffs rags under the door, but dust still gets inside. When everyone returns from work that day they are covered in dirt and Mama cannot stop coughing. Mama's coughing gets worse and worse, and she is told she has Valley Fever. Mama's lungs never fully recovered from the storm and she is bedridden for weeks, and she is finally taken to the hospital. Esperanza crochets to comfort herself while her Mama is sick. Miguel and Isabel bring a surprise gift for Esperanza; it is a shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe with roses; roses from Esperanza's home! Miguel grabbed roots of Papa's rose bush after the fire to bring with him to the United States so Esperanza will have her father near her always. Esperanza kneels by the shrine and prays for an answer on how to help her Mama. She has an idea but needs Miguel's help. Esperanza wants to work in the sheds to save up enough money for her Abue to come to the United States to help Mama. Esperanza begins working in the sheds with Hortensia. On Christmas Day, Esperanza visits her mother in the hospital. Esperanza shares with Mama that Marta has been talking about a strike during asparagus season, but Esperanza does not want to stop working as the money she is earning will be for Abue to come to the United States.

Esperanza is now working in the fields and her hands are cut, swollen, and stiff. Hortensia gives her a bowl of mashed aguacate (avocados) to help soothe her sore hands. Isabel suggests they visit Esperanza's Mama mañana (tomorrow) but Esperanza shares that her mother has an infection and the doctors requested no visitors for a whole month. Once asparagus season arrives, it is time for the strike. Esperanza does not join the strike, but all of a sudden, la migra (immigration officers) arrive and the strike stops abruptly. Esperanza sees la migra put the striking workers on a bus. Hortensia explains that they will be sent back to Mexico for striking. Esperanza goes to get more rubber bands and finds Marta hiding behind a stack of crates. Marta begs Esperanza to not say anything, but Esperanze is confused; she heard Marta was born in the United States so why is she hiding? Marta shares that it does not matter that she was born in the U.S. Because she was trying to form a union they will still send her to Mexico with the other workers. Marta tells Esperanza she cannot be separated from her Mama. Esperanza gives Marta some asparagus and her apron and tells her to pretend to be a worker. Marta thanks Esperanza and apologizes for misjudging her.

Miguel returns home from his work day and shares that men from Oklahoma showed up at his work on the railroad and offered to work for less pay so Miguel spent the day digging ditches. Esperanza is distressed by the news and runs out the door. Miguel runs after her and asks what's wrong and Esperanza says that nothing is right here. Esperanza asks if this life here in America is better than being a servant in Mexico, Miguel says that at least here in the U.S he has a chance to become more. Esperanza is frustrated that Miguel let his boss hire those Oklahoma workers and asks why he didn't stand up to his boss. Miguel tells Esperanza she is starting to sound like Marta. Esperanza tells Miguel she is tired of his optimism about this land of opportunity when she sees no proof.

Mama is cleared to return home! She is surprised to see the rose bush that is growing outside their home. Esperanza tells Mama they have been away from Abue for almost 1 year. She finds her suitcase to show Mama all the money she saved only to find nothing is there anymore, all her money orders are gone! Miguel was the only other person who knew where Esperanza was hiding them.

While Esperanza and Hortensia sort fruit, Alfonso appears and asks Esperanza to follow him. Miguel told Alfonso that he is coming from Los Angeles and wants Alfonso to bring Esperanza to meet him at the bus station. Once Esperanza and Alfonso get to the bus station, a silver bus pulls in front of the station. Miguel exits the bus and at first, Esperanza is furious with him for taking her money but Miguel brings out Abuelita! They hurry Abuelita home to see Mama. At first Mama thought she was dreaming, but once she realized Abue was indeed standing right in front of her, they embraced. Esperanza shows Abue the crochet blanket she nearly finished, telling Abuelita she has one more row to add. They finish the row together as Abuelita explains how she got to California. Abue says that Miguel left a note in the poor box at the covenant she was staying at. The note explained that Miguel and Abue would leave in the middle of the night so no one would follow them. Abuelita asks Esperanza to catch her up on everything that's happened while they were separated. Instead of months, Esperanza explains what has happened using the seasonal fruits and vegetables to tell time. Esperanza and Miguel drive to the foothills before sunrise. Esperanza lays on the earth and hears a heartbeat, she connects with her Papa once again and imagines the earth's heartbeat is his. Miguel lays beside Esperanza and hears the heartbeat as well.

### **PRESHOW QUESTIONS**

1. Esperanza Rising takes place during the early 1930's. What do you know about that time period? How do you think the time period might impact the events of the play?
2. "Esperanza" means hope in Spanish, and it is also the name of the main character in Esperanza Rising. Why do you think the author chose to name her main character Esperanza? Why do you think the author chose to name her book Esperanza Rising?
3. Abuelita says "no hay rosa sin espinas" "There is no rose without thorns". This is a proverb, or a traditional saying. What does proverb mean? How might this relate to the story of Esperanza Rising? How does this proverb relate to your life?

### FAMILY ROSEBUSH WHO IS APART OF YOUR FAMILY?

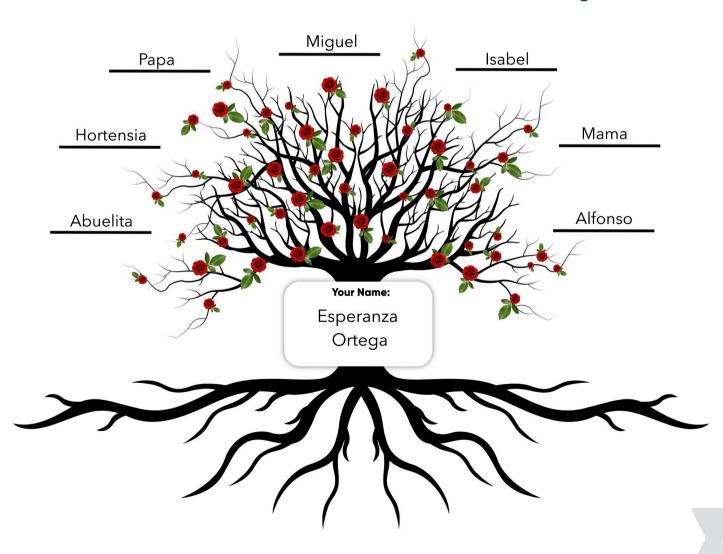
To Esperanza, family is very important. Esperanza uses roses to stay connected to her Papa once she immigrates to the U.S. Just like a family tree, fill in the rose bush to show how everyone is connected in your family or chosen family! (friends, cousins, etc.)

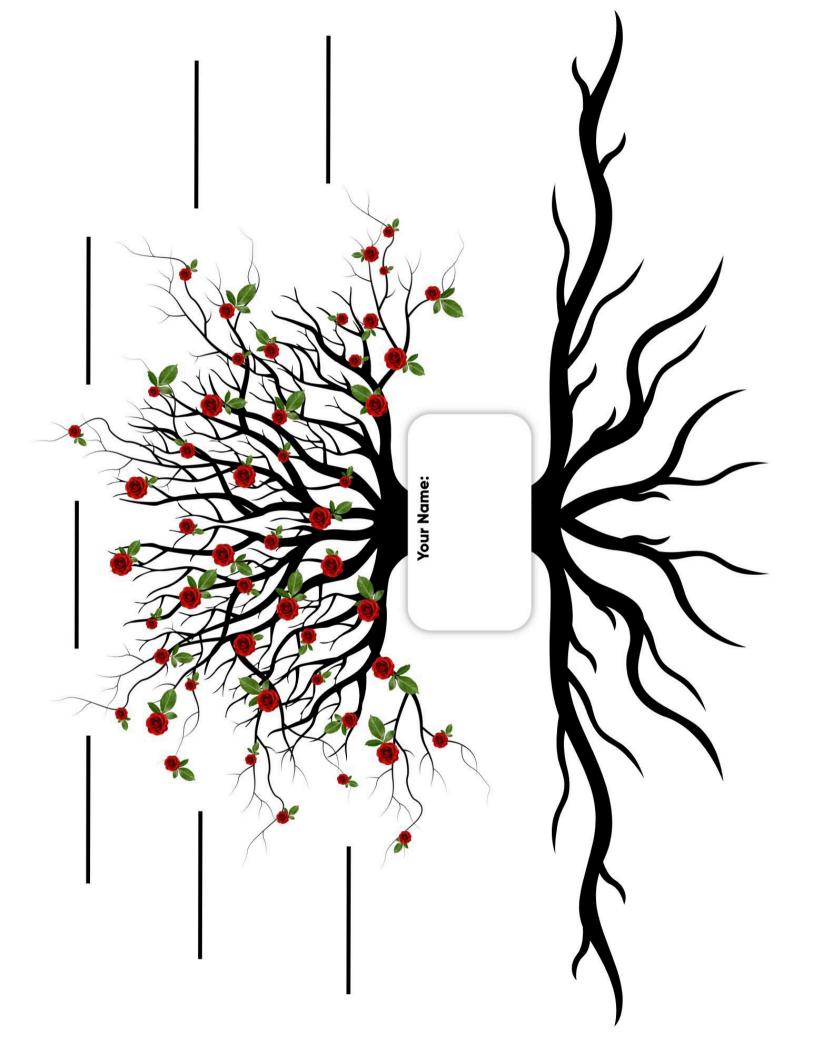
#### **MATERIALS**

• A Writing Utensil

#### **FOR EXAMPLE:**

If our protagnoist Esperanza
Ortega were to create a family
rosebush, hers might look
something like this:





## CREATE A CALENDAR MEASURING TIME THROUGH THE HARVEST

As Esperanza settles into the life on the migrant farm, the way she views the passage of time changes. She no longer measures time by the four seasons, or even by the months. She measures time using the harvest seasons. Her new calendar starts with the grape harvest, then on through almonds, potatoes, asparagus, peaches, plums, and nectarines. Then, her calendar starts back over on her birthday during the grape harvest.

#### **MATERIALS**

- A Writing Utensil
- Blank Piece of Paper

#### **DIRECTIONS**

- 1. For this activity, you will get to create your own calendar using the important seasons of your year. Think about how your year looks. Starting from your birthday, and then all the way around the calendar, try to visualize the different chapters of your year. Some examples of these chapters could be the "back-to-school" season, the week of your birthday, the part of the year where you participate in a sport, or the part of the year where you get to travel with your family.
- 2. Write out the different chapters on your blank paper.
- 3. Then, print out one copy of the next page for every chapter or season you write down.
- 4. On that page, in the "Title of the Season" section, write in the name of each season on each page.
- 5. Feel free to also include estimated dates for when that season happens.
- 6. Then, in the section below the title, write out some events that happen during that season. These events can be directly related to the name of the season, or they can be unrelated events that also happen during that time.
- 7. Feel free to draw and design the rest of the page however you want!

# CREATE A CALENDAR WORKSHEET

Title of the Season:
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As Esperanza immigrates to America, she's heartbroken to leave Abuelita behind in Mexico. Before she leaves, Abuelita gives Esperanza the crocheted blanket they worked on together. Abuelita asks her to finish making the blanket. Working on the blanket helps Esperanza feel connected to Abuelita even if they're miles away.

For this activity, you will be learning how to do a basic crochet pattern using your fingers. Once you have an understanding of the basics, feel free to look up free patterns online to create more intricate designs—like granny squares, stuffed animals, changing colors, and more!

#### **MATERIALS**

- Ball of Yarn—we recommend a larger yarn for crocheting with your fingers!
- Scissors
- Your hands (or a crochet hook)

# SOME DEFINITIONS YOU MAY NEED TO COMPLETE THIS PROJECT:

1. "Hook Hand": The hand with the finger that will be used as your crochet hook. This might be your dominant hand, or it may not be! It's all about what is most comfortable for you! . . .



#### **DEFINITIONS CONTINUED:**

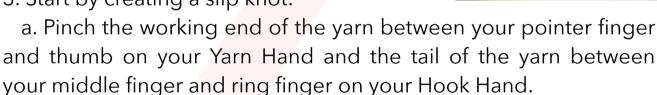
- . . . In fact, in the examples, you will see our Teaching Artist use her left hand as her Hook Hand, but she is right-handed!
- 2. <u>Working End:</u> this is the part of the yarn that connects your project to the ball of yarn.
- 3. <u>Tail End:</u> this is the end of the yarn—whether it's the tail that hangs off when you start crocheting a project or if it's the tail that's made from cutting your yarn.
- 4. <u>Slip Knot:</u> this is a type of knot used in many kinds of fiber arts. It creates a sturdy loop that's great for starting a project and can easily be undone.
- 5. <u>Chain Stitch:</u> this is the foundational stitch to any crochet project. It forms the first row of stitches, and it looks like a chain!
  6. <u>Slip Stitch:</u> this is the type of crochet stitch you will be learning in this project. There are many different kinds of stitches . . .

- ... be sure to double check what kind of stitch a pattern wants you to make as some stitches use the same name, even if they are wildly different.
- 7. <u>Frogging:</u> this is when you undo a stitch (or stitches). You remove the loops from your hook and you pull the working end until the desired number of stitches are undone.



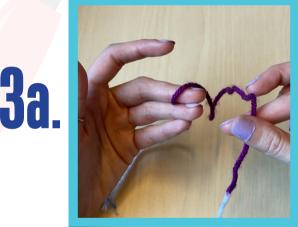
#### **DIRECTIONS**

- 1. Gather your materials. When picking your yarn, take into consideration how you want your final project to look. A larger yarn won't have a lot of space between the stitches, while a thinner yarn will have an airier look. In our examples, we will be using thin yarn. Look at the image to the right to see what different sizes of yarn look like once they're crocheted!
- 2. Decide which hand will be your "Hook Hand" and which hand will guide the yarn.
- 3. Start by creating a slip knot:

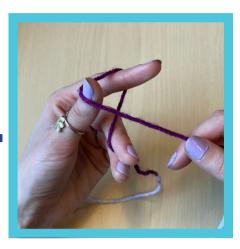


- b. Wrap the yarn around your pointer finger and thumb on your Hook Hand so that the tail of the yarn is going towards you.
- c. Transfer the tail of the yarn to your middle finger and ring finger on your Yarn Hand. Twist the yarn in your Yarn Hand so that you can pinch the tail end of the yarn with the pointer finger and thumb on your Hook Hand.
- d. Ca<mark>refully</mark> and slowly, pull the working end of the yarn tight while slipping the yarn off of your fingers. . .





3b.



3c.



#### **DIRECTIONS CONTINUED:**

. . . continue to pull tight until a sturdy knot has formed. Adjust the size of the slip knot so that the loop you just formed can fit comfortably (not too tight and not so loose, it can slip off) on your pointer finger on your Hook Hand.

\*As you continue to read the directions, the pointer finger on your Hook Hand will be referred to as your hook. Should you want a tighter stitch pattern, feel free to use your pinky as your hook\*

**3d**.







#### **DIRECTIONS CONTINUED:**

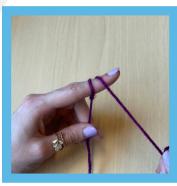
- 4. Create a chain.
- a. With the slip knot wrapped around your hook, pinch the tail end of the slip knot with your hook hand.
- b. Using your Yarn Hand, wrap the working end of the yarn towards you around your hook.
- c. Pinch the bottom loop of yarn wrapped around your hook and slip it up and over the top loop until the bottom loop has slipped off of your finger.

d. Repeat this process until your chain is the desired length.

**4a**.



**4**b.



#### **HELPFUL TIPS:**

- As you create your chain, resist the urge to pull the yarn tight after each new chain stitch. This will create a tighter chain and can make it more challenging to crochet your next row.
- You will need to adjust where your
  Hook Hand is pinching as you crochet.
  We find that, with hand crochet, it is
  helpful to pinch the chain right below
  the last stitch you made.
- If you are following a pattern, you will create a set number of chain stitches.
   If you'd like to follow along our example to practice, we created 20 chain stitches. (shown in step d.)





4d.



5.



6.



1.



8.





5. Now it's time to crochet your next row! First, take a look at your chain. Lay your chain down horizontally on a flat surface. You will want to lay it down so you can see a pattern that looks like overlapping pretzels. As you start to crochet your next row, you will be putting your hook into the top loops of the pretzels with each stitch.

6. Return the chain back to your hook so that the loops identified in the last step are away from your Hook Hand's palm.

7. Insert your hook into the first loop. Wrap the yarn towards you around your hook.

8. Carefully, lift the middle loop up and over the yarn you just wrapped around your hook until the middle loop is off of your hook. Make sure to keep the yarn you just wrapped around your hook ON your hook!

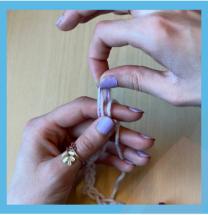


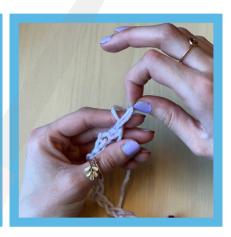


#### **DIRECTIONS CONTINUED:**

9. Wrap the yarn towards you again around. Then, carefully lift the two loops up and over the yarn you just wrapped around your hook. Again, make sure to keep the yarn you just wrapped around your hook ON your hook!







10. Repeat steps 7-9 with the next loop on your chain. You'll know it's the next loop as it won't have any yarn stringing around or through the loop already.



11. Continue to crochet all the way to the end of your chain. If you're following the example, you will have done this process a total of 20 times.



#### **DIRECTIONS CONTINUED:**

12. Once you've finished crocheting your second row, you're ready to start your next row. To do so, loop the yarn around your hook without picking up any loops from the rest of the crocheted material. Then, carefully lift the loop up and over the wrapped yarn until the first loop is off of your hook.







13. To crochet your next stitch, insert your hook under the next stitch. Just like in steps 7-9, wrap the yarn towards you around your hook. Then, carefully pull the wrapped yarn back under the stitch. You should now have two loops of yarn on your hook. Wrap the yarn towards you again. Then, carefully lift the two loops up and over the yarn you just wrapped. Repeat this step until you reach the end of the row.

















#### **DIRECTIONS CONTINUED:**

- 14. Continue repeating steps 12 and 13 until you reach the desired length of your crocheted material.
- 15. To finish your crochet project, wrap the yarn one final time around your hook. Lift the first loop up and over the wrapped yarn until the first loop is off of the hook. Take your scissors and cut the yarn off of your project. We recommend cutting it so there's about a 5 inch tail left on your project. Then, pull the loop you had made earlier until the tail has been pulled through.







- 16. Using your hook or a large sewing needle, weave the two tail ends into your final crocheted pieces to keep them secure.
- 17. Congratulations! You've just completed your first crochet project!







### WRITING ACTIVITY CREATE YOUR OWN ACROSTIC POEM!

Esperanza has many strong connections within her family, especially with Abuelita and Papa. Think about people in your life who you have a close relationship with. Write an acrostic poem about that person! An acrostic poem is where the letter of each new line makes a word, a phrase or name!

#### **MATERIALS**

• A Writing Utensil

FOR EXAMPLE:	YOUR TURN!
A-mazing hugs.	
B-ig heart.	
U-nderstanding eyes.	
E-veryone's friend	
L-ovable.	
I-ntelligent.	
T-alented at crochet.	
A-ffectionate.	

When creating your acrostic poem, think of activities you like to do with your favorite person, or descriptive words that describe just how much your favorite person means to you!

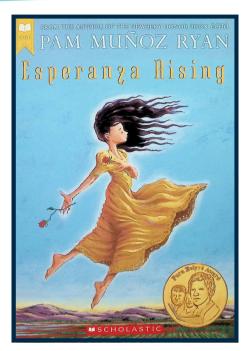
### **POSTSHOW QUESTIONS**

1. In the play, Abuela teachers Esperanza how to crochet "mountains and valleys". What do the mountains and valleys represent? Has a grandparent or other older person in your life taught you a skill like crocheting? Did you learn any "life lessons" when learning that skill? What skill would you like to learn?
2. Marta is passionate about fair working conditions for the farm workers, and she fights for the cause by participating in the strike. What is a cause that you are passionate about? How would you fight for your cause?
3. Esperanza experiences a lot of challenges throughout the play but still manages to have hope in the end. What do you do to stay hopeful? How do you inspire hope in others?

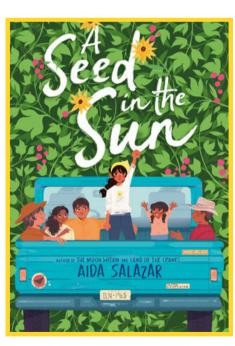
#### WHO SAID IT?

- 1. "My heart is dancing."
- 2. "... when you drink tea made from rose hips, you take in all the beauty the plant has known. These roses have known my Papa."
- 3. "I saw a strand of hair fall in your lap and you stitched it into the blanket."
- 4. "No hay rosa sin espinas"
- 5. "Were you really so very wealthy? Did you always get your way, and have all the dolls and fancy dresses you wanted?"
- 6. "Oh, Ramona, with your beauty and my position at the bank, we could be one of the most powerful couples in Mejico."
- 7. "Do not be afraid to start over"
- 8. "In Mejico, I was a second-class citizen. I stood on the other side of the river, remember? And I would have stayed that way my entire life. At least here, I have a chance to become more than what I was."
- 9. "So you're a princess who has come to be a peasant? Where's your finery, Cenicienta?"
- 10. "We are like the phoenix, mijita. Rising again, with a new life ahead of us."
- 11. "My hands look like the hands of a very old man."
- 12. "Our land is alive, mija. This whole valley breathes and lives. Did you know you can lie down on the land and feel it breathe?"

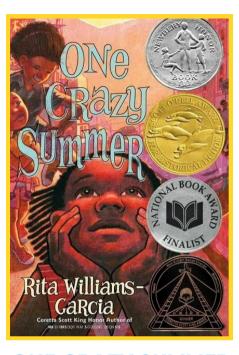
## RECOMMENDED READING BOOKS FOR YOUNG ADULTS



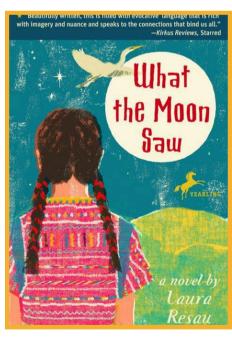
**ESPERANZA RISING** by Pam Muñoz Ryan



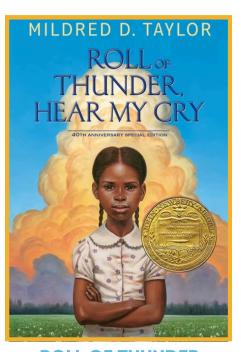
A SEED IN THE SUN by Aida Salazar



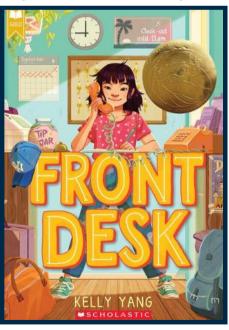
**ONE CRAZY SUMMER** by Rita Williams-Garcia



what the moon saw by Laura Resau



ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY by Mildred D. Taylor



**FRONT DESK** by Kelly Yang