



When the Emperor Was Divine

by Julie Otsuka



LIVING
LITERATURE
SERIES

Teacher's Guide
By Mary Ellen Snodgrass

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Synopsis

Evacuation Order No. 19

A sign appeared in Berkeley in April 1942. A 41-year-old woman reads the sign and begins to pack. Nine days later, she buys twine and tape at Lundy's Hardware Store from Joe Lundy. He tells her not to worry about the cost, and gives her caramels for the children. She is grateful, but leaves him money anyway. Department stores sell out of duffel bags. She chooses items for her son to pack, and removes pictures from the walls and books from shelves, carefully choosing items to take and those to leave behind. After padlocking boxes in the sunroom, she gives the cat to the Greers and slaughters and cooks a chicken, which she then feeds to the family's elderly pet, White Dog.

Throughout the narrative, current events are mixed with flashbacks: The woman's husband, whom government agents arrested on the night of December 7, 1941, has been transferred from Fort Missoula, Montana, to Fort Sam Houston, Texas; he writes her letters that are heavily censored by the military. Back in the present, after White Dog's feast, the woman ties him to a tree and kills him with a shovel blow to the head. After burying him in a hole in the yard, she greets the children after school and tells them to prepare for a trip; she lets her seven-year-old son believe that White Dog hasn't come when called because he is deaf. The ten-year-old girl reports that people stare at her. She practices the piano while the boy packs his baseball glove. The mother sets the macaw free. Rain disturbs the boy during the night. The next morning, the trio will go to the Civil Control Station.

Train

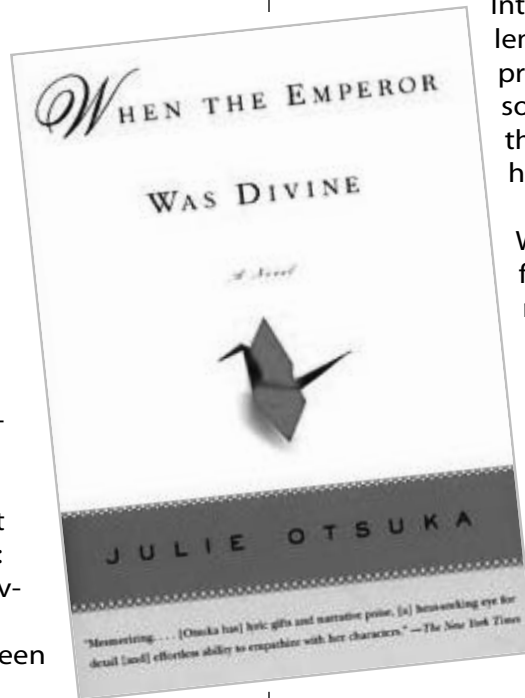
It is September 1942. The family (minus the father) have been living in temporary quarters (in horse stalls) at Tanforan Racetrack south of San Francisco for the last four and a half months; now, they are on an aged train traveling through the desert, on their way to an internment camp in Utah. The girl is now eleven, the boy eight. As the train passes through northwestern Nevada, someone hurls a rock at the window. The girl looks for Intermittent Lake and throws a lemon into the desert. The mother praises her softball throwing arm. A soldier forces the girl to pull down the shades. The boy hopes to see horses.

When the girl removes a ribbon from her hair, Teizo "Ted" Ishimoto returns it. She tells him her father has transferred to Lordsburg, New Mexico. The mother stopped using lipstick when her supply ran out two weeks before. The boy regrets forgetting his umbrella. The girl looks at a postcard promising perfume and a silk scarf for her birthday. While the children sleep, someone breaks the window with a brick, which a soldier retrieves.

Outside, a herd of mustangs gallops by. At Delta, Utah, in the morning glare, the internees travel by bus to Camp Topaz.

When the Emperor Was Divine

It is late summer. The boy thinks he sees Papa everywhere—these sightings are a manifestation of his longing for his father. The boy searches the barracks until his sister reminds him that Papa is gone. In their barracks room, they hear radio news of the war. The mother has told the boy he must never say the Emperor's name, but can't help whispering it to himself when he passes the guard tower. The family chooses hobbies and games to fill dull days. Another resident, Mrs. Kato, grows



confused about home. The family's former domestic, Mrs. Ueno, carries water for the mother. The boy suffers nightmares about displacement from home in Berkeley and dreams about swimming in an ancient sea. Letters from Papa are censored. The boy keeps a tortoise and thinks about his father's good traits. The mother fears the desert sun is causing her to age rapidly.

The children wonder what people at home are doing. Those who work on farms in the autumn report being spit on, shot at, and sworn at. The boy receives letters from Elizabeth Morgana Roosevelt. Rumors abound among the internees; fearful speculation about worse horrors circulate camp, with some internees worried about the possibility of sterilization, loss of citizenship, or even execution at the government's hands. In mid-October, the school opens. The sister worries that she has forgotten what Papa looks like. The boy relives his father's arrest. The mother has burned letters from Kagoshima along with photos, kimonos, and Japanese opera recordings and keepsakes. The children remember claiming to be Chinese to avoid reprisals back in California. Brutal and carnal behaviors turn up in camp gossip. The girl buries the dead tortoise. In late November, men plant trees in the camp. After a snow, inmates receive surplus clothes from World War I. The girl explains to her brother that horse meat comes from the mustangs or from injured animals.

On December 12, 1941, the fifth day after Papa's arrest by FBI agents, his wife had taken personal items to him in San Francisco. Quakers brighten Christmas 1942 with gifts for Japanese-American children. The girl begins to stay out with friends; the mother sits idle and dreams of her former home in Kagoshima. The whole family remembers the past and longs for the father; the mother is full of regret. The boy recalls burying the family's silver under the Buddha statue. The girl jumps rope in the moonlight. In February 1943, the mother signs the loyalty questionnaire. The next morning, Gloria the tulip blooms. A guard shoots a potential escapee in April. Japanese-American army volunteers depart in May. Throughout the summer, the boy continues to long for his father.

In a Stranger's Backyard

After three years and five months, the family returns to Berkeley, California, in fall 1945 with \$25

in cash. Although they still own their house, most of their personal belongings have been stolen and their home has been vandalized; they find trash in the house, obscenities scrawled on the walls, and pornographic magazines left on bare mattresses upstairs. The mother berates herself for trusting a stranger: Milt Parker, the American lawyer who had appeared on their doorstep the day after Papa's arrest, promising to take care of their property and collect the rent while they were away. Milt Parker is now nowhere to be found, and neither is the rent money. Neighbors for the most part ignore the family's return, although once, a whiskey bottle shatters a front window. Still, the sea air blows away foul smells inside, and for the first time in years, they eat fresh food—on their good silver, which the boy had buried in the yard before they were sent away.

Prejudice worsens as stories of Japanese atrocities return home with former prisoners of war. The family discovers that during the past years, DeNardo the postman, has maligned them as enemies. After a long search for work, the mother becomes a domestic, and she slowly begins to furnish the house, first providing paint to cover the words written on the walls, then other items such as second-hand beds for the children. In December 1945, Papa sends a telegram: he has departed from Santa Fe and will be home soon. Their once-handsome, vigorous father arrives toothless, bald, prematurely aged, and paranoid; he is so changed that the children don't recognize him and are afraid to greet him at the train station. He is fifty-six, but looks much older.

As time passes, the children see more changes in their parents. Mother seems more and more tired, and her body is visibly deteriorating from hard work, although she never complains. Papa, who at first tried to participate in the family, becomes more and more withdrawn; he winds up spending his days alone in his room, staring out the window (he never works again; he can't bring himself to leave the house, and nobody would hire him anyway). At night, Papa sleeps fitfully and has frequent nightmares; at these times, Mother must constantly reassure him that he is home. The whole family needs this reassurance, because although they are physically home, the intervening terrible years have taken away their security and sense of belonging. A looming question that remains unan-

swered is what Papa did before and during the war: What was he accused of? Was he guilty? What happened to him while he was held? He never says, and the children never ask.

By spring 1946, the other Japanese fathers who survived the war and remained in America have returned home, and other children are more receptive to the boy and girl.

Confession

In a short afterward, Papa speaks briefly of being detained for questioning for days, then embarks on a sarcastic screed full of suppressed anger in which he confesses to every crime falsely attributed to Japanese-Americans during World War II: yes, he says, he personally spread poison, dynamited railroads, laid mines in harbors, set fire to oil wells, assaulted the womenfolk, spied, stole, and sold state secrets. He further claims to be a Japanese-American everyman, reciting every imaginable vicious stereotype about people of Japanese ancestry. He concludes with a simple “I’m sorry,” and asks to be let go.

Japanese-American Internment Timeline

- 1941** **December 7:** Japan attacks Pearl Harbor. Presidential Proclamation No. 2525 authorizes U.S. Attorney General to order round-up of suspects, many of whom had already been under surveillance.
December 8: U.S. Treasury Department seizes all Japanese bank accounts and businesses.

- 1942** **January 1:** Attorney General freezes travel by all suspected “enemy” aliens, orders surrender of weapons.
January 14: President Roosevelt orders re-registration of suspected “enemy” aliens in West.
January 29: Attorney General issues first of a series of orders establishing limited strategic areas along the West Coast and requiring the removal of all suspected “enemy” aliens from these areas.
February 4: Attorney General establishes curfew zones in California effective

- February 4.
February 19: President signs Executive Order No. 9066, authorizing the Secretary of War or his designee to establish “military areas” from which people are excluded.
February 20: Secretary Stimson designates Gen. DeWitt as military commander empowered to carry out an evacuation within his command.
March 2: Gen. DeWitt issues Proclamation No. 1, designating the Western half of the three West Coast states and the southern third of Arizona as military areas from which all people of Japanese descent are to be excluded.
March 11: Gen. DeWitt establishes the Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA), with Col. Karl R. Bendetsen as Director, to carry out internment plan.
March 18: FDR signs EO 9102 creating the War Relocation Authority (WRA), with Milton S. Eisenhower as director, to assist in evacuation of Japanese-Americans by the military.
March 22: First large groups of Japanese ancestry moved from Los Angeles to the Army-operated Manzanar detention center.
March 27: Gen. DeWitt issues Proclamation No. 4 (effective March 29) forbidding further voluntary migration of Japanese and Japanese Americans from the West Coast.
March 28: In Portland, Oregon, Attorney Min Yasui decides to challenge the curfew order by breaking curfew. Declaring himself of Japanese ancestry, Yasui demands but fails to be arrested by a passing police officer, then presents himself at a local police station and insists he be arrested.
May 16: University student Gordon Hirabayashi challenges the exclusion order by purposefully breaking curfew and then going to an FBI office, presenting himself for arrest with a prepared statement, “Why I Refused to Register for Evacuation.”
May 19: Western Defense Command issues Civilian Restriction Order No. 1 establishing all temporary detention

centers in the eight far western states as military areas and forbidding residents to leave these areas without expressed approval of the WDC.

May 30: Fred Korematsu is arrested for violating the order, initiating one of four major test cases of the internment era.

July 13: Mitsuye Endo petitions for a writ of *habeas corpus*, stating that she was a loyal and law abiding U.S. citizen, that no charge had been made against her, that she was being unlawfully detained, and that she was confined in an internment camp under armed guard and held there against her will.

August 15: Farm laborers strike at Tule Lake internment camp.

September 11: First group is moved from Tanforan detention center to Central Utah internment camp, near Delta, Utah.

November 3: Transfer of internees from temporary detention centers is completed with the arrival of the last group at Jerome internment camp from Fresno.

1943

January 4: WRA field offices are established in Chicago, Salt Lake City, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Des Moines, New York, Denver, Kansas City, and Boston.

January 23: Secretary of War Stimson announces plans to form an all-Japanese American Combat team to be made up of volunteers from both the mainland and Hawaii.

February 8: Registration ("loyalty questionnaire") of all persons over 17 years of age for Army recruitment, segregation, and relocation begins at most of the internment camps.

May 6: Eleanor Roosevelt spends a day at Gila River internment camp in Arizona.

June 21: *Hirabayashi v. U.S.* and *Yasui v. U.S.*: The Supreme Court rules that a curfew may be imposed against one group of Americans citizens based solely on ancestry and that Congress, in enacting Public Law 77-503, authorized the implementation of EO 9066 and provided criminal penalties for violation of orders of the Military Commander.

1944

February 16: FDR signs Executive Order No. 9423, transferring WRA to the Department of the Interior.

May: The all-Japanese American (nisei) 442 Regimental Combat Team (RCT) is sent to the Italian front.

June 6: D-Day

December 17: The War Department announces the revocation (effective on January 2, 1945) of the West Coast mass exclusion orders, which had been in effect against people of Japanese descent since spring of 1942.

December 18: WRA announces that all internment camps will be closed before the end of 1945 (a deadline that is missed), and the entire WRA program will be liquidated on June 30, 1946.

December 18: *Korematsu v. U.S.*: U.S. Supreme Court rules that one group of citizens may be singled out and expelled from their homes and imprisoned for several years without trial, based solely on their ancestry.

December 18: In *ex parte Endo*, U.S. Supreme Court rules that WRA has no authority to detain a "concededly loyal" American citizen.

1945

April 29: The 442nd Regiment liberates Dachau concentration camp in Germany.

August 15: V-J Day

September: WDC issues Public Proclamation No. 24 revoking all individual exclusion orders and all further military restrictions against persons of Japanese descent.

Oct. 15-Dec. 15: All internment except Tule Lake are closed.

1946

March 20: Tule Lake Segregation Center is closed.

June 30: WRA program officially terminates.

October 30: Crystal City Detention Center, Texas, operated by the Justice Department, releases last Japanese (North, Central, and South) Americans. This marks the closing of the Japanese American Internment Program.

1948

July 2: Evacuation Claims Act gives internees until January 3, 1950, to file claims against the government for damages to or loss of real or personal prop-

<p>erty as a consequence of the evacuation. Total of \$31 million paid by the government, equaling less than 10 cents per dollar lost.</p> <p>1969 First annual Manzanar Pilgrimage held, leading to similar commemorations at other concentration camps.</p> <p>1970 Edison Uno and Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) colleagues introduce a resolution at the 1970 JACL National Convention to seek compensation from the government for internment. Although voted down, this is the action sometimes credited as the beginning of the redress movement.</p> <p>1976 February 19: President Gerald Ford signs "An American Promise"; it formally rescinds EO 9066 but contains no apology. May 3: Michi Weglyn's <i>Years of Infamy</i> is published; it is to become one of the most widely read and cited books on internment.</p> <p>1979 May: National Council for Japanese American Redress is formed by William Hohri and members of Seattle JACL in response to a March decision by JACL's National Committee for Redress that it should recommend the commissioning of a government study rather than press for direct individual reparations.</p> <p>1980 Following a 1979 proposal introduced by Senator Daniel Inouye, Congress establishes Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) to review the impact of EO 9066 on Japanese Americans.</p> <p>1983 February 22: Report of the Commission of Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC), entitled <i>Personal Justice Denied</i>, concludes that exclusion, expulsion and incarceration were not justified by military necessity, and the decisions to do so were based on race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership. November 10: In response to a petition of <i>error coram nobis</i> by Fred Korematsu, the San Francisco Federal District Court reverses his 1942 conviction and rules that the internment was not justified.</p> <p>1988 January 12: Ruling in <i>Hirabayashi v U.S.</i> vacates Hirabayashi's convictions for</p>	<p>resisting curfew and evacuation orders. August 10: The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 provides for a Presidential apology and appropriates \$1.25 billion for reparations of \$20,000 to most internees, evacuees, and others of Japanese ancestry who lost liberty or property because of government actions during World War II. The Civil Liberties Public Education Fund is created to help teach the public about the internment period.</p> <p>1989 November: Public Law 101-162 guarantees funds for reparation payments to surviving former internees beginning in October 1990.</p> <p>1990 October 9: The first redress payment is issued to 107-year-old Rev. Mamoru Eto at a Washington, D.C., ceremony.</p> <p>1999 January 25: Court of Federal Claims grants final approval to the settlement in <i>Mochizuki v. U.S.</i>, which authorizes apology letters and payments of \$5,000 to be sent to Japanese Latin Americans. February 1: Emiko Omori's film, <i>Rabbit in the Moon</i>, earns the 1999 Sundance Film Festival award. February 5: The Office of Redress Administration officially closes, having overseen some 82,219 cases. At its close, ORA lists 1,475 "unknown historical records" and 1,581 cases as "ineligible" for reparation. May 21: Congress passes legislation for additional funding to pay remaining eligible claimants who had filed timely claims under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 and the <i>Mochizuki</i> settlement agreement. October 22: Groundbreaking on construction of a national memorial to both Japanese-American soldiers and those sent to internment camps takes place in Washington, D.C., with President Clinton in attendance.</p> <p>2000 January: The Japanese American Veterans Association of Washington, D.C., votes to recognize the "principled stand" taken by <i>nisei</i> draft resisters of conscience, following similar gestures by the 442nd Club of Hawaii and the MIS of Northern California. February 2: The White House</p>
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announces its proposal for a new, \$4.8 million initiative to help acquire and preserve several World War II internment camp sites throughout the country.

2001 January: In one of his final acts in office, President Clinton proclaims the Minidoka War Relocation Center to be an official national monument.

Author Sketch

Novelist Julie Otsuka was born on May 15, 1962; her father was a Japanese aerospace engineer and her mother was a lab technician who was a nisei, or first-generation Japanese-American. Otsuka grew up in California with two younger brothers in an English-speaking environment. The novel's protagonists are based on Otsuka's own family: her grandfather, Shigeharu Nozaka of Berkeley, California, who was one of 1,200 Japanese nationals arrested on December 8, 1941, by the FBI as "dangerous enemy aliens" and imprisoned during World War II; her grandmother, Toyoko H. Nozaka; and her uncle, Andrew, and mother, Alice, who with Toyoko were interned at Topaz, Utah.



Growing up, Otsuka's only direct link to these family sufferings came through a box of censored letters and postcards her grandfather had written to her grandmother; her family, and particularly her grandmother, chose not to speak of their wartime experiences. It wasn't until Otsuka was grown and in graduate school that her future best-seller began to take shape. The novel began as a master's thesis in fiction-writing, for which Otsuka plumbed historical accounts, news stories, and her family history, producing a work that personalized the tragedy suffered by many Japanese-Americans on the West Coast during World War II.

A graduate of Yale University with an MFA from Columbia University, Otsuka currently lives in New York City.

Critic's Corner

When the Emperor Was Divine was an outgrowth of Otsuka's master's thesis, which became a novel

based not only on her family's suppressed experiences, but also on accounts of other victims of anti-Japanese prejudice in America during World War II. In addition to being a fictionalized memoir of sorts, the novel is a study of the terrible, lasting effects of prejudice on its victims, and a reminder that we are not immune to repeating the injustices of the past. Otsuka has recounted fears that a similar xenophobia would target Arab immigrants and Muslims after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and she has said in an interview, "I am still surprised that there has not been more of an outcry against the Bush administration's recent assault on civil liberties: the secret arrests and indefinite detention of more than 1,200 Middle Eastern men, the suspension of habeas corpus and of the right to trial by jury, the electronic monitoring of lawyer-client conversations, the use of military tribunals. It is actually possible, today, for a long-term U.S. resident suspected of terrorist activity to be arrested and sentenced to death in a secret military trial based on hearsay evidence."

Like the classic *Farewell to Manzanar*, by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James Houston, *When the Emperor Was Divine* brings home the terrible human costs of this type of xenophobia, and personalizes the experiences through the prism of a Japanese family that are at once individuals and everymen. Critics have remarked on Otsuka's incisive, unsentimental phrasing and the surreal calm with which acts of cultural violence are described, calling the book "terse but eloquent" (*New York Times Book Review*), and asserting that "[Her] writing cuts like jagged glass" (*Minneapolis Star Tribune*). Her stark portrayal of individual suffering in the face of a shameful campaign of racism earned honors from the Asia Society, a 2003 Alex Award, and an Asian-American Literary Award. Of the details, she remarked, "The backdrop—the awfulness of the war, of the internment—speaks for itself."

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Selected Works by Julie Otsuka

When the Emperor Was Divine (2002)
Best of the Fiction Workshop 1998 (contributor, 1998)

The Importance of Setting

The locations in *When the Emperor Was Divine* contrast West Coast and Western desert settings in the United States from 1941 to 1946, during and immediately after World War II, a fearful time for Americans. As well, the settings contrast the peaceful comfort of a prosperous, well-run middle-class household, and the deprived, ugly barracks existence of a detainee summarily stripped of

basic Constitutional rights. The mother's preparation of her home and children for evacuation illustrates the value of common items to the family, including a set of Imari tableware, a blue pin-striped suit, and a print of Jean-François Millet's painting *The Gleaners*, which depicts humble harvesters gathering leftovers. The purchase of twine and tape and the readying of boxes to lock in the sunroom indicates a hope for return to normalcy in the future. The dispersal of vulnerable living things—the cat to the Greens next door, the macaw out the window, and White Dog to its grave in the backyard—underscores the terrible, life-and-death choices that must be made during times of war and persecution, and creates an aura of finality to aspects of family life that will never return to their former state; symbolically, an end to the old life.

The train ride from San Francisco, across northern Nevada, and on to Delta in northwestern Utah, introduces the children to views of other towns and landscapes, and of places where citizens need not fear prejudice, state-sponsored theft, and physical and social displacement. The lowering of shades symbolizes the thrusting of Japanese-Americans into social darkness and legal limbo, and suggests the dual nature of incarceration—to protect citizens of Japanese lineage from harm and to punish an ethnic group for the atrocities of the Japanese Empire. Upon the family's arrival at the Utah camp, the barren wasteland, stark tarpaper and plank barracks, and fenced-in perimeter marked by guard towers predict a test of survival and endurance for an unknown length of time. Some semblance of routine, order, and normal life is provided by meals in mess halls, laundry in lavatories, and a school in a camp facility. The dominance of natural cycles seizes the imagination with the passage of seasons and images of extremes of cold and heat, as well as the uplifting return of spring after a hard winter; the seasons, at least, offer something that transcends human foibles and cruelty.

The chilling return home to Berkeley, California, further underscores the fragility of possessions, and indeed of life itself, during wartime, and the losses that are incurred. The mother clings to her key before approaching the familiar house for the first time in years; the first sight that greets her is her once-lovely yard, which now sports weeds, a

dead garden, and a bare patch where her beloved rose bush once grew. She grieves for the loss of the rose bush, which apparently has been stolen. Once inside, the family discovers their once-beautiful home pillaged and vandalized. Worsening the bleak setting is the intrusion of home-grown “terrorists” who hurl a brick through the window. By patching broken glass, shepherding the children upstairs to a back room, and dousing the lights, the mother returns the family to the incarceration of Camp Topaz and to a hunted mentality, even as she seeks to protect the children from further harm. The arrival of Papa, now a barely functional, prematurely aged shadow of his former self, dashes any hope of a restoration of the family unit. The family, though reunited, is not the same.

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Julie Otsuka’s style, present the following terms and applications to her novel:

Historical or chronicle novel: a fictional work that immerses the reader in historical events. When the *Emperor Was Divine* is a historical, or chronicle, novel. Through facts, letters, postcards, newspapers, radio transmissions, and eyewitness reports, the characters re-enact the repression of Japanese-Americans after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941. Brief references to punitive camps for collaborators, “Harry” and the bomb, war’s end, racism in California, and rumors and racial profiling spread by returning prisoners of war, outline enough of world conflict to put into perspective the welter of emotion that arouses hatred and suspicion between ethnic groups.

Suspense: anticipation of the outcome of an action or the solution to a mystery, puzzle, or uncertainty. Thoughts of Papa and worries about his fate unite the mother and her children in daily fantasies that both aggravate their suffering and sustain them through it. Letters and postcards, although sliced up by censors, sustain the family in their dreams of Papa’s return and the security of his leadership, while raising more questions than they answer. The nearly unbearable suspense—How long until we see Papa again? Does he still love us? Will he even return?—is finally relieved, but hideously, painfully, when Papa returns weak, damaged, and nearly unrecognizable. The sus-

pense about Papa builds in the narrative until the dream of restoration is crushed by the reality. The entire process brings home the terrible suffering of a patriarchal family when the father is cut off from his wife and children.

Universality: a quality or theme that applies to all people at all times. The themes of prejudice, war, loss, suffering, love, and hope are universal to the human condition. Even their obvious “Americanness” universalizes the family—they are much like other families in the “melting pot,” united by pop culture (the children listen to *The Green Hornet*, read *Joe Palooka* comic strips and *Audubon’s Birds of America*, and post a “One World One War” map on the wall), music (the father sings *Begin the Beguine*), and even faith—the mother, far from being an emperor-worshipper, is a Christian who prays the Lord’s Prayer and contemplates a print of Jesus (another universal image of suffering, love, and faith amid terrible trials). Reminders of the uniqueness of Okies, Squanto, and Mormons indicate that other American ethnic groups have suffered some of the same exclusion and bias that assaults the Japanese-American internees.

Related Reading

William Armstrong, *Souder*
Joseph Bruchac, *Bowman’s Store*
Pearl Buck, *The Good Earth*
Chris Crutcher, *Whale Talk*
Michael Dorris, *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*
Robin Lee Graham, *Dove*
Esther Hautzig, *The Endless Steppe*
Irene Hunt, *No Promises in the Wind*
Gish Jen, *Who’s Irish?* and “Fish Cheeks”
Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John*
Joseph Krungold, *And Now Miguel*
Gus Lee, *China Boy*
Adeline Yen Mah, *Chinese Cinderella*
James Vance Marshall, *Walkabout*
Ben Mikhaelsen, *Touching Spirit Bear*
Joyce Hostetter Moyer, *Blue*
Walter Dean Myers, *The Glory Field*
Ann Petry, *Tituba of Salem Village*
Conrad Richter, *The Light in the Forest*
Art Spiegelman, *Maus*
Jane Wagner, *J.T.*
Yoko Kawashima Watkins, *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*
Lawrence Yep, *Dragon’s Gate*

Jane Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic*

Cross-Curricular Sources

For related reading and more information about Julie Otsuka, historical novels, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, World War II, Japan, nationalism, internment, the Japanese emperor, Tojo, the bomb, espionage, Kimi Ga Yo, racism, divided families, wartime loss, and prisoners of war, consult these sources:

Articles

- Leeper, Angela. "I Spy: Books about Espionage," *Book Links*, vol. 17, no. 2 (November 2007): 56-60.
- Pearce, Matt. "Pearl Harbor: The Attack Begins," *World War II* (2006): 2.
- Wiseman, Paul. "Nationalism Gains Strength in Japan," *USA Today* (27 July 2007).

Audiocassette

The Light in the Forest, Listening Library

Audio CD

A Yellow Raft in Blue Water, Audio Bookshelf

Autobiography

- Annie John*
Bowman's Store
China Boy
Dove
The Endless Steppe
Farewell to Manzanar
Night
So Far from the Bamboo Grove

Biography

- Anna and the King of Siam*
Thousand Pieces of Gold

Fable

"The Hares and the Frogs," Aesop

Historical novels

- Blue*
Chinese Cinderella and the Secret Dragon Society
The Devil's Arithmetic
The Glory Field
Island of the Blue Dolphins
The Light in the Forest
No Promises in the Wind
Tituba of Salem Village

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<http://www.time.com/time/asia/asia/magazine/1999/990823/hirohito1.html>
 "Exploring the Japanese American Internment,"

<http://www.asianamericanmedia.org/jain-ternment/>

"Gold Star Mothers,"

<http://www.montney.com/mflag.htm>.

"Tojo Hideki,"

http://www.grolier.com/wwii/wwii_tojo.html

"Topaz Museum," <http://www.topazmuseum.org/>

"Timeline of Japanese American Internment,"

<<http://www.imdiversity.com>>

Music

"Flag and National Anthem of Japan,"

<http://www.timwerx.net/culture/japan/hinomaru.htm>

Novels

- The Bean Trees*
Dragon Gate
The Good Earth
Snow Falling on Cedars
Walkabout

Plays

- J.T.*
The King and I

Poem

- "The Ballad of East and West," Rudyard Kipling
 "The Man He Killed," Thomas Hardy

Reference works

- Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*
Children of Topaz
Civil Disobedience
Encyclopedia of World Scripture
Years of Infamy

Short story

- "Fish Cheeks," Gish Jen
 "The Wall," Jean-Paul Sartre

Videos

- Come See the Paradise*
The Joy Luck Club
Nanking
Pearl Harbor
South Pacific
Thirty Seconds over Tokyo
Thousand Pieces of Gold

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Julie Otsuka's *When the Emperor Was Divine* should include these aspects:

Themes

- displacement
- fatherlessness
- intolerance

- xenophobia
- incarceration
- despair
- repatriation
- disorder
- racism
- reunion
- grief
- challenge

Motifs

- making friends with fellow internees
- surveying changes in American attitudes
- trying to fit in
- bicultural assimilation
- overcoming an international tragedy
- recovering from loss and grief

General Objectives

1. To identify the nature of home
2. To characterize the effects of war on civilians and law officers
3. To discuss the purpose of character names
4. To account for sources of prejudice and intimidation
5. To contrast urban and rural settings
6. To note the value of hope, dreams, and fantasy
7. To enumerate methods of coping
8. To study the conventions of prison literature
9. To recount types of social rejection and humiliation
10. To explain the title

Specific Objectives

1. To describe the reactions of white Americans to the bombing of Pearl Harbor
2. To restructure events surrounding Papa’s arrest and interrogation by the FBI
3. To discuss methods of passing the time at the racetrack and at Camp Topaz
4. To summarize the chores of reopening the house and cleaning the yard in Berkeley
5. To account for the loss of a tortoise, dog, cat, and macaw
6. To characterize conditions in the Utah desert through the seasons
7. To list ways of identifying with other Americans
8. To evaluate changes in Papa
9. To describe lessening of neighborliness and heightening of suspicion and hostility

10. To validate letters and postcards as evidence of love

Meaning Study

Below are significant words, phrases, or sentences from the historical novel. Explain each in context. Chapter names and page numbers pinpoint each entry so you can re-read the passage in which it appears.

1. Sugar rationing would begin on Tuesday.
(“Evacuation Order No. 19,” p. 4)
(The controlled distribution of sugar during World War II protected citizens from shortages caused by speculators and assured industry, hospitals, and the military a necessary share of the commodity. At war’s height, ration books allotted to adults and children aided fair and even sales of sugar, coffee, jam and jelly, meat, lard, shortening and oils, cheese, canned milk, butter, margarine, canned and bottled foods, frozen food, dried fruits, leather shoes, stoves, firewood, coal, gasoline and fuel oil, typewriters, bicycles, and cars. Individuals purchased items with money and the appropriate ration book stamp.)
2. Everything else—the china, the crystal, the set of ivory chopsticks her mother had sent to her fifteen years ago from Kagoshima on her wedding day—she put into boxes.
(“Evacuation Order No. 19,” p. 8)
(The mother is a native of Kagoshima, a port city on Kyushu, the southernmost island of Japan. She was married at age 26 to a man 11 years her senior.)
3. In front of a wooden picket fence was a victory garden and a hand-painted sign that said FOR SALE. (“Train,” p. 23).
(War gardens, called “victory gardens” in a bit of wartime propaganda, united American homeowners and apartment dwellers in morale boosting. The task of raising fresh fruit and vegetables required no transportation or purchase and empowered civilians to help themselves and their families to better nutrition during an era of high prices and food shortages. Posters pictured the symbolic figure of Miss Liberty spreading seeds over furrows, a juxtaposition linking victory gardening with good citizenship and patriotism.)
4. On the map the lake was called Intermittent.
(“Train,” p. 23)

(The appearance and disappearance of Intermittent Lake depends on the snow melt of the Wasatch mountain range in Utah and on the runoff in spring, which can fill the lake to full pond. The advance of summer heat and urban, industrial, and agricultural needs gradually dissipates the outlines as the lake shrinks.)

5. The girl had always lived in California—first in Berkeley, in a white stucco house on a wide street not far from the sea, and then for the last four and a half months, in the assembly center at the Tanforan racetrack south of San Francisco—but now she was going to Utah to live in the desert. (“Train,” p. 25)
(A thoroughbred racing course in San Bruno, California, the Tanforan racetrack and stables provided the military a training field for the infantry during World War I and an internment camp in World War II for 8,000 Japanese-American evacuees housed in 170 barracks until they could be sorted out and transported to more permanent camps at Gila River, Arizona; Grana, Colorado; Heart Mountain, Wyoming; Jerome, Arkansas; Manzanar, California; Minidoka, Idaho; Poston, Arizona; Rohwer, Arkansas; Topaz, Utah; and Tule Lake, California.)
6. At Topaz the bus stopped. (“Train,” p. 48)
(At its opening on September 11, 1942, Topaz was a 31-square-mile facility. It accommodated 8,000 internees and a staff of 1,000 formerly housed at Tanforan racetrack in San Francisco. The Utah compound lay beyond the Sevier River in sight of Mount Topaz and the Wasatch Mountains some 16 miles north of Delta, Utah. Pine plank and tarpaper apartments offered little protection from high and low temperatures and from dust storms. The camp closed on October 31, 1945, over two months after the end of World War II.)
7. But sometimes it slipped out anyway. Hirohito, Hirohito, Hirohito. (“When the Emperor Was Divine,” p. 52)
(The ruler of the Japanese Empire from 1926, Hirohito or Emperor Showa served his nation for 62 years. The expansionism that pushed Japanese troops into Manchuria in 1931 and into Nanking on December 13, 1937, reached untenable proportions in September 1941, when Japan, under the leadership of General Hideki Tojo, chose Britain, the Netherlands, and the United States as wartime targets.)
8. She told him about the ancient salt lake that had once covered all of Utah and parts of Nevada.

This was thousands of years ago, she said, during the Ice Age. (“When the Emperor Was Divine,” p. 58)

(Around one million years ago in the Jurassic Period, the Sundance Sea extended south from the Arctic Ocean through western Canada to the west-central states. Fossilized seafloor deposits attest to plants, fish, and marine reptiles that populated the body of water. During the Ice Age, Lake Bonneville in northwestern Utah flourished with fresh-water animals, including the mammoth and saber-toothed tiger. At the era’s end, the Great Salt Lake remained, varying from 1,700 to 3,300 square miles, depending on rainfall and drought.)

9. We counted gold stars in our neighbors’ front windows. (“In a Stranger’s Backyard,” p. 117).
(Gold Star Mothers whose sons were taken prisoner, wounded, or killed in action displayed flags in their windows marked by single gold stars. Families with husbands and sons in the service displayed a similar red-bordered white rectangle with a blue star at the center.)
10. I’m the stranger at the gate. (“Confession,” p. 143)
(Papa refers to the Judeo-Christian tradition, evinced in the Bible, of welcoming the outsider into a household or worship center and of tending to individual needs for food, water, first-aid, shelter, and protection.. In that tradition, it is commonly held that the way one treats the stranger and the powerless is a true measure of one’s own character—those who are truly righteous have great care for outsiders. By this definition, the only characters in the novel who qualify are Joe Lundy, the kindly hardware store owner in Berkeley, and strangers such as the Quakers who give Christmas gifts and words of encouragement to the internees. Ted, although he himself is a “stranger” who has been mistreated, reveals this spirit in his kindness to the girl.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important. Be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the historical novel.

Character Interaction

1. Why do interned children return quietly to classrooms in Berkeley?
(When the boy and girl return to Berkeley in fall 1945, they are eager to learn what old friends

have been doing during the war. To their surprise, they find their old friends cold to their overtures. The two try to fit in with other students by accentuating their American traits. They speak English and conceal Asian traits and culture, particularly preference for Japanese foods. They lower their voices and avoid white bullies, who ride their bikes around the two on the walk home from school. The duo refrain from joining groups of Japanese-American children and try not to argue or to cause trouble that will draw attention to them.)

Action

2. How does the family reach Camp Topaz?
(The family's long journey from Berkeley, California, to an internment camp outside Delta, Utah, begins with packing their belongings for an assembly at the Civil Control Station. From there, they join other Japanese Americans in internment at the Tanforan racetrack south of San Francisco, where they remain in horse stalls from April until September 1942. Authorities transfer evacuees to individual camp sites. The family takes a train through northern Nevada to northwestern Utah and completes the last leg of the journey by bus into the desert at Delta, Utah, to Camp Topaz. Along the way, journeyers keep train shades drawn to avoid arousing the ire of racists, who retaliate for the bombing of Pearl Harbor by throwing rocks and bricks at the train windows.)

Exposition

3. What does the novel indicate about the family's wartime situation?
(Internment begins late in the night of December 7, 1941, when FBI agents round up Japanese-American males for interrogation and imprisonment. The two children see their Papa taken away in house slippers; left fatherless, they look to their mother for guidance and reassurance. Two weeks later, she contacts Papa in San Francisco and takes toilet articles to him. Censored letters and postcards from his places of incarceration fail to fill the void as the tedium of life in a flimsy barracks room in the Utah desert increases disillusion and hopelessness. The family is lucky to return to their former home in Berkeley, California, and to find enough furnishing to begin their lives anew. Although filth, neglect, vandalism, and evi-

dence of theft greet them at the door, they begin accommodating themselves to Berkeley once more and to the clean sea air. The situation reaches a low point with Papa's return by train from Santa Fe. Rather than being an uplifting presence, he is an emotional and physical drain on the household, retreating into mental illness and leaving the mother to earn a living as a domestic and the children to cope with community disapproval and suspicion.)

History

4. How does the action ally with the history of 1941-1945?
(After the early morning bomb run on December 7, 1941, by Japanese MIGs over Hickam Field and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, the American people find themselves plunged into a world war that began in the 1930s. Immediately, the west coast comes under suspicion as a breeding ground for Asian insurgents and collaborators. Amid widespread rage and hysteria over the attacks, the unprecedented decision of President Franklin D. Roosevelt to intern people of Japanese descent suspends civil rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Interrogation and brutalizing of men precedes separation of families and the loss of personal and business property. Those who spend the next years in camps look forward to resuming normalcy in American neighborhoods. They return to vandalism and theft of their belongings, homelessness, unemployment, and deterioration of physical and mental health. Vigilantism threatens Asian-Americans in communities, particularly in schools and public transportation. The most vulnerable are the elderly and children.)

Setting

5. How do families cope in the desert?
(The thin walls of plank-and-tarpaper barracks leave families vulnerable to gnats and flies, heat, cold, snakes and lizards, noise, and lack of privacy. Children jump rope, play board games, and fly kites while parents attempt to plant gardens and sanitize surroundings that quickly silt in with alkaline particles. Dust storms overwhelm eyes and respiratory systems with stinging dust, which burns mucous membranes and erodes health. The squalor of mess halls and latrines and the flat nothingness of

the camp worsens in winter, when rain turns dust to mud. The coming of spring introduces color to the Wasatch mountain vista, but frustrates internees, whom guards sequester behind fences.)

Interpretation

6. Why is the mother a model parent?

(The mother sets the tone of the novel by maintaining a stoic outlook toward events that can't be helped. She immediately obeys official orders to pack and assemble for evacuation and makes no complaint to Joe Lundy, the hardware store clerk who sells her tape and twine. She even takes care of the needs of the family's pets, including the painful job of euthanizing the aged family dog after making him a delicious last meal. By calming her son and daughter and restoring normalcy to mealtime, playtime, and bedtime, she keeps order in their lives and quells panic. Her authority replaces the absent father with simple instructions and an optimism belief that they will eventually return to their Berkeley home be reunited as a family.)

On the train ride to Utah, the alert mother looks out for safety and comfort by encouraging rest and everyday conversation. Upon the family's arrival home to Berkeley in the fall of 1945, she returns to the establishment of eating and sleeping arrangements and to the upgrading of diet with fresh pears and other familiar foods. Rather than grieve over Papa's decline, she takes strength from the familiarity of a day job that assures a living for her family.)

Literary Foils

7. How does Ted contrast with Milt?

(Brief exchanges with outsiders illustrate the behaviors and attitudes of other survivors of World War II. Like the mother, train passenger Teizo "Ted" Ishimoto makes upbeat comments about the girl and replaces her ribbon. At the lavatory door, his courtesy reminds the child that good manners help people cope in untenable situations, such as the abrupt removal of Japanese Americans from their homes to unknown destinations. For extra good feeling, he tells the girl that her mother is beautiful.)

People like attorney Milt Parker illustrate the opportunism of war profiteers. By assuring the

family that their home will be rented and protected, he offers false comfort during the confusing few hours preceding departure from Berkeley to the Civil Control Station, taking advantage of their vulnerability. When the mother unlocks the house door in the fall of 1945, she realizes that Milt has cheated her and that there is no recourse against his dishonesty. In contrast to Ted Ishimoto, Milt Parker gives evidence to the worst traits of selfishness, criminality, and lawlessness that arise in times of war and turmoil. Perhaps an even better foil for Milt Parker is Joe Lundy, the kindly hardware store owner and one of the few examples of decency toward the family from a non-Japanese.)

Theme

8. What does the novel reveal about ethnicity?

(The narrative stresses the multicultural nature of life in the American nuclear family. Although the parents have ties to Kagoshima, Japan, their behaviors and attitudes are textured with American variety—Benny Goodman's band and The Green Hornet on the radio, Millet's The Gleaners on the wall, and the Lord's Prayer for consolation. They raise pets, shop at the corner drugstore, jump rope and play board games, sing popular ballads and jazz songs, and attend school functions like other American families. The Asian bias that the FBI expects to find among internees exists only in theory. However, upon return to a racist environment bristling with malice and false rumor, Japanese Americans develop a bias to protect themselves from anti-Japanese fervor.)

Tone

9. Why is normality integral to the novel's tone?

(Efforts to maintain family rhythms and goals protect internees from panic and unwise decision. On the train trip east from San Francisco to Delta, Utah, the mother admires her daughter's pitching arm and encourages both children to stretch out on the seat to achieve restful sleep. At the barracks at Camp Topaz, Utah, the family continues household chores to keep the premises clean and liveable. The children enroll in school and make friends. Letter-writing assures them that Papa is somewhere out there and relatively safe. Upon the trio's return to Berkeley, California, the routine of housekeeping occupies them in a house spoiled by intrud-

ers and vandals. The excitement builds when Papa returns home by train from Santa Fe. Although he looks sick and retreats into sadness and regret, the mother and children continue to take walks, read the newspapers, and improve relations with suspicious neighbors. The aim toward normality proves fruitful in a situation that can't be helped.)

Style

10. Why is the tone altered in the fifth chapter? (Critics question Julie Otsuka's shift from impersonal prose in the first four chapters to a snide, sarcastic delivery in Papa's section. His acquiescence to FBI intimidation derives from a frustration with the mindless bigotry and injustice he faces, as well as, perhaps, a need to exonerate Japanese Americans accused of wartime treason. By confessing to every plot that gossips fabricate, he brings attention the ridiculousness of the accusations, as well as the folly of classifying an entire population of Americans as saboteurs and "slant-eyed snipers." He enumerates the ordinary jobs that Japanese-Americans perform in society and lists his losses—wife, children, home, assets, insurance, business, and civil rights. The shift to a corrosive tone suggests that repatriation is a two-way project, requiring Japanese Americans to work with whites toward an easing of tensions based on groundless suspicions. The father's apology, reduced to two words—"I'm sorry"—suggests alternate interpretations: he is sorry for the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor and he regrets the injustice his family and ethnic group have suffered.)

How Language Works

Julie Otsuka reveals character traits with brief phrases packed with significance.

1. Kindly non-Japanese hardware store owner Joe Lundy, who is aware of the roundup of Japanese Americans, looks away from the mother and remarks, "You can pay me later"—indicating, in a way designed to help the mother "save face," that he wants to give his merchandise as a gift, a fact she gratefully recognizes (even though she leaves money for her purchases on the counter anyway). He cryptically expresses his concern for the young ones by handing over two wrapped caramels, "For the children."
2. On the train ride from San Francisco through

- northern Nevada to northwestern Utah, the mother supports the girl's interest in softball by commenting jovially, "Don't lose that arm."
3. To the girl's question to Teizo "Ted" Ishimoto, "Are you a rich man?," he replies "Not anymore," and quickly changes the subject.
 4. The mother expresses acquiescence to the camp with simple phrases: "Oh, well," and "So it goes."
 5. The children return to Berkeley like shadows of their former selves. To deflect white hostility, they become overly polite: "We said yes and no and no problem. We said thank you. Go ahead. After you. Don't mention it."
 6. The reunion of husband and wife at the train station shows the couple's love by demonstrating the brain-to-brain oneness that sometimes comes with marriage: "Did you ..." she said. "Every day," he replied.

Across the Curriculum

Music

1. Read aloud the words of "Kimi Ga Yo" (May Your Reign Last Forever, 1869, the Japanese national anthem, composed by Irish bandmaster John William Fenton. Explain how honor to the nation's emperor unites Japanese people and helps them endure hardships and threats to themselves and their culture.

Language

1. Using the following model from the novel, explain the nature and purpose of a euphemism: "Dining Hall and not Mess Hall; Safety Council, not Internal Police; Residents, not evacuees; Mental Climate, not Morale."
2. Make a wall poster and cartoon on xenophobia. Express the danger of stereotyping an entire ethnic group or culture based on a few misconceptions.

Composition

1. Make an oral report on the people who refused to be interned or illegally labeled as spies and collaborators with the enemy. Include these:
 - Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu, a shipyard welder in San Leandro, California
 - Quaker conscientious objector Gordon Kiyoshi Hirabayashi, a sociology major at the University of Washington in Seattle

- attorney Minoru Yasui of Hood River, Oregon
- Fred Tayama, a Hawaiian-born spokesman of the Japanese American Citizens League
- journalist James M. Omura of Bainbridge Island, Washington.

2. Compose a first-person account of the planning and creation of Camp Topaz, Utah. Choose your role as a builder, bus driver, guard, cook, resistance leader, camp commandant, doctor, government inspector, or teacher.

Geography and Computers

1. On an internet map, locate all U.S. camps for Japanese-American internees during World War II. Add the maximum number of people incarcerated in each. Explain why so many internees remained in horse stalls at a San Francisco racetrack for over four months.
2. Using an internet map of Japan, locate the mother's hometown of Kagoshima. How far is it from Hiroshima? from Nagasaki? from Tokyo? from Berkeley, California?

Social Studies

1. Explain in a theme how the author describes the no-man's-land that Japanese Americans occupy after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. How do people in Berkeley express suspicion and hate? How does prejudice destroy Papa? Why are the children less emotionally fragile than their parents?
2. Debate whether federal authorities protect or demonize Japanese Americans at internment camps. How might the family have suffered if they had stayed in Berkeley during the war? What events or humiliations might Papa be hiding from his family?
3. Compose a brief timeline of World War II history and geography incorporating these terms: Solomon Islands, Luzon, Harry, contraband, bivouacking, censored, blackout, Nazis, loyalty hearing, evacuees, Hirohito, saboteur, Guadalcanal, War Relocation Authority, Omaha Beach, Saipan, Mindanao, air raid warden, repatriated, victory garden, General MacArthur, Fort Sam Houston, Fort Missoula, Stalingrad, battle of the Coral Sea, Tanforan, Homefront Commandos, American Friends Service, Banzai, Shinto, New Guinea, Leyte, Lordsburg, Burma Road, lend lease, B-29, Peleliu, Bataan, rationing, Topaz, and alien enemy.

Language

1. Place these vocabulary terms into categories. Mark each either abstract or concrete under these topic headings: descriptions, places, objects, actions, people, writings, vehicles, popular culture, classical music, science, and geographic terms. List reasons for your choices. Place a star by all terms referring specifically to the main characters and their culture: mirage, Eiffel Tower, sullied, canteen, Oran, liquidated, Tule Lake, forte, azuki beans, iron lung, Venice, pueblos, Elko, Chiclet, Great Wall, Imari, haiku, Golliwog, Provo, mustangs, Mt. Eden, Shirley Temple, Great Salt Lake, Glacier Falls, Squanto, Okies, Millet, bravo, New Mexico, fronds, sheikh, Alameda, Dalton Gang, Rabaul, abacus, Buddha, Stetson, Green Hornet, Juneau, Morocco, stucco, oases, go, greasewood, Electrolux, Winnemucca, Enrico Caruso, updrafts, chronicle, Mary Janes, Wasatch Mountains, Anaconda, fedora, Ogden, smelter, Intermittent Lake, coniferous, partition, forswear, gondola, Nephi, serenade, savanna, hostel, bonsai, Benny Goodman, alkaline, Oto-san, Joe Palooka, divinity, Audubon, 1812 Overture, El Cerrito, firebreak, Hindu, gleaners, Debussy, Tojo, Spaniards, prime numbers, Oakland, Tahoe, Nevada, severed, macaw, latrine, Joe DiMaggio, inscrutable, Yosemite, bulbous, adobe, Tchaikovsky, Kagoshima, marsh wren, yew, "In the Mood," and tar-paper.

Research

1. Create a bulletin board mapping places where Japanese Americans served time in internment camps: Crystal City, Texas; Fort Lincoln, North Dakota; Fort Missoula, Montana; Fort Stanton, New Mexico; Kennedy, Texas; Kooskia, Idaho; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Segoville, Texas. Men identified as criminals or subversives went to Leupp, Arizona; Moab, Utah; or Fort Stanton, New Mexico. Place a star by the camps that incarcerated males like Papa who were suspected of sedition or collaboration with enemy insurgents. Note which camps contained the largest number of children and families.
2. Divide the class into small groups to research other examples of racial and ethnic prejudice, including these:
 - suspicion of Vietnamese boat people

- the creation of the Ku Klux Klan and the White Camellia during Reconstruction
- the Minutemen's patrol of Southwestern entrance points for illegal Mexican aliens
- anti-Semitic attacks on synagogues and cemeteries
- curtailment of the teaching of German in public high schools during World War I
- segregation of black children from whites in polio camps
- reviling of Chinese people for spreading SARS in Canada
- rejection of Cubans in public places after the Mariel Boatlift
- anti-Arab arrests and confinement of Al Qaeda suspects to Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp following 9/11.

Science

1. Give a brief talk on the hardship of living in an alkaline desert in northwestern Utah. Note effects on eyes and mucous membranes and on new plantings.
2. Suggest camp procedures or shortages that may have caused Papa to lose all his teeth.
3. Outline advice on keeping a macaw or tortoise as a pet. What are the best diets and best living environments?

Journalism

1. Compose newspaper or online headlines about the following events:
 - a. A hearing-impaired internee is shot for moving too close to the fence.
 - b. The Japanese emperor's name is removed from all conversation and printed materials.
 - c. Members of the Society of Friends—Quakers—prepare Christmas packages for the internees.
 - d. Someone throws a brick at the train carrying internees, breaking a window.
 - e. The teacher in Berkeley teacher welcomes the children back.
 - f. The wife leaves a suit in the closet.
 - g. Volunteers leave the camp to join the war effort.
 - h. Papa sends postcards from where he is being held by the U.S. government.
 - i. Mother signs the loyalty oath, swearing she will remain loyal to the United States and will not try to overthrow the government.
 - j. Papa is taken away from home wearing his slippers and bathrobe.

- k. Japanese internee families are locked in horse stalls at Tanforan racetrack.
- l. Returning former prisoners of war malign Japanese Americans, promoting hatred based on their treatment overseas by Japanese soldiers.

2. Outline a cartoon strip featuring the wartime adventures of these groups:

- a. invaders at Omaha Beach
- b. heroes at the battle of the Coral Sea
- c. "Harry" and the bombers
- d. combatants at Guadalcanal
- e. transporters on the Burma Road
- f. Japanese-American soldiers in the Pacific

Religion

1. Act out episodes involving the legends of Buddha. Explain why the American Friends Service ministers to Buddhists.
2. Comment in a paragraph on the prayer that ends the mother's day. How does she honor both Christianity and Buddhism?

Reading

1. Read aloud other literary descriptions of racial or cultural divides. Include Joyce Moyer Hostetter's *Blue*, Jane Yolen's *The Devil's Arithmetic*, Gus Lee's *China Boy*, Adeline Yen Mah's *Chinese Cinderella*, Gary Soto's *Taking Sides*, Sheila Gordon's *Waiting for the Rain*, Joseph Bruchac's *The Warriors*, Yoko Kawashima Watkins's *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*, Laurence Yep's *Dragon's Gate*, Chris Crutcher's *Whale Talk*, Mildred Taylor's *The Land*, Jean Craighead George's *Julie of the Wolves*, Theodore Taylor's *The Cay*, Ann Petry's *Tituba of Salem Village*, Ben Mikaelson's *Touching Spirit Bear*, Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*, Michael Dorris's *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*, Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John*, William H. Armstrong's *Souder*, James Vance Marshall's *Walkabout*, Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, and Gish Jen's *Who's Irish?* and "Fish Cheeks." List behaviors that welcome outsiders, such as playing neighborhood games, celebrating the end of World War II, planning community events, telling life stories of the internment camps, receiving letters and postcards, offering help for cleaning yards and homes, and returning to an integrated class.

Literature

1. With a group, discuss the importance of these minor characters: Ted Ishimoto, the drugstore clerk, train guards, classmates, Joe Lundy, tower guards, DeNardo, Mrs. Kato, Quakers, residents in the family's home, Milt Parker, Mrs. Ueno, Elizabeth Morgana Roosevelt, the mother's employer, FBI agents, camp cooks, Sugar Sawada, interrogator, Emperor of Japan, and the Greers.
2. Write a paragraph in which you explain the purpose of a minor scenario to reader attitude. Choose from these: running out of Pond's cold cream, buying a Coke for a nickel, smothering the tortoise, jumping rope at night, having nightmares of closed doors, looking like a hobo, killing White Dog, rejecting a department store job, crocheting doilies, wanting to be a jockey, forgetting an umbrella, looking for a rose bush, eating pears, listening to *The Green Hornet*, losing teeth, singing "America the Beautiful," and keeping a front-door key on a chain.
3. Discuss a favorite scene from the novel that appeals to the senses of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, and feeling; for example, tasting fresh pears, finding the Buddha statue, tying a kerchief over the nose and mouth to keep out alkaline dust, throwing a lemon out the train window, hearing the wind stop blowing, listening to tortoise feet scrabbling in the box, eating cole slaw, longing for chocolate, watching Gloria bloom, losing a kite in the fence, sleeping upstairs in the back of the house to avoid danger, and hearing Papa's train arrive.

Math

1. Make a list of prime numbers, which can be divided only by one and by the number itself. Discuss why these numbers are important in mathematics, for example, in cryptography and generating random sequences.
2. Using a scale of miles, determine how far Papa travels from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Berkeley, California, and how many miles the train covers on the way from San Francisco, California, to Camp Topaz, Utah. Which journey covers the largest expanse of desert? the most urban area? the most farmland?
3. At post-World War II prices, estimate the type of groceries that the mother can buy for three

- people at \$25. Justify your answers with grocery advertisements from wartime newspapers.
4. Estimate how much rent Milt Parker owes the family for the period of time the house in Berkeley, California, was on the realty market. Research to find the rental value in the early 1940s, of a house for a family of four.

Psychology

1. Compare Papa before and after FBI agents seize him in the night on December 7, 1941, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Why does he write happy letters and postcards to the children? Why does he fear telephones and visitors? Why does he take notes on daily news? Why does he guard private conversation? Examine Papa's behavior in light of what is now known as Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome.
2. Describe character relations by summarizing the events and significance of the train ride to Utah. How does the mother ease the insecurities of her children? What do other passengers contribute? How do shades discourage attacks with rocks and bricks? Why do thoughts of wild mustangs occupy the boy?
3. List the boy's emotions while he lives at Camp Topaz in the Utah desert. Include his pet tortoise, his dreams, fears of forgetting his father, and his observations of change in his mother and sister.

Cinema

1. Draw costumes and props for the novel. Include surplus pea coats and canvas leggings from World War I; uniforms and weapons for train and tower guards; and uniforms for bus drivers.
2. Describe parts of the novel that are suited to radio, film, tableau, poster, stage, puppetry, and pageant; for example, reading posters and anti-Japanese signs, returning to classrooms in Berkeley, planting trees by the mess hall, standing still while bullies ride bikes around Japanese-American children, burying White Dog along with soiled gloves, freeing the macaw out the window, claiming to be a "Chink," looking at the stars over the desert, and welcoming Papa at the train station.
3. Create posters advertising films featuring Asian cultures and cultural pride, such as *Farewell to Manzanar*, *Pride*, *The Joy Luck Club*, *Exodus*, *The Good Earth*, *Flower Drum Song*, *Empire of the*

Sun, MASH, The Painted Veil, The Kite Runner, Madame Butterfly, The Last Emperor, The Killing Fields, A Passage to India, and Snow Falling on Cedars. Discuss how filmmakers reveal qualities shared by all cultures, particularly parental love, loyalty, courtesy, intelligence, survivalism, hospitality, ambition, cooperation, and courage.

Art, Costume Design, and Music

1. Using desktop publishing or other media, design several of these projects: an official copy of loyalty oaths or of Executive Order 9066 from President Franklin D. Roosevelt; a train schedule from Santa Fe to Berkeley; a censored picture postcard from Fort Sam Houston or Fort Missoula; a line of melody from the "Golliwogg's Cakewalk"; instructions on making a kite or learning to crochet; a map of the Topaz camp and its environs; a list of camp rules or for residents of the Tanforan racetrack; a summary of events beginning and ending World War II in the Pacific; a business card for Joe Lundy or Milt Parker; a city map of Kagoshima or Berkeley; an employment circular seeking farm help or people to plant trees at Camp Topaz; and lessons for young students on the Bill of Rights or the course of the Pacific War.
2. Create a bulletin board or mural illustrating scenes featuring female characters; for example, the mother sitting on her suitcase while the children sleep on train seats; a teacher welcoming internees to class in Berkeley or at Camp Topaz; a drugstore clerk selling Coke for five cents; the girl playing the piano without a metronome; Elizabeth Morgana Roosevelt putting small gifts into her letters to the boy at Camp Topaz; a former servant carrying a heavy bucket for the mother; the girl skipping rope in the night; and the mother listening to the troubles of her employer.

Drama and Speech

1. Write a conversation in which Japanese-American friends discuss their losses during internment. Propose a petition to the U.S. Congress for reparations for lost businesses, farms, homes, clothing, health, furnishings, and vehicles.
2. Describe aloud the drama of Papa's confession. How does he use the opportunity to shame

FBI agents? What wrongs and incivilities rattle Papa most?

3. Discuss your reaction to the deaths of the tortoise and White Dog and to the release of the cat and macaw. Debate other methods of finding homes for animals—for example, through the Humane Society, a zoo, or the American Friends Service. Was this even possible at the time the events in this story took place?

Alternate Assessment

1. List in chronological order and describe these significant events: moving to an upstairs bedroom, sleeping on the train, paying for twine and tape, writing to children, supporting a family with domestic work, doing laundry in a latrine, disliking a picture of gleaners, buying fresh pears, arresting and interrogating Japanese-American males, departing from Tanforan racetrack in San Francisco, forgetting what Papa looks like, listening to war news on the radio, tolerating spitting and swearing, facing repatriation to Japan or execution, recovering a statue of Buddha, releasing a bird, covering from an alkaline sand storm, riding the bus from Delta, and claiming to employ dynamite. Indicate Julie Otsuka's opinion on each subject.
2. Compose brief definitions of internment, censorship, and emperor as they apply to *When the Emperor Was Divine*. What changes in the text would explain camp dangers along the fence? offer more information about Japanese-American volunteers to the army? account for Papa's toothlessness and despair? justify the imprisonment of American citizens based on their Asian descent?
3. Summarize scenes that depict conflict, particularly animosity toward mixed-blood children, return to a hostile classroom in Berkeley, reading racist posters, countering the suspicion of neighbors and former prisoners of war, avoiding tower guards, dressing for winter in World War I surplus garments, killing a tortoise, ignoring writing on the wall, avoiding a whisky bottle thrown through a window, and trying to remember Papa.

Vocabulary Test

A. Match each term in bold with a synonym from the list that follows.

- _____ 1. **foliage:** mirage, canteen, haiku, fronds, golliwog
- _____ 2. **report:** sullied, forswear, liquidated, updraft, chronicle
- _____ 3. **plaster:** adobe, tar-paper, stucco, oases, greasewood
- _____ 4. **gatherer:** abacus, Buddha, Stetson, Green Hornet, gleaner
- _____ 5. **wall:** partition, gondola, fedora, smelter, latrine
- _____ 6. **sage:** iron lung, guru, macaw, Anaconda, mustang
- _____ 7. **periodic:** severed, inscrutable, prime, bulbous, intermittent
- _____ 8. **grassland:** marsh wren, yew, savanna, bonsai, Okie
- _____ 9. **introduction:** overture, pueblos, divinity, forte, azuki
- _____ 10. **cheer:** alkaline, serenade, hostel, coniferous, bravo

B. Which unused term above means:

- 1 cut _____
- 2. melody _____
- 3. Indian villages _____
- 4. poem _____
- 5. godliness _____
- 6. rest stop _____
- 7. developing frog _____
- 8. shady spots _____
- 9. hat _____
- 10. strength _____

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Matching (30 points)

Match the following descriptions to the names or places each refers to:

- _____ 1. killer of White Dog
- _____ 2. domestic
- _____ 3. forbidden name
- _____ 4. claims to spread poison
- _____ 5. tells neighbors that prisoners are enemies
- _____ 6. admires a red dress
- _____ 7. toothless
- _____ 8. plants Gloria
- _____ 9. give Christmas gifts
- _____ 10. returns a ribbon
- _____ 11. carries a bucket
- _____ 12. shops for a duffel bag
- _____ 13. plays a cakewalk
- _____ 14. looks for a brick
- _____ 15. burns kimonos and operas

- | | | |
|--------------|------------|----------------|
| a. Papa | f. mother | k. Mrs. Ueno |
| b. Lundy | g. FBI | l. boy |
| c. Quakers | h. girl | m. Milt Parker |
| d. Mrs. Kato | i. DeNardo | n. Elizabeth |
| e. soldier | j. Ted | o. Emperor |

Part II: Identification (20 points)

Name the following characters

- _____ 1. returns from Santa Fe
- _____ 2. buries a tortoise
- _____ 3. buys tape and twine
- _____ 4. leaves in slippers
- _____ 5. describes sources of horse meat
- _____ 6. crochets
- _____ 7. makes notes on the news
- _____ 8. takes toiletries to San Francisco
- _____ 9. listens to an employer's complaints
- _____ 10. dreams of swimming in an ancient sea

Part III: Settings (20 points)

Identify where these events take place.

- 1. end of train ride _____
- 2. end of bus ride _____
- 3. shopping for a hammer _____
- 4. White Dog's grave _____
- 5. newly planted trees _____
- 6. trapped kite _____
- 7. hidden silver _____
- 8. admission of burning oil wells _____
- 9. basket of citrus fruit _____
- 10. sheet room divider _____

Part IV: Essay Questions (40 points)

1. Account for anger at FBI questions about loyalty.
2. Summarize the author's attitude toward civil rights.
3. Compare Papa and the mother before and after his arrest.
4. Cite examples of racial profiling.
5. Describe life in the desert.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: True/False (30 points)

Mark each statement either T for true or F if any part is false:

- _____ 1. Guards at Camp Topaz shoot a man who is hard of hearing.
- _____ 2. The old silverware is too rusty for use.
- _____ 3. The family reaches Berkeley with \$25 in cash.
- _____ 4. The mother rejects a loyalty questionnaire.
- _____ 5. The boy spies Papa among the camp internees.
- _____ 6. Papa's letters have holes cut in them.
- _____ 7. A jar of Pond's cold cream lasts until the return.
- _____ 8. The boy lies about being a "Chink."
- _____ 9. Camp inmates have no opportunity to apply for farm work.
- _____ 10. Papa transfers to Lordsburg, New Mexico.
- _____ 11. The boy packs his baseball glove first.
- _____ 12. The cat belongs to the Greens.
- _____ 13. Tanforan smells like wild mustangs.
- _____ 14. Joe Lundy sends caramels to Topaz.
- _____ 15. Camp rumors hint at forced sterilization and execution.

Part II: Fill in the Blanks (20 points)

Fill in the blanks with terms that make a true statement:

- 1. The mother _____ letters from _____ along with photos, kimonos, and Japanese opera recordings and keepsakes.
- 2. Following a snow, inmates at _____ receive surplus pea coats from World War _____.
- 3. After three years and five months as internees, the family returns to _____, California, in fall _____.
- 4. After padlocking boxes in the _____, the mother prepares a _____ for cooking.
- 5. The 11-year-old girl looks for Intermittent _____ and throws a _____ into the desert.

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Choose the correct answer to complete each statement below:

- _____ 1. White Dog dies from
 - a. poison.
 - b. old age.
 - c. a blow from a shovel.
 - d. neglect.
- _____ 2. After packing, the family
 - a. prays to Buddha.
 - b. goes to the Civil Control Station.
 - c. visits Papa in San Francisco.
 - d. buys a duffel bag.
- _____ 3. The mother frees
 - a. the macaw.
 - b. a golliwog.
 - c. the tortoise.
 - d. Gloria.
- _____ 4. The mother runs out of
 - a. lipstick.
 - b. sheets to use as partitions.
 - c. patience with the mess hall.
 - d. postcards.

- _____ 5. Papa promises to buy
- slippers.
 - birthday gifts from a department store.
 - another umbrella for his son.
 - tickets to Kagoshima.
- _____ 6. Elizabeth Morgana Roosevelt
- offers Christmas gifts to internees.
 - complains of smells in the horse stalls.
 - stays out late jumping rope.
 - writes to the boy.
- _____ 7. In May 1943, volunteers
- plant willow trees at the mess hall.
 - join the army.
 - transfer to Fort Missoula.
 - post extra tarpaper on barracks walls and tin over knotholes.
- _____ 8. Prisoners of War
- sign loyalty oaths.
 - return to Fort Sam Houston.
 - spread racial hatred.
 - obey FBI interrogators.
- _____ 9. The mother enjoys
- visits with her former domestic.
 - helping Mrs. Kato.
 - memories of Kagoshima.
 - censoring camp letters.
- _____ 10. Papa makes a lengthy
- garden at the camp.
 - Christmas letter.
 - walk from Wyoming.
 - confession of crimes.

Part IV: Essay Questions (40 points)

1. Explain how the confession expresses disillusion with white Americans.
2. Account for damage to the house in Berkeley.
3. Describe the duties of soldiers and guards on trains and in towers.
4. Explain how Papa spends his time at home.
5. Discuss methods by which Japanese-Americans try to fit in.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY TEST

- A. 1. fronds 6. guru
 2. chronicle 7. intermittent
 3. stucco 8. savanna
 4. gleaner 9. overture
 5. partition 10. bravo
- B. 1. severed 6. hostel
 2. serenade 7. golliwog
 3. pueblos 8. oases
 4. haiku 9. Stetson
 5. divinity 10. forte

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (30 points)

- | | | |
|---------|-------|-------|
| 1. f | 6. b | 11. k |
| 2. f, k | 7. a | 12. f |
| 3. o | 8. l | 13. h |
| 4. a | 9. c | 14. e |
| 5. i | 10. j | 15. f |

Part II: Identification (20 points)

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Papa | 6. mother |
| 2. girl | 7. Papa |
| 3. mother | 8. mother |
| 4. Papa | 9. mother |
| 5. girl | 10. boy |

Part III: Settings (20 points)

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Delta, Utah | 6. camp fence |
| 2. Topaz | 7. under a statue of Buddha |
| 3. hardware store | 8. San Francisco |
| 4. tree in backyard | 9. train |
| 5. Topaz | 10. barracks at Topaz |

Part IV: Essay Questions (40 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. T | 11. T |
| 2. F | 7. F | 12. T |
| 3. T | 8. T | 13. F |
| 4. F | 9. F | 14. F |
| 5. F | 10. T | 15. T |

Part II: Fill in the Blank (20 points)

- burned, Kagoshima
- Topaz, I
- Berkeley, 1945

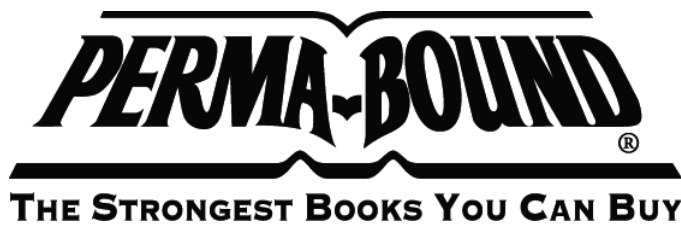
- sunroom, chicken
- Lake, lemon

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 6. d |
| 2. a | 7. b |
| 3. a | 8. c |
| 4. a | 9. c |
| 5. b | 10. d |

Part IV: Essay Questions (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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