

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Farewell to Manzanar

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ISBN 978-1-60389-773-0
Reorder No. 201271

Notes

This autobiography describes the life of Jeanne Houston's Japanese-American family. She begins her story on December 7, 1941, with the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the immediate aftermath, which marked the beginning of her family's struggle against the fear and prejudice sweeping America. After her father is taken away and accused of spying, the rest of the family is forced to move to the Japanese-American internment camp, Manzanar. The story describes how this imprisonment destroys her father's spirit and leaves Jeanne with memories too painful to bring out into the open.

Many people today describe this relocation and internment of American citizens of Japanese descent as a great injustice and a shameful episode in America's history.

All page references come from the Bantam Books edition of *Farewell to Manzanar*, copyright 1973.

Note to teacher: Farewell to Manzanar uses the term "Oriental" when referring to Asians. We recognize that the word "Oriental" is no longer appropriate, and we have changed it, except in direct quotations.

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. define autobiography and point out how this work fits the definition.
2. infer what the thoughts, ideas, and actions of the characters might be when they are not expressly stated.
3. summarize and comment on the impact of the following on the narrator's family:
 - Executive Order 9066
 - the loyalty oath
 - the creation of the nisei regiment
 - three supreme court cases - Hirabayashi, Korematsu, Endu
 - the December riot at Manzanar
4. understand the meaning through context clues of Japanese terms:
 - Shikata ga nai - It cannot be helped
 - Issei - Japanese immigrants from 1890-1915
 - samurai - class of Japanese people, just below the nobility
 - Inu - collaborator or traitor
 - Nisei - children of Issei who are American citizens
 - oori - dance
5. recognize the ways in which the internment camps contributed to the break up of the family unit.
6. point out how the living conditions at the camps demonstrated a lack of understanding of Japanese culture in regard to food and privacy.
7. point out how Papa's cane and the rock garden are used as symbols in this novel.
8. write a character sketch of Papa commenting on the following:
 - his position as patriarch of the family
 - the ways in which he tries to cope with the humiliations he must endure
 - his childhood in Japan
 - his strengths/weaknesses in his daughter's eyes
 - the impact on him of Pearl Harbor and the bombing of Hiroshima
 - his opinion on the causes of war and the proper attitude of a good soldier
9. discuss the following metaphors:
 - Japan and the U.S. as a mother and a father
 - the photograph of the old woman and her dog

Questions for Discussion and Essay

1. Compare and contrast the ways Jeanne's mother and father cope with the hardships they suffer at Manzanar.
2. Why does Jeanne learn to twirl the baton instead of taking Odori lessons?
3. What kind of home does Jeanne live in before Manzanar? How does the family's lifestyle change after they are released from the camp?
4. How is Jeanne first introduced to the idea of racial bigotry? In what ways does she try to fit in a school after leaving Manzanar?
5. Why are many of the people detained at Manzanar reluctant to leave? Why do the younger families have an easier time adjusting to life outside the camp?
6. Briefly summarize the three Supreme Court cases regarding the internment of Japanese-Americans. What impact do each of them have on the closing of the camps?
7. Write a character sketch of Woody. Why does Jeanne consider him a surrogate father?
8. In what ways can Papa's cane and his rock garden be considered symbols in this story? What do they reveal about Japanese culture and traditions?
9. How does Woody's visit with Toyo in Japan help him better understand his father?
10. Why doesn't Ko want his son to volunteer to serve in the military? Why does Woody want to go? Why do you think the all-Nisei Unit is the most decorated regiment in World War II and suffers the highest mortality rate?
11. Point out the reasons for the lack of privacy at the camps and the impact this inconvenience has on Jeanne's family.
12. Why are the bombings of Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima so difficult for Papa? How does he respond when he is asked which country he wants to win the war? Do you think he should have answered any other way?
13. Sociologists finally come to the camp and are appalled at the breakdown of the family units. What do they recommend to remedy the situation? Are they successful?
14. Define "Issei," "Inu," and "Nisei." Why are the differences between the three generations important enough for the Japanese to give each group its own name?

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Part I

Foreword

1. What evidence is there that this book is an autobiography?

2. Why does Jeanne Houston write the book?

Chapter 4: A Common Master Plan

VOCABULARY

communal – public
dimmiest – faintest
latrine – a toilet
Oxydol – a brand of laundry detergent
partitions – divisions
permeate – to pass through
sagebrush – a shrub
Sierras – mountains in California
tarpaper – a paper used for waterproofing
ventilated – provided with fresh air
weather stripping – a metal strip placed on the floor to keep out rain

1. Why are the children sick?

2. What does “Arigato” mean in English? Why is Mama grateful to the old woman with the box? How does she feel about privacy?

Chapter 10: The Reservoir Shack: An Inside

reservoir – a place where water is collected and reserved

gunsight – a scope used to aim a gun

MP – military police

1. In what way are Kaz and his crew in a “no-win situation” when they go to the reservoir?
