

they called us enemy full

they called us enemy full is a powerful graphic novel that provides an in-depth and personal perspective on the Japanese American internment during World War II. This comprehensive work chronicles the experiences of young George Takei and his family as they are forcibly relocated and confined in internment camps by the U.S. government. The story offers a poignant blend of historical facts and personal narrative, which highlights themes of resilience, injustice, and identity. This article explores the content, significance, and impact of they called us enemy full, shedding light on its role in educating readers about a dark chapter in American history. Additionally, it discusses the author's background, the graphic novel's adaptation, and the educational value embedded within its pages. The following sections will guide readers through the essential aspects of this notable work.

- Overview of They Called Us Enemy Full
- Historical Context and Background
- Author and Illustrator Contributions
- Themes and Messages in They Called Us Enemy Full
- Reception and Critical Acclaim
- Educational Use and Impact
- Adaptations and Related Media

Overview of They Called Us Enemy Full

They Called Us Enemy Full is a graphic memoir that vividly recounts the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The narrative centers on George Takei's childhood experiences, combining personal memories with historical events. Presented in a graphic novel format, it uses compelling illustrations and storytelling techniques to engage readers of all ages. This rendition encapsulates the full story, detailing the forced removal, life in the camps, and the aftermath of the internment. The work is notable for its straightforward yet emotionally resonant approach, making the complex history accessible and relatable.

Structure and Content

The graphic novel is structured into several chapters that follow a chronological order. It begins with the family's life before the war, transitions into the forced evacuation and incarceration, and concludes with the release and the long-term effects on the Japanese American community. Each chapter is richly illustrated, capturing the emotional and physical hardships faced during this period. The full version also includes supplementary materials such as historical notes and a glossary to enhance understanding.

Historical Context and Background

The story depicted in *They Called Us Enemy* is set against the backdrop of the U.S. government's internment of approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. This section explores the political and social climate that led to Executive Order 9066, which authorized the mass removal and confinement of Japanese Americans in camps scattered across the country. Understanding this context is crucial to appreciating the significance of the memoir.

Executive Order 9066

Signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in February 1942, Executive Order 9066 authorized military commanders to designate exclusion zones and forcibly relocate residents deemed a threat to national security. This order disproportionately targeted Japanese Americans, many of whom were U.S. citizens. The policy was driven by war hysteria, racial prejudice, and economic motivations, resulting in a grave violation of civil liberties.

Life in Internment Camps

The internment camps were often located in remote, harsh environments with inadequate facilities. Families lived in cramped quarters, enduring extreme weather conditions and limited resources. The graphic novel portrays these difficulties through detailed illustrations that convey the emotional toll and resilience of the internees. Camp life involved a loss of freedom, dignity, and economic stability, which had lasting impacts on the community.

Author and Illustrator Contributions

They Called Us Enemy is a collaborative effort between George Takei, Justin Eisinger, Steven Scott, and artist Harmony Becker. Each contributor played a vital role in bringing this important story to life. The combination of Takei's firsthand experiences with the narrative skills of Eisinger and Scott, alongside Becker's evocative artwork, resulted in a compelling and authentic representation of history.

George Takei's Role

George Takei, best known for his acting career, particularly in *Star Trek*, provides the personal narrative and historical insight. His involvement adds credibility and emotional depth, as he draws upon his memories as a child in internment camps. Takei's perspective enriches the story, ensuring that the memoir remains an authentic voice of those affected by the internment.

Artistic Style and Impact

Harmony Becker's illustrations are instrumental in conveying the mood and setting of *They Called Us Enemy*. The artwork uses a monochromatic palette to reflect the somber tone, while detailed facial expressions and settings immerse readers in the era. The visual storytelling complements the

text, making the complex history tangible and engaging.

Themes and Messages in They Called Us Enemy Full

The graphic novel addresses several significant themes, including racial injustice, resilience, identity, and the importance of remembering history. It challenges readers to confront uncomfortable truths about patriotism and civil rights violations. The narrative emphasizes the human cost of prejudice and the strength required to overcome systemic oppression.

Racial Injustice and Civil Rights

They called us enemy full highlights the unjust treatment of Japanese Americans, illustrating how fear and racism can lead to violations of constitutional rights. The story serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of governmental overreach and discrimination during times of crisis.

Resilience and Family

The memoir showcases the resilience of internees, focusing on how families maintained hope and solidarity despite adversity. This theme underscores the enduring spirit of the Japanese American community and their determination to rebuild their lives post-internment.

Reception and Critical Acclaim

Since its publication, they called us enemy full has received widespread acclaim for its educational value and emotional impact. Critics and educators praise the graphic novel for making an important historical episode accessible to younger audiences and fostering empathy. It has appeared on numerous best-of lists and received awards recognizing its contribution to literature and historical awareness.

Awards and Honors

The book has been honored with several awards, including recognition from literary and educational organizations. These accolades highlight the graphic novel's effectiveness in combining historical accuracy with compelling storytelling.

Educational Use and Impact

They called us enemy full is widely used in schools and libraries to teach about the Japanese American internment and broader themes of civil rights. Its graphic novel format appeals to diverse learners, facilitating discussions about history, justice, and human rights. Educators value it as a resource for engaging students in critical reflection.

Classroom Applications

Teachers integrate they called us enemy full into curricula covering U.S. history, social studies, and literature. The book encourages critical thinking and empathy, making it a powerful tool for lessons on discrimination and resilience. Supplementary materials and discussion guides often accompany the graphic novel to enhance learning outcomes.

- Promotes understanding of Japanese American internment
- Supports lessons on civil liberties and constitutional rights
- Encourages empathy through personal storytelling
- Accessible format for diverse student populations

Adaptations and Related Media

Beyond the graphic novel, they called us enemy full has inspired various adaptations and media projects aimed at expanding its reach. These include audiobook versions, educational videos, and public speaking engagements by George Takei. Such adaptations help to preserve the legacy of the internment experience and educate new audiences.

Audiobook and Visual Media

The audiobook version of they called us enemy full provides an immersive experience, often narrated by George Takei himself. Visual media adaptations incorporate interviews and archival footage to complement the graphic novel's narrative, further enhancing public understanding of this historical event.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'They Called Us Enemy' about?

'They Called Us Enemy' is a graphic memoir by George Takei that recounts his childhood experience being imprisoned with his family in American internment camps during World War II.

Who is the author of 'They Called Us Enemy'?

The author of 'They Called Us Enemy' is George Takei, co-written with Justin Eisinger and illustrated by Harmony Becker.

What historical events does 'They Called Us Enemy' depict?

'They Called Us Enemy' depicts the forced relocation and incarceration of Japanese Americans in internment camps during World War II following

Executive Order 9066.

Why is 'They Called Us Enemy' considered important reading?

'They Called Us Enemy' is important because it raises awareness about civil rights violations and the impact of racism and xenophobia on Japanese American families during WWII.

Is 'They Called Us Enemy' suitable for young readers?

Yes, 'They Called Us Enemy' is often recommended for middle school and high school students as it offers an accessible and impactful way to learn about this dark chapter in American history.

Has 'They Called Us Enemy' received any awards or recognitions?

'They Called Us Enemy' has been widely praised and received several awards, including the Eisner Award for Best Reality-Based Work.

What themes are explored in 'They Called Us Enemy'?

The memoir explores themes such as identity, resilience, injustice, family, and the importance of remembering history to prevent repeating mistakes.

How does the graphic novel format enhance the story in 'They Called Us Enemy'?

The graphic novel format uses visual storytelling to convey emotional depth, historical context, and personal experiences, making the story more engaging and accessible.

Where can I purchase or read 'They Called Us Enemy' in full?

'They Called Us Enemy' is available for purchase at major bookstores, online retailers, and libraries. Some digital platforms and libraries may offer full access through e-books or graphic novel collections.

Additional Resources

1. They Called Us Enemy: A Graphic Memoir

This graphic memoir by George Takei recounts his childhood experiences during the Japanese American internment in World War II. It offers a powerful firsthand perspective on the injustice faced by Japanese Americans, blending historical facts with personal narrative. The book is both educational and deeply moving, highlighting themes of resilience and identity.

2. Farewell to Manzanar

Written by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston, this memoir tells the story of a Japanese American family's internment at the Manzanar camp. It explores the struggles of maintaining dignity and family bonds under harsh

conditions. The book provides an intimate look at the impact of internment on individuals and communities.

3. *When the Emperor Was Divine*

Julie Otsuka's novel follows a Japanese American family forcibly relocated to an internment camp during World War II. Told through multiple perspectives, it captures the emotional and psychological effects of displacement and loss. The lyrical prose evokes the quiet resilience of those affected by this dark chapter in American history.

4. *Citizen 13660*

Miné Okubo's graphic memoir documents her experiences in the Japanese American internment camps. Through stark black-and-white illustrations and concise text, the book reveals daily life and the injustices faced by internees. It is a pioneering work that combines art and narrative to inform and engage readers.

5. *Snow Falling on Cedars*

David Guterson's novel is a blend of mystery and historical fiction set in the aftermath of Japanese American internment. It examines themes of prejudice, love, and justice on an island in the Pacific Northwest. The story delves into the community's lingering tensions and the quest for truth.

6. *In Defense of Justice: Joseph Kurihara and the Japanese American Struggle for Equality*

This biography by Yuji Ichioka highlights the activism of Joseph Kurihara, a Japanese American who protested internment and fought for civil rights. The book sheds light on resistance within the internment camps and the broader struggle for equality. It provides important historical context and inspiration.

7. *Unbroken Bird: A Memoir of Surviving the Japanese American Internment Camps*

Masayo Duus recounts her childhood experiences during internment and her journey toward healing and understanding. The memoir reflects on the long-term effects of incarceration and the importance of remembering history. It is heartfelt and personal, offering a unique voice among internment literature.

8. *American Knees: A Novel*

Craig Okopenko's novel explores the Japanese American experience, touching on themes of identity, belonging, and cultural heritage. While not solely about internment, it provides insight into the generational impact of historical trauma. The narrative is both humorous and poignant, capturing the complexities of American life.

9. *Behind Barbed Wire: An Artist's Diary*

This illustrated diary by Chiye Mori offers a visual and written account of life inside the Japanese American internment camps. The blend of art and personal reflection gives readers a vivid sense of daily camp life and emotional struggles. It is a valuable resource for understanding the human side of history.

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