

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

Farewell to Manzanar

by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston

& James D. Houston

written by Jill Geisler

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F o r e w o r d

1. Before beginning the story, you are exposed to much information about *Farewell to Manzanar*. After reading the back of the book, the “About the Authors” page, the quotations at the front, and the forward, generate a list of words or phrases that stuck in your head. Use this list to predict the plot of the story.

P a r t 1

Chapter 1 **“What is Pearl Harbor?”**

2. The author describes the return of the fishing boat fleet as an eerie and worrisome event. In all her years of watching Papa sail from port, she had never seen such an event occur. The author and the other women have many unanswered questions as the ships approach. Write a conversation that may have occurred between the author and her mother on this day. It may begin as follows:

Jeanne: Look, Mother, I think the ships are returning!

Mother: This is very strange . . .

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3. As the reader, you take on the point of view of the women watching the ships' departures. But this is not an ordinary departure:

“They kept floating out there, suspended, as if the horizon had finally become what it always seems to be from shore: the sea’s limit, beyond which no man could sail. They floated a while, then they began to grow, tiny gulls becoming boats again, a white armada cruising toward us.”

Change the point of view, and put yourself in the character of Papa. Imagine there is a telegram or text message service available to you on the ship. Send your family a short note, one to two sentences, telling them why the ships are turning around.

4. Though the author is young, she vividly recalls her mother’s emotional state during the time after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Mother’s reactions range from not worried to extremely worried as problems escalate between father and the government.

Put yourself in Mother’s perspective, and write a journal entry describing your feelings while your husband is away. What do you fear most? What brings you relief in these hard times?

Chapter 2

Shikata Ga Nai

5. When the author changes locations, she has major problems adjusting. One significant reason is due to her “irrational” fear of people of Chinese descent. “My fear of her ran so deep I could not speak of it, even to Mama, couldn’t explain why I was screaming.” The author, later in life, links this fear to a fictional story her father often shared when she was young.

Search your inner-psyche for an irrational fear. Analyze why you may feel this way. Write the author a friendly letter explaining your analysis and comparing your situation to her situation as a child.

6. As Jeanne describes her new neighborhood, the reader becomes aware of the deep fear she and her family were constantly feeling while living at Terminal Island. There were poor living conditions, gang-like activities among the youth, and still a lack of knowledge about their father, the head of the family.

Use the letters of Jeanne’s new home, Terminal Island, to describe the life her family is living at this place. And then use the letters of Jeanne’s old home, Ocean Park, to describe her former life. You may want to use these descriptions to start:

T rying to function without Papa
E veryone lives in constant fear
R
M
I
N
A
L
I
S
L
A
N
D

O wn place to live
C ommunity feeling
E
A
N

P
A
R
K

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7. Of all of the changes occurring as a result of the move to Terminal Island, the most memorable to Jeanne is the differences between her old teacher in Ocean Park and her new teacher. Her Ocean Park teacher was an active part of the community, “grandmotherly,” and loving. Jeanne’s new teacher, on the other hand, is cold, “remote,” and unwilling to help her when she has questions concerning her schoolwork.

Pretend that you are Jeanne and write a letter to an old friend who is still living in Ocean Park telling her about your new school, new teacher, and what you miss about your own home.

8. The Wakatsukis had to part with many of their favorite material possessions as they shifted from home to home after Pearl Harbor. One of Mama’s most valuable possessions was her set of blue and white china. As the family is forced to move from Terminal Island, Mother considers selling her china for some extra money. When a man starts to barter for her set, she ends up throwing the whole set, piece by piece, on to the floor, breaking every piece.

Explain to a classmate who is confused why Mama would violently destroy her most valuable possession piece by piece.

9. When the family chooses to move to Manzanar to avoid the constant relocation from ghetto to ghetto, they are tagged and put on a long bus ride. It is a solemn ride out of Los Angeles County, and very few people are talking on the bus. As the transportation arrives at Manzanar, herds of residents approach the bus to see the new arrivals.

Jeanne lightens the mood as the bus arrives by opening the window and yelling to the residents, “Hey! This whole bus is full of Wakatsukis!” Envision a photograph taken of little Jeanne yelling out the crowded bus window to the worried residents of Manzanar. Write a caption for this picture that might have appeared in the Manzanar newspaper. Try to cover all of the five W’s (who, what, when, where, why) when writing your caption. If you can, include the one H, (how).

Chapter 3

A Different Kind of Sand

10. With Papa gone, the family has to adjust to their new home without the head of their family. At the start of this chapter, the family begins to reestablish roles when Woody takes charge of fixing up the barracks. Woody has a very different personality than father; however, his spunky leadership style is just what the family needs during their transition to life in Manzanar.

Imagine you are Jeanne giving a speech at Woody's wedding, years from now. What would you say about his ability to be the head of his new family?

11. Woody's character, Jeanne's brother, is established during this chapter. He is often the joker of the family, lightening the mood of the darkening hardships the family must face. One such hardship is the adjustment to the food at Manzanar. The Wakatsuki family has always eaten a traditional Japanese diet. Now they are forced to eat a poorly researched Japanese diet, which mixes and matches unconventional foods.

At the end of chapter three, Woody lightens the mood by making fun of the cuisine at camp. Explain to a classmate who doesn't understand what the humor is in Woody's closing comment: "No." Woody grinned, heading out the door. "Rice. With Log Cabin Syrup and melted butter"