**Lorenzo and the Turncoat**

Lila and Rick Guzmán

*Curriculum Guide by Serena Mari Garcia, University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley English Department*

**Summary**:

Lorenzo Bannister and Eugenie Dubreton are madly in love and engaged to be married. Their plans are interrupted when a devastating hurricane sweeps through New Orleans two days before their wedding. Suddenly Eugenie is missing but sources confirm she’s in Baton Rouge in the company of a British man. Has she betrayed Lorenzo and the Spanish cause? Lorenzo must join his mentor, Colonel De Gálvez, and the Spanish Army on a dangerous mission to search for answers.

**About the Author:**

**Lila Guzmán** is the author of *Green Slime and Jam* (Eakin Press, 2001) and the recipient of several awards for her writing, including: Honorable Mention in Fiction and the Dorothy Daniels Honorary Writing Award from the National League of American Pen Women. **Rick Guzmán** was born in Galveston, Texas, and practices law in Austin. A former officer, he graduated from Rice University and the University of Houston Law Center. They live in the Hill Country area of Texas. If you would like to meet the author(s), please contact Lila at [lorenzo1776@yahoo.com](mailto:lorenzo1776@yahoo.com) with “Author Visit” as the subject line.

**Teacher Information:**

Author Lila Guzmán claims writing “a historical novel is a challenge on many levels.” However, in the age of the Internet she had “instant contact with re-enactors, historians and other experts.” Rick Guzmán describes himself as the “concept guy” and originally discovered the topic for the book and wrote the outline for the series. Working with each other sometimes presents strange conversations about characters. Lila claims their children “will be in therapy for years” after hearing discussions about how a character should meet his/her death.

**Texas State Standards:**

This curriculum guide includes activities that can help students gain knowledge and skills expected for their grade level in Texas. Relevant standards for ELAR Grade 8 include:

§110.20b(1)  Reading/Fluency. Students read grade-level text with fluency and comprehension. Students are expected to adjust fluency when reading aloud grade-level text based on the reading purpose and the nature of the text.

§110.20b(2) Reading/Vocabulary Development. Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. (A) determine the meaning of grade-level academic English words derived from Latin, Greek, or other linguistic roots and affixes; (E) use a dictionary, a glossary, or a thesaurus (printed or electronic) to determine the meanings, syllabication, pronunciations, alternate word choices, and parts of speech of words.

§110.20b(3) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Theme and Genre. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. (A) Implicit theme; (B) Stylistic elements; (C) Compare and contrast historical and cultural settings.

§110.20b(6) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding (A) Summarize plot elements.

§110.20b(13) Reading/Media Literacy. Students use comprehension skills to analyze how words, images, graphics, and sounds work together in various forms to impact meaning. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts.

§110.20b(14) Writing/Writing Process. Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text.

§110.20b(26) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students will use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings.

**Pre-reading activity:**

* Have students create word maps for “revenge,” “anger” and “forgiveness.” Continue to add events of the novel to each appropriate category. Upon completion of the novel, ask students to present their concept maps.
* What is the longest trip you have ever been on? Describe the experience – exciting, daunting, etc. What did you and your travel companions to do pass the time?
* Use Revolutionary War era maps of Texas, Louisiana and the British Colonies to identify: New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Mississippi River, Lake Portchartrain, Bayou Manchac, Attakapas, Natchitoches, Opelousas, Pointe Coupee, Fort Bute, Fort New Richmond, West and East Florida.
* Discuss the geographical disadvantages of “bowl-shaped” (37) New Orleans; what is “perfect hurricane weather” (7); review the destruction caused by the broken levies during Hurricane Katrina of 2005; if novel is read during the season, track hurricane development on a map.
* Have students read mini biographies on: Colonel Bernando De Gálvez, Marie Felicite de Saint Maxent, and Lt. Colonel De Saint Maxent.
* Before reading, have students review historical documents of the Revolutionary Era, including: The Declaration of Independence, correspondence between the Spanish and the American colonies, etc.
* Give a mini lesson on figurative language, including: simile, metaphor, allusion, personification, flashback, irony and imagery.
* What does Mahatma Ghandi mean by “an eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind?” What is the difference between justice and revenge?
* Has your reputation ever been attacked by rumors? Did you do what you were accused of? How did you handle the situation? Did you lose friends because of the rumors? Did you hate the person who started the rumors? Did you seek revenge or did you forgive the person who lied?
* Do you have “superstitions” (42) in your culture? Do you believe numbers can be lucky or cause bad luck (20)?
* Do you believe everything happens for a reason? Do you believe in a higher power, like God? Explain why or why not for both questions.

**Vocabulary:**

1. guffawed (1)
2. auspicious (2)
3. vicar (2)
4. espionage (3)
5. aristocrat (3)
6. armoire (3)
7. cavalry (4)
8. estate (4)
9. luster (7)
10. ushered (8)
11. ecstatic (8)
12. cockade (11)
13. entice (15)
14. aghast (15)
15. indiscretions (17)
16. Creole (18)
17. cupola (18)
18. feigned (18)
19. highwayman (23)
20. wharf (24)
21. notary (27)
22. trifled (28)
23. Papist (29)
24. Ruse (31)
25. indignantly (32)
26. scamp (35)
27. admonishing (36)
28. companionable (41)
29. raucous (46)
30. barrister (47)
31. wench (47)
32. gist (47)
33. ingratiating (48)
34. solemn (49)
35. methodically (55)
36. stupor (57)
37. frivolous (60)
38. curtly (66)
39. exorbitant (67)
40. iota (72)
41. salve (73)
42. vile (73)
43. delusions of grandeur (73)
44. contretemps (77)
45. alcove (78)
46. candelabrum (81)
47. smite (82)
48. consolation (87)
49. indigo (91)
50. artillerymen (95)
51. carabineers (95)
52. accouterments (96)
53. epidemic (100)
54. boasting (100)
55. sub-maxillary (100)
56. suppurations (100)
57. quarantine (101)
58. pensive (103)
59. erstwhile (103)
60. half-cock (107)
61. skulk (110)
62. impudence (116)
63. palisade (116)
64. conciliatory (121)
65. gilt (122)
66. hodgepodge (128)
67. cuspidor (131)
68. indignation (134)
69. aide-de-camp (141)
70. reconnoitered (156)
71. incessant (164)
72. articles of capitulation (166)
73. rules of war (167)
74. tattoo (169)
75. dib-stones (174)
76. justifiable homicide (175)
77. exile (178)
78. merry fife tune (179)

**Discussion Questions:**

1) According to the novel, what does it mean to be a “turncoat?” Do Eugenie, Lorenzo, Charles Peel, Robert Hawthorne, Thomas Hancock fit the description? Why or why not?

2) Before answering this question, review the Hippocratic Oath. What does “stop being a doctor” (7) mean? Can Lorenzo just stop being this way? Why or why not? Lorenzo claims it is his “job to cure you, not judge you” (23); why is it important for a patient to be honest with his or her doctor? Why is it important for a doctor not to judge a patient?

3) Lorenzo and Eugenie are getting married in their late teens. Why was this so acceptable then? Is marriage at this age still as acceptable? Why or why not?

4) Robert Hawthorne is dealing with the grief of his cousin Dunstan Andrews’, aka Saber Scar, death. He also feels partly responsible for Saber Scar’s death. Hawthorne claims he “will restore honor to his cousin’s memory” (5). Predict what will happen during his revenge mission.

5) What does the sentence, “The best defense is a good offense” (14) mean? Why is this important? Use text evidence and personal experience to explain your response.

6) Lorenzo is happy with his medical practice and isn’t interested in reentering the war. Eugenie shares his desires. Why do you think neither wants to reenter the war to support the Spanish?

7) When Hawthorne finds his victims entering a church, he gets “a feeling of deep discomfort” (29). Why is he so uncomfortable? Is it because of his plan or because of the thought of entering a church? Provide textual evidence to support your response.

8) Why does Eugenie not tell Hawthorne that she isn’t Colonel De Gálvez’s wife?

9) What do Robert Hawthorne and Charles Peel have in common? Does the loss of a loved one contribute to the life they currently live?

10) Although the reader knows what happened to Eugenie, what do you think Lorenzo is feeling/thinking? Use textual evidence to support your response.

11) After reading the novel, describe the relationship between Eugenie and Lorenzo. Use text evidence to support your answer.

12) At the end of Chapter 19, the reader learns that Colonel De Gálvez is willing to “do anything in his power to protect the province” (97). Predict what might happen when he advances to war.

13) Lorenzo suspects something isn’t quite right when he and the Spanish Army take Fort Bute. His “gut instinct” (144) leads him to call on Colonel De Gálvez and express his worries. Have you ever had a gut feeling? Did you listen to it? What happened? Write a expository essay explaining why it is important to listen to your gut instincts.

14) After completing the novel, describe the evolution in the relationship between Eugenie and Hawthorne. Use textual evidence to support your response.

15) After completing the novel, describe the evolution of characters Hawthorne, Eugenine and Lorenzo. Use textual evidence to support your answer.

**Extensions:**

Writing:

(A) Several traditional dishes are mentioned in the novel, including: gazpacho (5), gumbo, grillades, etoufee, red beans and rice, shrimp bisque and fried oysters. In groups, have students choose a dish, research, create and present a dish. Students will also write a reflection after all dishes are presented.

(B) Lorenzo is able to deduce information about Charles Peel by simply observing. Do you ever “people watch”? Why or why not? Have students practice “people watching” for 5 minutes. Have them write their observations down without talking. Share them with the class.

(C) Hawthorne feels entirely uncomfortable with entering a church. Later, we find he doesn’t believe in God and that his parents weren’t particularly religious. Could believing or not believing in a higher being affect how people act? Why or why not? Review possible religions of the time to understand what they did/did not believe and/or to compare and contrast if they have changed over time.

(D) According to Hawthorne, umbrellas are a “ridiculous” custom (30). Later we find that Eugenie wanted to break tradition to have a “double ring ceremony” (33). What other customs do you think have become more or less acceptable? Have students research the issue to present.

(E) Have you ever wondered *why* something had to happen? Charles tells Lorenzo, “Grief makes us do things we later regret” (86). This causes Lorenzo to realize why his father had to die. Have you ever experienced grief or the loss of someone or something you love? Write a narrative to describe the loss, what you did to overcome it, what you have learned from it, and why you think it had to happen.

(F) Eugenie was once a spy for Colonel De Gálvez. Her job was to gather information and send confidential missives to the colonel. Hawthorne allows her to write a letter and it contains a secret code. Create and practice writing secret codes.

(G) Complete a Hero’s Journey Graphic Organizer for the plot elements of *Lorenzo and the Turncoat*.

Art Ideas:

(A) Complete an illustration to identify all instances of figurative language in the book, including:

* Simile: “the American Congress had fled…like a fox before hounds” (2).
* Metaphor/Personification: “sounds soaked through the walls” (4)
* Metaphor: “a knot came to his throat” (7)
* Simile: “hurricanes are like women” (9)
* Personification: “sadness swept through him” (11)
* Metaphor: “300 of them are raw recruits” (14)
* Personification: “he moved his fingers deftly… with a skill that inspired confidence” (23).
* Metaphor/Personification: “regrets began to seep” (89)
* Metaphor: “what a capital dog” (115)
* Simile: “rumors as thick as honey” (129)
* Euphemism: “the Spanish were knocking at his door” (159)
* Euphemism: “would soon eat humble pie” (159)
* Personification: “cannons roared” (161)

Literary Allusion:

1. Jack Robinson (12) is a figure of speech used to sarcastically indicate time. As in “it was done faster than you can say Jack Robinson”.
2. Anne Bonney and Mary Read (43) were two female pirates known for boarding white ships pretending to be men.
3. Brown Bess (44) is an allusion to a specific type of weapon preferred by members of the British Army.
4. Alexander Hamilton (61), the founding father of the United States, is best known for a duel with Aaron Burr.
5. Noah from the book of Genesis is known for building an ark to spare “two of every animal” from the Great Flood.
6. Te Deum (84) is an early Christian hymn of praise.
7. “In God we Trust” (87) is an allusion to what later is printed on American money.
8. Edinburg Scarlet Fever of 1774 (100) was a major pandemic of Scarlet Fever.
9. Baroque (122) architecture is characterized by ornate detail.
10. Beowulf (124) is an Old English epic poem about a heroic battle.
11. Tower of Babel (129) a story in the book of Genesis used to describe the origin of languages.
12. Battle of (Lexington and) Concord (141) was the established “start of the American Revolution.” The battle is also described in Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Concord Hymn.”

**Further reading:**

* + *Just Jane: A Daughter of the England Caught in the Struggle of the American Revolution* by William Lavender
  + *The Secret Soldier: The Story of Deborah Sampson* by Ann McGovern
  + *The Turncoat* by Donna Thorland

**Related Media:**

* PBS. “Liberty: The American Revolution.” <http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/>
* PBS. “The Road to Revolution Game.” <http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/road.html>
* National Museum of American History. “Connect with us on Social Media.” <http://americanhistory.si.edu/connect>
* National Museum of American History. “Star Spangled Banner on the Web.” <http://amhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/>