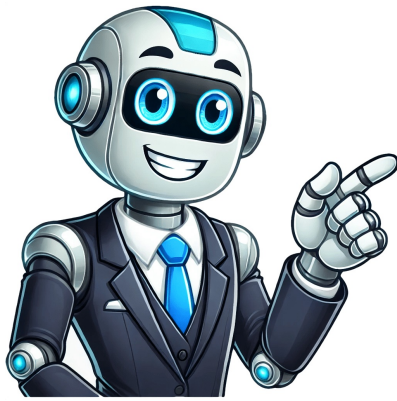


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## Farewell to manzanar book summary

December 7th, 1941 marked the beginning of Jeanne Wakatsuki's memoir, where she recounts her childhood experiences amidst the tumultuous events following Pearl Harbor. As a seven-year-old, Jeanne watched her Papa's fishing boat leave the Long Beach harbor with Mama, only to be interrupted by news of the bombing on the radio. The family's anxiety grew as they wondered what this new war would mean for their Japanese-American friends. The Wakatsukis soon found themselves facing concrete forms of anti-Asian hysteria. Papa was arrested and taken to a detention center at Fort Lincoln, leaving Mama to move her family to Terminal Island to be near her grown son Woody. However, the government eventually forced all Japanese-Americans out of coastal towns, citing concerns about espionage. The Wakatsukis relocated to Los Angeles but only stayed for a few months before being ordered to an internment camp in Manzanar. Through careful planning, Jeanne's brothers ensured that Mama and their large family were assigned to the War Relocation Authority camp. Though initially poor, life there became more comfortable after receiving help from the community. Jeanne's father, Isamu, worked as a cook, while her mother, Mitsuye, managed the household. Jeanne's experiences had stripped him of his dignity, leaving him an alcoholic and isolated from the family. His behavior became increasingly erratic, causing fights with Mama that would eventually lead to a violent outburst. The Loyalty Oath creates tension at Manzanar as internees are forced to choose between their loyalty to America and their cultural heritage. The Wakatsukis' return to their hometown brings no comfort; they're forced to live in a dilapidated housing project. Mama works tirelessly at a cannery, while Papa's struggle with alcoholism weighs heavily on the family. Jeanne faces racism and exclusion from mainstream activities, but finds solace in her friendship with Radine. When they attend high school, Radine gains acceptance, leaving Jeanne isolated. Despite her father's disapproval, Jeanne shines as a carnival queen, only to be humiliated by peers who judge her by her ethnicity. Years later, upon visiting Manzanar's ruins, Jeanne connects deeply to the camp and realizes it was a transformative experience that shaped her identity and gave her renewed confidence. Today's post focuses on "Farewell to Manzanar," a memoir written by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston, which offers an intimate look at Japanese Americans' lives during World War II internment. We aim to give readers an overview of the book without revealing crucial plot details, inviting those who wish to experience it firsthand. Our discussion will unfold in three parts: summarizing the story, examining main characters, and posing thought-provoking questions. The memoir "Farewell to Manzanar" shares a poignant account of Jeanne Wakatsuki's life within a Japanese American incarceration camp during World War II. It explores themes of resilience, identity, and the impact of discrimination on individuals and families. The book delves into the complexities of family dynamics within the context of detention, highlighting the challenges faced by internees and the sacrifices made for survival. Through personal narratives and historical context, the memoir provides a powerful insight into the experiences of Japanese Americans during this period.

The memoir "Farewell to Manzanar" serves not just as a daily survival story but also as a poignant reminder of the fragility of civil liberties during times of crisis. Through her narrative, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston vividly portrays a difficult period in American history with the innocence of childhood and the insight of adulthood reflecting on formative years. Each character adds depth to the story by offering different perspectives and emotional responses to their WWII incarceration. Here's a brief look at some key characters:

- "Jeanne Wakatsuki": As the protagonist, she narrates her family's experiences in Manzanar from age seven onwards, showcasing daily life and her personal growth amidst identity struggles.
- "Papa (Ko Wakatsuki)": He is a significant figure who undergoes profound changes due to his experiences, especially solitary confinement, affecting his relationship with the family upon return.
- "Mama (Nikkei)": She serves as a source of strength for the family, keeping them together under dire circumstances in Manzanar. Her resilience is a vital anchor for the family.
- "Woody Wakatsuki": He represents loyalty and pride in heritage despite unjust treatment, reflecting complex feelings of duty and honor among Japanese Americans during WWII.

The memoir also explores the psychological and social impacts of incarceration on young Japanese Americans differently based on gender and personality. Creating discussion questions can deepen reader understanding of "Farewell to Manzanar" and facilitate insightful conversations about its broader historical significance. Some thought-provoking questions include:

- How does Jeanne's struggle with her dual identity—both Japanese and American—affect her sense of self?
- How do the characters face challenges in reintegrating into society after their release from Manzanar?
- What historical lessons can be learned from "Farewell to Manzanar"?
- How do the themes of prejudice, resilience, and identity apply today?

The memoir "Farewell to Manzanar" is a poignant account of Jeanne Wakatsuki's experiences in a Japanese American internment camp during World War II. The book delves into the personal and societal impact of incarceration on individuals, particularly women, and their families. It sheds light on the complexities of family dynamics within the context of detention, highlighting the challenges that occur in parental roles and the tensions that arise. To endure the humiliations of forced internment—and of an American-born child who discovered what it meant to grow up behind barbed wire in the United States. January 29, 2008 The scene where Jeanne's mother defiantly smashes her fine china on the floor, piece by piece, in front of a salesman trying to buy them at a ridiculously low price because he knows she has no choice, is one of the most powerful moments of human resilience I've ever read. January 4, 2021 took a post-war Japan course years ago that included this scene where Jeanne dropped it from the syllabus. I wish I'd revisited it sooner, as it's an essential story, especially within the context of WWII's cultural shifts. Jeanne Wakatsuki was one of thousands of Japanese Americans sent to internment camps during WWII, where she spent a significant part of her childhood. Her story is told through the eyes of a child struggling to understand her ordeal, not just the poor living conditions and the concept of being confined, but also witnessing her family's endless struggles. Jeanne's anguished father is intense, and her mother is resilient. Their love and support become pillars of strength for Jeanne as she navigates the harsh realities of internment. For Jeanne's family and many others, cooperation becomes survival. One heart-breaking aspect is that when the war ends, many Japanese Americans are reluctant to leave internment. Moving from familiar imprisonment to an unfamiliar cultural climate of racism is terrifying. The book itself is both emotional and educational, well-organized with a timeline of events and a Q&A with the author. Definitely recommended. February 8, 2022 I owe Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston my career. Re-reading this for research for my writing. It was while reading this book in college that one of my classmates asked the fateful question, "Can we go to California?" Footed the bill for our class trip to Manzanar, and I was ecstatic. It was an unforgettable experience that left a lasting impact. The journey itself was grueling, but it was worth it, even with the red eye flight and sleepless night on the return trip. We were about to embark on an annual pilgrimage to Manzanar with former internees, which was a unique experience. Reflecting on the fact that I would have been interned in camp too if I had been born 50 years earlier on the west coast was emotionally overwhelming. 12 years later, after completing my education, at a professor's suggestion, I returned for the 50th pilgrimage, as the site had undergone significant changes. I was thrilled to see that disability education was now included, which sparked my second research project on Japanese American disability history, an area that remains largely unexplored. This is my third book about Japanese internment camps in the United States during the 1940s. Unlike the other two books, this one is a non-fiction account, published in 1973. While it's not perfect, it provides invaluable information about the camps and their impact on individuals like Jeanne Wakatsuki. When Jeanne's family left Manzanar after four years of WWII, they returned to find that they had lost everything. As first-generation Japanese Americans, they were barred from becoming citizens, owning land or businesses, and even pursuing a commercial fishing license for her father. They were given a choice: accept the terms of the government or remain in the camps. Jeanne's story is one of raw honesty, making me wish we could all be kinder to those who are different from us. Farewell to Manzanar, written by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, recounts the author's harrowing experience as a Japanese-American internment camp survivor during World War II. Initially, I was unfamiliar with the concept of "internment" camps and was struck by their dark history. The American government forcibly relocated thousands of Japanese-Americans from the west coast to desolate camps in the desert after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. While reading this book as a teenager, I didn't immediately connect with it, but as I continued, my appreciation grew. However, upon re-reading it as an adult, I appreciated its thought-provoking nature and personal narrative, which skillfully weaves together historical events and the author's family dynamics. Compared to other atrocities committed during wartime, Jeanne's story is relatively less severe, yet she effectively conveys the profound impact of these experiences on her family. Unfortunately, the book's strength lies in its early sections; as it progresses, the narrative becomes less cohesive and more fragmented. Although this memoir is suitable for children due to its personal nature, I believe it's more beneficial as a nostalgic reflection on childhood from an adult perspective, examining how such experiences shape one's life. Overall, I think the book would have benefited from focusing on a single theme, like exploring family dynamics or dealing with racial shame. Instead, it attempts to balance both aspects, making it a decent but not outstanding historical document. If you're interested in this topic, I recommend reading other books about the Japanese-American internment camps before this one. This book recounts the true story of Jeanne's experiences during World War II, when she was interned in a relocation camp without committing any crime. The author describes the harsh conditions, the loss of freedom, and the impact on her family. It's a powerful and moving story that sheds light on a often overlooked chapter of American history. The book is written in a simple, accessible style, making it easy to read and understand. It's a must-read for anyone interested in Japanese history, American history, or the experiences of people who have been marginalized. The book is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the power of hope. It's a story that reminds us of the importance of standing up for what is right and the need for justice. 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The author's perspective on the Japanese American internment experience during WWII, exploring the impact of this event on individuals and families for years to come. In her daughter's 8th grade English class, a regrettable period of American history was studied through a book written for YA audiences. The story begins with an abandoned quarry in San Antonio, Texas, which became the "Japanese Tea Garden" featuring a tea room. However, visitors are now greeted by a carved wooden archway reading "Chinese Tea Garden." One theory claims that Japanese-American operators had the arch carved to avoid discrimination and internment after Pearl Harbor, but this is false. In reality, the Jingju family was evicted in 1942 due to anti-Japanese sentiment, and a Chinese-American family took over the park and tea room. Houston's account highlights the stark difference between American internment camps for families and those in Europe. While the US government claimed it was for counter-intelligence purposes, it was clear that systemic discrimination against Asian immigrants and Asian-Americans led to the actual motive. Houston wrote "Farewell to Manzanar," blending journalism and sociology to detail her personal experience with minimal trauma. This important work sheds light on a shameful chapter of American history. One of many atrocities committed by the US Government was the forced relocation and incarceration of 110,000 to 120,000 Japanese people in camps inland, a dark period that all Americans should be familiar with. The Pacific coast was home to individuals who would eventually face imprisonment. Approximately 62% of those interned were US citizens, yet they were forcibly relocated due to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's orders shortly after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. This event has left many questioning whether the true reason for the internment was security or racism towards Japanese Americans. The current atmosphere regarding Muslims and terrorism may suggest that things haven't changed as much as we'd like to believe. "Farewell to Manzanar" was won by a fisherman. Ko was wrongly accused as a collaborator and sent to a camp in North Dakota while the rest of the family went to Manzanar. Due to the limited time available, they were only able to bring what they could carry, leaving many possessions behind. In one particularly poignant scene, Jeanne's mother deliberately destroys their expensive china set rather than selling it at an unfair price to a salesman. The story chronicles the difficult conditions faced by the family upon arrival and how they eventually made Manzanar their home. At the end of the war, they were reluctant to leave, fearing they would be outcasts in post-war society. Overall, this memoir is a powerful and moving account that I highly recommend. Facing the Mountain by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston is a heart-wrenching account of the Manzanar internment camp, which had a profound impact on its author and her family. The book delves into the struggles faced by Jeanne and her loved ones during this tumultuous period in American history, offering a glimpse into the lives of Japanese Americans who were forcibly relocated from their homes to these camps after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. With its concise yet powerful narrative, this memoir is both a tribute to those who suffered and a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. The author's experiences were further validated when she visited Manzanar in California, where she encountered the ruins of the camp and was moved by the photographs taken by Ansel Adams. Her visit brought back memories of her book, and it reinforced her appreciation for the struggles faced by those who endured such hardships, as well as their capacity to create a sense of community and purpose despite adversity. The author's experience with Farewell to Manzanar, a book about the Japanese American internment during WWII, has had a profound impact on her perspective. Reading the book and visiting Manzanar in person made it feel more real, giving them a deeper understanding of the daily lives of those imprisoned. However, they felt that the author's goal to educate through history and combat discriminatory acts. I'm glad I finally got around to reading this book! At first, I was surprised by how quiet it was, especially given its groundbreaking reputation. But by the end, that quietness had become a strength—it's a sad yet optimistic book that perfectly captures the mundanity of everyday life in the internment camps during WWII. The child's perspective is relatable and speaks to anyone who's been a child, while the author's story is uniquely her own but also represents so many others who've shared their experiences. I'm grateful she decided to share her story with the world. The true story of Japanese American families during World War II is one of resilience and hope in the face of injustice. In 1942, thousands were forcibly relocated from their homes to internment camps like Manzanar, where they faced harsh conditions and loss of freedom. Despite these challenges, many found ways to maintain their dignity and community. For example, Jeanne Wakatsuki's family, including her father Ko, struggled with the aftermath of relocation and the loss of their identity. Her mother's determination to protect their belongings is a testament to the strength of Japanese American women during this time. The struggle for dignity amidst overwhelming oppression is a recurring theme throughout Jeanne's narrative. As her family navigates various challenges, they find solace in small traditions and the sense of community that blossoms despite adversity. The harsh realities of camp life are starkly portrayed, with identity becoming an ongoing concern as they grapple with hopes of returning to normalcy alongside struggles of acceptance. The phrase "Shikata ga nai," or "it cannot be helped," echoes throughout their experiences, reflecting both resignation and the will to survive. With World War II coming to a close, Jeanne's family faces a daunting new reality: the confines of Camp Manzanar are gone, but the scars remain. Many internees struggle with integration into society, which now seems hostile and prejudiced. Jeanne's efforts to write wrongs of history and combat discriminatory acts. I'm glad I finally got around to reading this book! At first, I was surprised by how quiet it was, especially given its groundbreaking reputation. 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