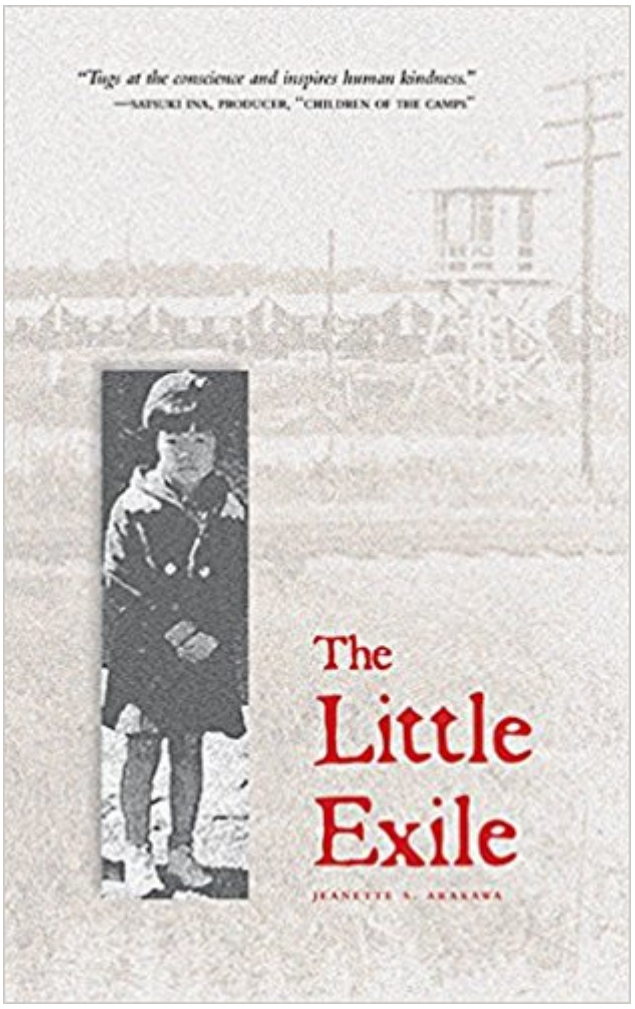
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The Little Exile



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Synopsis

After Pearl Harbor, little Marie MitsuiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s typical life of school and playing with friends in San Francisco is upended. Her family and thousands of others of Japanese heritage are under suspicion and forcibly relocated to internment camps far from home. Living conditions in the camps are harsh, but in the end Marie finds freedom and hope for the future. Told from a childÃ¢â ¬â„¢s perspective, The Little Exile deftly conveys MarieÃ¢â ¬â„¢s innocence, wonder, fear, and outrage. This work of autobiographical fiction is based on the authorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s own experience as a wartime internee.Jeanette Arakawa was born in San Francisco in 1932 and was interned in the 1940s at the Rohwer War Relocation Center in Arkansas.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Arakawa revisits the fear, confusion and injustice her family experienced during World War II... Describes years of displacement and privation as she comes to understand the meaning of discrimination in the land of the free. "Ã¢â ¬â ¢The Mercury News "Each Nisei memoir is precious and adds its own contribution to our collective knowledge of the incarceration period. ArakawaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s detailed childÃ¢â ¬â„¢s eye view of that story is by turns funny, angry, and sad, like most children are. It is a worthwhile addition to the camp memoir club."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Densho"The Little Exile is a memoir worth reading. One piece of advice though: be prepared to read it in multiple sittings. My heart needed time between chapters or it wouldÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve broken."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Hippocampus Magazine "Jeanette Arakawa has done a masterful job in bringing this tragic story to life. It should be required reading in our schools. We have to make sure that what

happened to my parents, and tens of thousands of other Japanese-Americans, never happens again. The Little Exile belongs on everyone's shelf.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â ¢Prof. Michio Kaku, Professor of Theoretical Physics, author of Physics of the Impossible 5/5 "Arakawa tells her remarkable story with neither bitterness nor anguish but spares no details of the disturbing experience."Ã¢â ¬â ¢San Francisco Book Review "These are experiences that need to be remembered"Ã¢â ¬â ¢Kirkus Reviews "[The Little Exile] gives us a peak into the racism and the hate Japanese Americans had to endure during those yearsÃ¢â ¬â ¢but also the small acts of kindness that they also experienced too. These kinds of stories are important."Ã¢â ¬â ¢8Asians"The Little Exile has a renewed and special relevance for today's national discussion related to immigration issues and the unhappy willingness of a great many Americans to repeat the errors of our past."Ã¢â ¬â ¢The Midwest Book Review"Deeply moving and poignant"Ã¢â ¬â ¢Gayle Noguchi, Wheel of Dharma "A literary-cultural-historical gift"Ã¢â ¬â ¢Asian American Literature Fans "An illuminating glimpse inside a stolen life."Ã¢â ¬â ¢101 Books About Japan "Arakawa takes readers on a journey through the brutal challenges that many Japanese Americans faced."Ã¢â ¬â ¢JQ Magazine "With the deftness and colorful detail of a gifted artist, Arakawa captures the WWII confinement experience of Japanese Americans as seen through the eyes of a young child. Little MarieÃ¢â ¬â„¢s innocent wisdom and spritely audacity frame the enormity of the trauma along with the minutiae of everyday life confined by barbed wire. Her story tugs at the conscience and inspires human kindness."—Satsuki Ina, Ph.D., Producer of the PBS documentary, Children of the Camps "Few books about Japanese American incarceration capture so vividly the feel of community before the war, during the incarceration, and in the postwar relocation years. Arakawa has written an epic story in small, exquisitely remembered vignettes that glow with humor, warmth, and her own and her family's wisdom."—Gil Asakawa, author of Being Japanese American "Set amidst the tumult and trauma of displacement and incarceration, Arakawa offers us the moving and poignant story of a young girl whose American identity is constantly challenged. The Little Exile dramatically captures not only the broad historical injustices, but also the small acts of kindness and cruelty that leave such an indelible impression on our lives."—Michael Omi, University of California, Berkeley

Jeanette Arakawa was born in San Francisco, California to Japanese immigrants. Between 1942 and 1945, during World War II, she was part of a diaspora that took her to Stockton, California, Rohwer, Arkansas, and Denver, Colorado. She returned to San Francisco in 1946. Jeanette and her husband, Kiyoto, have two sons and a grown granddaughter. Over the years Jeanette's devotion to educational issues has permitted her to share her experiences in the classroom as well as other

forums. She continues to be an active member of her temple. Writing, line dancing, taiko (Japanese drumming), and singing occupy the spaces available in her busy life. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Little Exile, a novel by Jeanette S. Arakawa is a fictionalized account of the life of Marie Mitsui, ArakawaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s alter ego, a Japanese American youngster around World War II.I want to thank the author for having the courage to chronicle the events of her life during a painful time when many that had gone through it are reticent to talk about it even 75 years later. I thank her for using this story to open the eyes of those that are still unaware that the United States of America incarcerated Japanese Americans during World War II.This is an easy-to-read story told through the eyes of an adolescent girl; an American citizen born to Japanese parents. The parable progresses through MarieÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s life from San Francisco in late 1930s; to the bombing of Pearl Harbor; her familyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s evacuation to an internment camp in Arkansas; and their return to San Francisco after the end of the war.This book is historical fiction based on facts from the authorÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s personal experiences. While it lacks the intense tension in many dramatic historical fiction stories, this one is compelling because the author does a very good job of providing vivid, colorful, and detailed descriptions of the characters and settings. I found the characters likeable and realistic. Their relationships were touching but not mushy. The tension comes from MarieÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s encounters with bullies and bigots; her alcoholic father; the stress of loneliness; living behind barbed wires around soldiers with rifles and bayonets. Some of her scrapes are ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“normalÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• for a sometimes mischievous kid; others came about because she was a Japanese American and in an internment camp. I felt the mix added to the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“roundnessÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• of MarieÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s character. She was a normal girl trying to live a normal life under extraordinary circumstances.I am a ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“third-generationÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (sansei) Japanese American. While I was growing up, I had heard some stories from friends and relatives about life in camp but most that lived through it refused to talk about it. So some of the events and feelings the author describes in this book are familiar but I am glad that she has made her experiences available in print for everyone to read.I found a few minor editing errors which is my pet peeve when books are produced through a publishing house with professional editors. There were also a few spots where the transitions (story flow) and character introductions could have been smoother.The authorÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s meticulous attention to the detailed descriptions used throughout the book leads me to believe that she benefited greatly from her continuing education creative writing class.

So important to make people aware that this happened and can happen again if we're not careful.

I was a tiny bit dubious about this upon first taking it up: a first book by a woman who is now fairly old about things that happened 75 years ago. But instead this was a lovely, heartbreaking story about one victim of one of the worst events in American history. I have to confess that I'm a very deep admirer of FDR and I believe he is given more blame than he deserves for the internment of Japanese Americans during WW II, while he is also not given some blame that he truly deserves. For instance, FDR did not come up with the idea of interring American citizens. That idea was brought to him by those working on behalf of Earl Warren, the Republican governor of California. FDR didn't particularly care one way or another. So I think he is partly cleared on that score. But he is, I believe, profoundly guilty of not caring enough. He preferred gaining the support of Warren in activating and building factories in California than he cared in protecting the rights of Japanese Americans. In other words, he wasn't out to harm Japanese Americans, but was out to strike a deal with Earl Warren. He is guilty of treating Japanese Americans as mere pawns in gaining political support. I find what FDR did to be loathsome, even if he was guilty in something very different than what he is usually blamed for. I'll go further. This was a pattern in his career. He didn't support anti-lynching laws because he was afraid of losing support of some Southern Senators. FDR was a great man, in my opinion our greatest president, but he was very, very far from perfect.But back to this lovely book. What makes this such a rich, deeply moving story is the wonderful detail. You get a marvelous sense of the the specificity of Marie's life, of the people she knew, of the colors and sounds in she experiences, of the conversations she has, of the people she knows, of the uncertainties she feels, of the emotions she experiences. This is a splendid book because you can really put yourself in Marie's little shoes. Even though I'm a 63 year old Southern white male, it was easy to see and experience everything from her point of view. We hear about the internment of Japanese Americans during the war, but we do not generally feel what a personal tragedy it was. Here we grasp what a horror the whole thing was by identifying with a love little girl.I strongly recommend this book, and not just to those interested in the American homefront during WW II or those interested in the history of Japanese Americans during WW II. I recommend this book for the same reason I recommend any good book: it takes the reader outside of him or herself and allows them to grasp and understand and feel how someone else experiences the world. I believe that this book will surprise and delight any reader.

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