

Level 3: Intermediate Writers

Winner: Mariana Dobrev
Santa Monica Public Library

Book: *The House on Mango Street*

Author: Sandra Cisneros

11.19.2019

Dear Ms. Cisneros,

I am happy that you have written *The House on Mango Street*. I enjoyed this warm and human story of a young girl. I like the optimism that your book brings. Optimism is the mother of future realization. Each chapter is one essay, one life lesson.

Your story brought me back to my younger years. Although I was born in a big home in a big city, I have always had the longing to change myself and my life. Just like Esperanza, I did not feel I belonged forever to this home and this town, I felt I should go out into the world. I knew intuitively that this could happen if I studied hard and I found a good profession. My wise grandfather advised me that I needed to be independent to be stable, and that difficult times could happen in my life.

And really, I had a difficult time. In my home country, Bulgaria, the political situation changed dramatically and chaos arose until a new system was established. This lasted for years. Then, my husband passed away. I told my sons, we will survive. But my eldest son said, we will not just survive, we will fight and thrive. So I did not give up; I fought and I was able to raise my two sons and they were able to study at the university.

Many years after I left my hometown, I passed by my birthplace. Strangers, the new homeowners, invited me inside. I said, "I was born here!" We drank coffee and I left. For a second, I had no doubt that I had made the right decision. When I left at 18 years old to enter the university in the capital, I never returned.

I am sure that Esperanza will have a successful future. She never will forget Mango Street, but one day she will pack her bags and say "Goodbye." She is so strong that Mango Street can't keep her there forever. Esperanza is an electron that has accumulated too much energy to stay. She takes off and jumps into another "atom," a changed entity and new person. This energy is absorbed from the multinational culture and multiple personalities of Mango Street.

I always knew that the US was a multinational country. When I arrived in California from Bulgaria, I was impressed to meet such a colorful society for the first time. At the beginning, it was interesting to look from a distance. Very soon, I started to visit events where people of different nationalities live. Now, I don't feel any difference between the people. This environment gave me rich and new experiences, emotional connections, and friendships. Here, I feel free and vital. The people give me optimism and hope about the future.

Ms. Cisneros, I admire you. You described your characters so realistically, with love. In the end of the book I had a feeling that I personally knew and loved every one of them.

Sincerely,

Mariana Dobrev