**Lorenzo’s Revolutionary Quest**

Lila and Rick Guzmán

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

**Summary**:

Lorenzo has grown tremendously after helping to get much-needed supplies to the Continental Army. Now sixteen and ranked as a Capitan, General George Washington has hired Lorenzo to purchase 500 head of Spanish owned cattle in Texas to feed the troops. Lorenzo will balance the struggles of hiring and trusting new people, the separation from his fiancé and loss. With Colonel De Galvez’s help during the long trek, Lorenzo will come face-to-face with the notorious renegade rustlers under the command of Chein d’Or and revisit the sins of his past when “Saber Scar” escapes from prison. Will the memory of his father continue to guide Lorenzo’s choices?

**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. 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 with “Author Visit” as the subject line.

**Teacher Information:**

Author Lila Guzman 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 Guzman 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.

§110.19(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.

§110.19(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.

§110.18(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.

§110.19(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.

§110.19(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.

§110.19(14) Writing/Writing Process. Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text.

§110.19(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 “vengeance,” “honor” and “power.” 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?
* Have students read and/or present mini biographies on: Marquis de Lafayette, Lipan Apache, Parliament – House of Lords, Society of Friends aka Quakers, Battle of Brandywine Creek, and La Salle.
* Have students write an expository essay about what it means to be a “leader.”
* Before reading, have students view pictures of British and Continental Army soldiers in uniform. How old do they look? What gender do most of them seem to be? Why do you suppose that is?
* Give a mini lesson on figurative language, including: simile, metaphor, allusion, personification, flashback, euphemism, irony and imagery.
* Have students create a family tree with as many generations as possible. Ask students to identify where each family member was born. Did students already know this information or was it new? Did their findings change how they viewed themselves? Why or why not?
* What does the phrase “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” mean? Have you ever gotten to know someone who also dislikes the same person?
* Do you know another language? If so, what is it? How did you learn it? Would you like to learn another language? What benefits and/or disadvantages would knowing another language have?
* Use the map in the book and others as necessary to identify the Spanish Missions, major rivers, and the King’s Highway in Texas.
* Give a mini Texas history lesson on: the mesquite tree, armadillo, mockingbird, vaqueros, remuda and longhorns.

**Vocabulary:**

canteen (1) –

league (2) –

province (2) –

gumption (2) –

sentiment (2) –

mock (2) –

bawling (3) –

loping (4) –

frontiersman (4) –

mare (6) –

inoculated (6) –

reluctant (7) –

indignant (8) –

scullery (8) –

 maneuvered (13) –

viola (13) –

rendezvous (13) –

scoundrel (14) –

indebted (14) –

stampede (15) –

mercenaries (17) –

foreigner (17) –

presidio (17) –

gruff (18) –

malady (18) –

gangrene (18) –

amputations (18) –

renegades (19) –

infiltrated (19) –

brooded (20) –

trek (20) –

refuge (21) –

scornfully (22) –

diversion (23) –

seized (23) –

defiance (23) –

pantomime (24) –

prevailed (25) –

pandemonium (25) –

reigned (25) –

prim (26) –

woe (26) –

devoured (26) –

anticipated (28) –

woodenly (28) –

hearth (28) –

indisposition (29) –

languishing (29) –

mortifying (29) –

malarkey (29) –

attaché (32) –

diplomatic privilege (32) –

systematically (33) –

flogged (33) –

to the contrary (34) –

reverie (36) –

regaled (37) –

salute (37) –

killjoy (38) –

rosary (38) –

billeted (38) –

mantilla (38) –

objectivity (40) –

hacienda (40) –

mangled (40) –

smug (41) –

superiority (41) –

cravat (41) –

extravagant (42) –

dignitaries (42) –

cordial (42) –

nobility (42) –

courtship (44) –

concocted (44) –

flippant (46) –

customary (46) –

ensemble (46) –

insufferably (46) –

mincemeat (47) –

chaperones (48) –

humility (50) –

dismay (50) –

stead(50) –

foreseen (51) –

defiance (51) –

decree (51) –

wreathed (52) –

peril (52) –

traitor (55) –

bouquet (55) –

welfare (56) –

rendezvous (56) –

mestizos (56) –

tethered (57) –

momentous (58) –

befall (58) –

impediment (59) –

banns (59) –

enigmatic (59) –

stoic(61) –

trek (61) –

mochila (62) –

fringed (62) –

nuisance (64) –

unmercifully(64) –

terrain (64) –

crooning (66) –

serenaded (66) –

seethed (67) –

brocade (67) –

intricate (71) –

filigree (71) –

skeptical (71) –

patriot (72) –

mere (72) –

whetstone (72) –

vague (73) –

courtyard (75) –

elegant (75) –

rationally (77) –

rampaging (80) –

torrent (80) –

ford (80) –

engulfed (81) –

submerged (82) –

eddy (82) –

admonished (87) –

ambush (88) –

lariats (90) –

relish (90) –

medieval jousting (91) –

sorrel (91) –

spur of the moment (95) –

surmised (98) –

punctuated (98) –

banter (98) –

encroached (98) –

foliage (99) –

tension (101) –

copse (106) –

cud (108) –

weary (108) –

winced (108) –

caterwauling (110) –

Diego (112) –

droves(112) –

jittery (112) –

briars (113) –

cajoling (113) –

ambled (113) –

impeccable (115) –

diplomacy (116) –

rue (117) –

debris (118) –

axle rod (118) –

careened (119) –

somber (121) –

ominous (123) –

quizzical (123) –

depot (124) –
gallop (127) –

lope (127) –

volley (129) –

jugular (130) –

fatal (130) –

interrogation (133) –

sympathy (133) –

bedraggled (136) –

treacherously (138) –

slay (139) –

defiance (150) –

turncoat (151) –

peat (156) –

ruckus (164) –

procession (167) –

condemned (167) –

sorrow (168) –

scorn (168) –

erstwhile (169) –

pity (169) –

**Discussion Questions:**

1) In this story, several adolescent characters become involved in the Revolutionary War. Each has his/her own reasoning and acts according to his/her moral code. Compare and contrast Thomas to Lorenzo and Molly to Eugenie on their reasons to enter the war, their actions and the way they feel about joining.

2) Review the phrase “Absolute power corrupts absolutely.” In Chapter 9, we learn that Dunstan’s, aka Saber Scar, father is in the House of Lords of Parliament and wields “tremendous power.” Do you think having a powerful father could have influenced how Dunstan acts? Why or why not? Can power change a person for the better or worse or both?

3) Why does Red say his “life is half over at 29” (45)? How long were life expectancies during this time? What are they now? How and why have they improved? Are there any disadvantages to living longer? Explain.

4) Throughout his journey, Lorenzo grieves the loss of his father. Have you ever lost a family member or meaningful relationship? Discuss.

5) What is the significance of the trumpet-shaped blossoms at Lorenzo’s father’s grave and Miguel’s house? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

6) How are Chien d’Or and Saber Scar similar? Think of their actions, beliefs, goals, etc.

7) Compare and contrast the ongoing vendettas in the novel, including: Raven Feather v. Soledad, Chien d’Or v. Red, Saber Scar v. Lorenzo.

8) What does the phrase, “Living without the tribe’s protection was a virtual death sentence” (58) mean? Why is there protection in a group? Are you part of a clique? What are other advantages of belonging to a group? What are the disadvantages of being in a group? What are the pros and cons of being outside of the group?

9) We learn that Dunstan, aka Saber Scar, feels as if he has never belonged to a group and suffered bullying. What is bullying? Have you ever witnessed and/or participated in bullying? How can bullying make or break a person? Do you think these events created Dunstan’s character? What are some of the better ways to respond to people who insult us or are bullies?

10) Despite having his father’s stamp of approval, on pages 60 and 64 we learn Lorenzo has some concerns about Miguel. Discuss what you think the issue might be. Use textual evidence to support your response.

11) After reading Chapter 15, predict what will happen between Saber Scar and Lorenzo.

12) Before reading Chapter 16, write a narrative essay about the scariest thing you’ve ever done.

13) Think of the seriousness of “taking secrets to the grave” as Lorenzo’s father did. Why does this concept matter to Lorenzo? Are you good at keeping secrets? Do you think keeping secrets is like lying? Why or why not?

14) After reading Chapter 32, Lorenzo and Red are about to interrogate Saber Scar. How do you think Lorenzo’s father would handle the situation? How can Lorenzo extract information without disrespecting his father’s memory?

**Extensions:**

Writing:

(A) Spies are an integral part of any war. Lorenzo and many other characters are young. Why would these adolescents want to enter the war? Would you enter the war? Why or why not? Research and present examples of young spies during the Revolutionary War.

(B) At sixteen, Lorenzo has the stressful job to purchase and move 500 head of cattle from Texas to Virginia. What was the most stressful thing you’ve ever had to plan? What occurred? Why did it occur? What was the outcome? Have you ever been away from home for an extended period of time? Have you ever been homesick?

(C) It is claimed that Saber Scar would sell his mother “for the right amount of money” (26) and that Lorenzo is “wet behind the ears” (2). What do these sentences mean? Why are euphemisms used in polite society?

(D) By the beginning of Chapter 2 Lorenzo has already proven his fast reflexes are on par with the cattle drive. He’s had much practice on moving his body quickly and making snap decisions. What events and/or activities could help you have faster reflexes? What are the benefits and disadvantages of these activities?

 (E) Review the concepts “biological warfare,” “smallpox” and the “Geneva Convention.” What are the rules of war? Are there rules in war? What is the Geneva Convention? What are the dangers of using biological warfare during war? What are some of the possible short and long-term effects of using this tactic during war? What is the point of inoculation? What are some of the problems of NOT being vaccinated, then and now?

 (F) Lorenzo remembers meeting Miguel once before; specifically, being told by his father to leave the room (18). Write a narrative about a time you were truly curious. What was it about? Who was involved? Why do you think you were prevented from finding out the information? Did you eventually learn about what you were looking for?

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

(H) “Violence is never the way” (73). Is there ever a reason to use violence? Write an expository essay to outline the concept of war.

 (I) Have you ever snuck into somewhere you weren’t supposed to be? Write a narrative describing the situation. Explain what happened, who was involved, what was the outcome, what did you learn, etc.

 (J) Put yourself in Miguel’s shoes; would you have changed everything about yourself to survive? Use current events to discuss this issue.

 (K) For students who speak Spanish - Discuss the cultural significance of “mischief maker” (115) aka “busca plato” and “monkey blood” (164) aka “sangre de chango”.

 (L) Dunstan turns his back on Thomas the first chance he gets. Have you ever felt abandoned or betrayed by a friend? Write a narrative to explain what happened.

Art Ideas:

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

* Metaphor: “running with their tails between their legs” (6).
* Simile: “was as sneaky as a coyote” (28).
* Simile: “swirled like a leaf in a whirlpool” (82).
* Simile: “the sky was cloudless, as if someone has placed a pale blue blow upside down over the world” (89).
* Simile: “a look as hard as flint” (168).

Literary Allusion:

1. “Hotter than Hades” (3) is an allusion to Greek mythology.
2. After murdering his opponent, Dunstan “took the king’s shilling” (10) which means he agreed to work for the British army or navy.
3. When Dunstan and Thomas get into New Orleans, Dunstan discusses the importance of controlling the Mississippi River. “…A flatboat with nine thousand pounds of Spanish gunpowder slipped up the Mississippi River…” (71) is reference to the first book in the series, *Lorenzo’s Secret Mission.*
4. Lord’s Prayer (122) and Last Rites (167) refer to religious ceremonies.
5. St. Elmo’s fire / Fox Fire (125) – describes the electrical charge released during storms.

**Further reading:**

* Historical Fiction – Revolutionary War Era
	+ *Cast Two Shadows: The American Revolution in the South* by Ann Rinaldi
	+ *The Accidental Spy* by J.R. Lindermuth
	+ *Rebellious Heart* by Jody Hedlund

**Related Media:**

* East India Trading Company <http://pirates.wikia.com/wiki/East_India_Trading_Company>
* “Pirates of the Caribbean East India Trading Company” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQengBZbyic>
* PBS. “The Road to Revolution Game.” <http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/road.html>