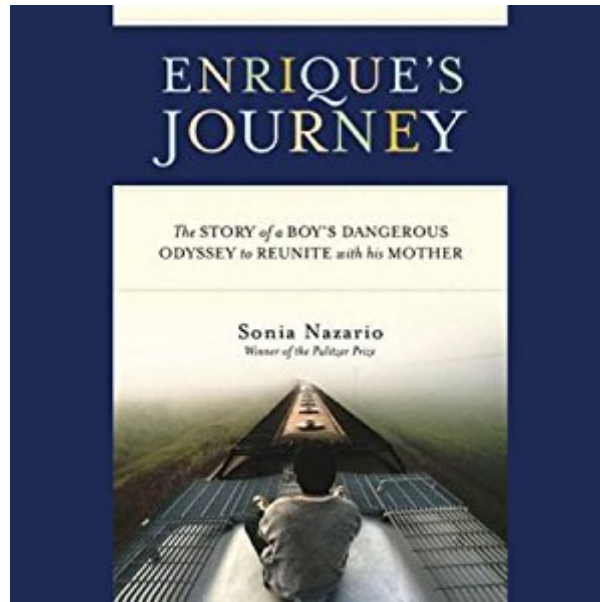




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# Enrique's Journey



## Synopsis

In this astonishing true story, award-winning journalist Sonia Nazario recounts the unforgettable odyssey of a Honduran boy who braves unimaginable hardship and peril to reach his mother in the United States. When Enrique is five years old, his mother, Lourdes, too poor to feed her children, leaves Honduras to work in the United States. The move allows her to send money back home to Enrique so he can eat better and go to school past the third grade. Lourdes promises Enrique she will return quickly. But she struggles in America. Years pass. He begs for his mother to come back. Without her, he becomes lonely and troubled. When she calls, Lourdes tells him to be patient. Enrique despairs of ever seeing her again. After eleven years apart, he decides he will go find her. Enrique sets off alone from Tegucigalpa, with little more than a slip of paper bearing his mother's North Carolina telephone number. Without money, he will make the dangerous and illegal trek up the length of Mexico the only way he can—clinging to the sides and tops of freight trains. With gritty determination and a deep longing to be by his mother's side, Enrique travels through hostile, unknown worlds. Each step of the way through Mexico, he and other migrants, many of them children, are hunted like animals. Gangsters control the tops of the trains. Bandits rob and kill migrants up and down the tracks. Corrupt cops all along the route are out to fleece and deport them. To evade Mexican police and immigration authorities, they must jump onto and off the moving boxcars they call *El Tren de la Muerte*—The Train of Death. Enrique pushes forward using his wit, courage, and hope—and the kindness of strangers. It is an epic journey, one thousands of immigrant children make each year to find their mothers in the United States. Based on the Los Angeles Times newspaper series that won two Pulitzer Prizes, one for feature writing and another for feature photography, Enrique's Journey is the timeless story of families torn apart, the yearning to be together again, and a boy who will risk his life to find the mother he loves. Praise for Enrique's Journey

“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

The book was very interesting and put me in the shoes of kids who's mothers had left them in Nicaragua, 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 Journey Summary Enrique'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 falls asleep. 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 collect 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's husband gets Enrique and drives him to see his mom in North Carolina. Happiness did not last too long. Lourdes want 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 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 pass 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 where 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 see 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 is disheveled, 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 *Ämigranterna* "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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