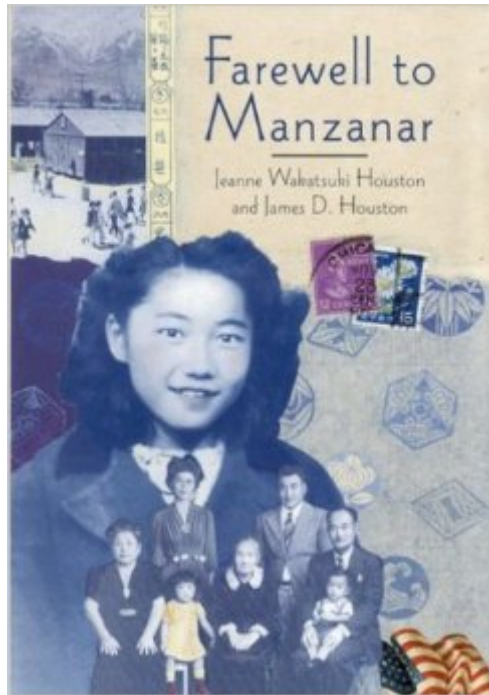


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# Farewell To Manzanar



## Synopsis

During World War II a community called Manzanar was hastily created in the high mountain desert country of California, east of the Sierras. Its purpose was to house thousands of Japanese American internees. One of the first families to arrive was the Wakatsukis, who were ordered to leave their fishing business in Long Beach and take with them only the belongings they could carry. For Jeanne Wakatsuki, a seven-year-old child, Manzanar became a way of life in which she struggled and adapted, observed and grew. For her father it was essentially the end of his life. At age thirty-seven, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston recalls life at Manzanar through the eyes of the child she was. She tells of her fear, confusion, and bewilderment as well as the dignity and great resourcefulness of people in oppressive and demeaning circumstances. Written with her husband, Jeanne delivers a powerful first-person account that reveals her search for the meaning of Manzanar. Farewell to Manzanar has become a staple of curriculum in schools and on campuses across the country. Last year the San Francisco Chronicle named it one of the twentieth century's 100 best nonfiction books from west of the Rockies.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

## Customer Reviews

I have been thinking about this book more and more ever since I saw the racist, effusive film "Snow Falling on Cedars". My big gripe with that film was that it made the Japanese Americans look

so weak and helpless without white people to rescue them from their predicament. For those of you who disagreed with my review of that film, I strongly urge you to read (or re-read) "Farewell to Manzanar". This is a frank, accurate, and at times heart-breaking, true story of a Japanese family's internment in the camps. The narrative contains several different threads including: 1. The legal and economic injustice done to the author's family and thousands of other Japanese Americans. 2. The day to day life and survival requirements in the camps. 3. The difficulty of coping with generational differences within an interned Japanese-American family. 4. The difficulties and prejudices that Japanese Americans had to overcome in order to rebuild their lives after they were released. Ms. Wakatsuki-Houston's memoir is simple and compelling. She describes her childhood experiences from the objective and mature perspective of an adult, a wife, and a mother. But despite the passage of time her narrative still conveys a great deal of pain and difficulty in coming to terms with her childhood internment at Manzanar. The most interesting part of the book for me was how the author's family attempted to rebuild their lives after the U.S. government robbed and humiliated them. The father immediately started a farming venture whose success was only undermined by unusually adverse environmental conditions. One of the sons served in the military and then resumed the family's fishing business.

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