

BOOKNOTES

educators guide



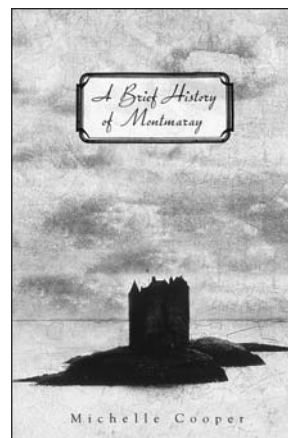
GRADES 3-7

INTRODUCTION

World War II is ancient history to children, but they all have relatives who were affected by the war. Some were involved in direct combat, many were forced to leave their homes in war-torn Europe, and others were ordered to take different names as their country fell to enemy rule. Those on the American home front rationed food and clothing, planted Victory Gardens, and displayed stars in their windows in honor of their soldiers. The politics of World War II, and the interrelationships between countries, are complex and difficult to understand when read in history books. But reading fiction set during this time allows young readers to make an emotional connection to the children and their families who became victims of this devastating war.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON WORLD WAR II THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Courage & Honor • Fear • Survival
Family • Friendship • Patriotism



GRADES 7 UP

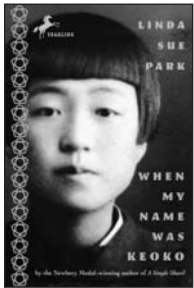
ABOUT THE BOOKS



A Faraway Island

Annika Thor; translated by Linda Schenck
Grades 3-7
Delacorte Press HC: 978-0-385-73617-6
GLB: 978-0-385-90590-9

It's the summer of 1939. Two Jewish sisters from Vienna—twelve-year-old Stephie Steiner and eight-year-old Nellie—are sent to Sweden to escape the Nazis. They expect to stay there six months, until their parents can flee to Amsterdam; then all four will go to America. But as the world war intensifies, the girls remain, each with her own host family, on a rugged island off the western coast of Sweden. Will they ever see their parents again?



When My Name Was Keoko

Linda Sue Park
Grades 5 up
Yearling PB: 978-0-440-41944-0

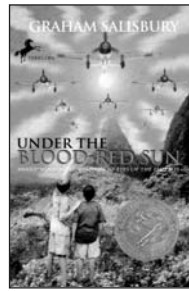
The Kim family's pride in their country and its culture leads them to maintain as much of the Korean ways as possible during the Japanese occupation of Korea. This pride almost costs them their lives.



Lily's Crossing

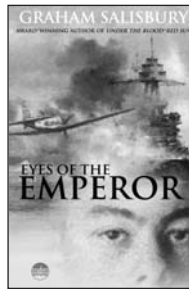
Patricia Reilly Giff
Grades 3-7
Yearling PB: 978-0-440-41453-7
Delacorte Press HC: 978-0-385-32142-6

This story of friendship will appeal to young readers for many reasons. Because it is set during World War II in the United States, students can grasp a full understanding of how the war affected people on the home front. It asks them to think about the meaning of family, dealing with guilt, separation and loss, the consequences of dishonesty, and the rewards of honesty.



Under the Blood-Red Sun

Graham Salisbury
Grades 5 up
Yearling PB: 978-0-440-41139-0
Laurel-Leaf PB: 978-0-553-49487-7



Eyes of the Emperor

Graham Salisbury
Grades 7 up
Laurel-Leaf PB: 978-0-440-22956-8
Wendy Lamb Books HC: 978-0-385-72971-0

These companion books illustrate the impact of cultural prejudice during a time of intense fear—the invasion of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Both novels expose the lives of Japanese American families and soldiers struggling to define an American identity for themselves, while also preserving their Japanese roots and traditions. The stories bring to light the devastation and horror of the attacks on Pearl Harbor, and the shocking internment of American citizens.



War Games

Audrey Coulombis and Akila Coulombis
Grades 3-7
Random House HC: 978-0-375-85628-0
GLB: 978-0-375-95628-7

For twelve-year-old Petros, World War II feels unreal and far away. But when the Germans invade Greece, the war suddenly comes impossibly close. Overnight, neighbors become enemies. People begin to keep secrets. Soon what were once just boys' games become matters of life and death as Petros and his brother Zola each wonder if, like their resistance fighter cousin, they too can make a difference.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Have students ask family members about relatives who fought in World War II. Which branch of the service did they serve? What part of the world? Then instruct students to take a virtual field trip of the United States World War II Museum. (www.ddaymuseum.org) Ask them to write a tribute to their relative that might be an appropriate reading to commemorate Veterans Day at the World War II Museum.

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

COURAGE & HONOR

Ask students to define *courage*. Discuss how Sun-hee and her family show courage in *When My Name Was Keoko*. What about Slim in *The Eyes of the Emperor*? Why does Eddy describe his act as “the bravest thing I’d seen in the army so far?” (p. 207) Courageous acts aren’t always visible. Discuss the obvious acts of courage in *Under the Blood-Red Sun*. Who is the most courageous character in *Lily’s Crossing*, *A Faraway Island*, and *War Games*? What are the less obvious acts of courage in each of the books? Draw a connection between courage and honor. Who are the most honorable characters? What lessons are to be learned from them?

FEAR

War creates fear. Discuss how Petros and his family deal with fear in *War Games*. Discuss Stephanie Steiner’s greatest fear in *A Faraway Island*. How are her fears greater than those of her sister, Nellie? Contrast Stephanie’s fears with those of Albert in *Lily’s Crossing*. Examine the covers of *War Games* and *Under the Blood-Red Sun*, and explain how fear is communicated through the art.

SURVIVAL

In each of the novels, the main characters and their families must take bold steps to survive the looming threats of a world at war. Contrast how the Nakaji family protects themselves in *Under the Blood-Red Sun* with what Petros and his family do to survive a German invasion in *War Games*. Why is it necessary for Sun-hee in *When My Name Was Keoko* to change her name, and Petros and his family in *War Games* to speak only Greek? Eddy is worried about his own safety in *The Eyes of the Emperor*. Discuss what he does to survive a hideous experiment on Cat Island.

FAMILY

The importance of family is an underlying theme in each of the novels. Lily and Albert in *Lily’s Crossing*, and Stephanie and Nellie Steiner in *A Faraway Island* suffer separation and loss of family. Compare and contrast how each of these characters deals with their loss. Discuss how Albert gains a sense of family from Mr. and Mrs. Orban. Discuss the family relationships in *War Games* and *When My Name Was Keoko*. How does the war change these relationships?

FRIENDSHIP

Friendships are gained and lost in each of the novels. Discuss how the war affects Stephanie Steiner’s ability to make new friends in *A Faraway Island*. How are Sun-hee’s friendships adversely affected by the war in *When My Name Was Keoko*? Petros, the main character in *War Games*, and Elia have known one another their entire lives. At what point does Petros sense that his friendship with Elia is changing? Describe Eddy’s friendship with Cobra and Slim in *The Eyes of the Emperor*. How are the main characters in each of the novels the victims of profiling? Explain how profiling leads to bullying. Who are the bullies in each of the novels?

PATRIOTISM

Define *patriotism*. Brainstorm the different contributions each member of the Kim family makes to show their loyalty to Korea in *When My Name Was Keoko*. Explain how Petros’s family feels patriotic to both Greece and the United States in *War Games*. How do people on the homefront display their patriotism in *Lily’s Crossing*? How does Eddy fulfill the oath he took when he enlisted in *Eyes of the Emperor*?

CONNECTING TO THE CURRICULUM

LANGUAGE ARTS

Have students find out what it was like being a child during World War II by walking in Vera's shoes on the following Web site: www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2children. Have Lily from *Lily's Crossing*, Stephie Steiner from *A Faraway Island*, and Vera become pen pals. Have each character relate how the war has affected them and their country.

Sometimes poetry brings comfort to people in times of trouble. Ask students to think about the main characters and select a poem that might soothe their fears. Have them write a letter to each character, attach the poem, and state why they have selected this verse for them.

In the United States, women contributed to the war effort by taking jobs that were traditionally held by men. Refer students to the following Web site: www.nps.gov/pwro/collection/website/rosie.htm. Then ask them to write a feature story on one of the women for a biographical work on American Women in World War II.

SOCIAL STUDIES

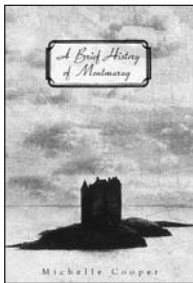
In *When My Name Was Keoko*, Tae-yul volunteers to fly for the Japanese Imperial Army. Ask students to read about the Kamikaze pilots on the following Web site: www.pbs.org/perilousfight/psychology/the_kamikaze_threat. What motivated the pilots to volunteer? Have students read about the suicide bombers in Iraq. Then have them write a brief newspaper article that compares the mission and motivation of the Kamikaze pilots in World War II to the Iraqi suicide bombers.

Have students take a virtual field trip of the United States Holocaust Museum. (www.ushmm.org) Instruct them to write a description for one of the exhibits for a museum guidebook.

In *Under the Blood-Red Sun*, the Nakaji family lives in Hawaii when Pearl Harbor is bombed. In 1962, the United States government completed the USS *Arizona* Memorial, a site that has become a great tourist attraction; in 1965 Pearl Harbor was named a national historic landmark, and in 1980, it was placed under the direction of the National Park Service. Ask students to research the symbolism of the architecture of this historic memorial. What items can tourists expect to see there? Finally, ask students to write a postcard that they might send their social studies teacher that describes their visit to Pearl Harbor.



ABOUT THE BOOK



A Brief History of Montmaray

Michelle Cooper

Grades 7 up

Alfred A. Knopf HC: 978-0-375-85864-2

GLB: 978-0-375-95864-9

Sophie FitzOsborne lives in a crumbling castle in the tiny island kingdom of Montmaray with her eccentric and impoverished royal family. When she receives a journal for her sixteenth birthday, Sophie decides to chronicle day-to-day life on the island. But this is 1936, and the news that trickles in from the mainland reveals a world on the brink of war. The politics of Europe seem far away from their remote island—until two German officers land a boat on Montmaray. And then suddenly politics become very personal indeed.

A Brief History of Montmaray is a heart-stopping tale of loyalty, love, and loss, and of fighting to hold on to home when the world is exploding all around you.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- Discuss Aunt Charlotte’s view of women. Why doesn’t she think females should be educated? How does Aunt Charlotte offer security to Sophie and Veronica? How might Veronica consider Aunt Charlotte a threat? Explain Sophie’s shyness when she finally meets Aunt Charlotte at the end of the novel.
- Sophie is smitten with Simon, but Veronica has other ideas about him. Explain why Veronica thinks that Simon “doesn’t have the best interest of Montmaray at heart.” (p. 34) By the end of the novel, Sophie realizes that Simon hasn’t changed, but that she has. What is the pivotal moment when Sophie changes her thoughts about Simon?
- Contrast Toby and Simon’s views of politics. Why does Sophie think that people who care the most about politics have the least compassion for ordinary people? Debate whether Sophie thinks that Simon and Veronica have little compassion for others. Why is Sophie upset when she finds out that Veronica is corresponding with Daniel, their former tutor? What does this correspondence have to do with politics?
- Sophie was only six when her mother died. Why does Toby, her older brother, change the subject when Sophie asks questions about her mother? Why does Sophie think that Toby was affected the most by their parents’ death? Veronica offers only vague facts when Sophie inquires about her parents. Explain each girl’s need to discover more about the mothers they lost.
- Veronica is the intellectual one, and is very interested in the political situation in Spain. Debate whether Veronica’s interest in Spain has anything to do with the mystery surrounding the disappearance of her mother.
- Sophie and Veronica argue about the motive of the two Germans who come to the island. What makes Sophie suspicious of them? What is Veronica’s position regarding the German visitors? Why does their presence make Sophie fearful about writing in her journal? How are Sophie’s instincts about the German visitors correct?
- Sophie says, “There is a fine line between gossip and history when one is talking about kings.” (p. 89) Explain why the political situation in Europe is so personal to the FitzOsbornes. Do their personal loyalties cloud their judgment of the events unfolding?
- Explain how Montmaray was devastated by World War I and its aftermath. How does that history shape the royal family’s views of the new war brewing in Europe?

WRITING ACTIVITIES

- Veronica is reading *The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror*. She explains that it is Communist propaganda published by the Left Book Club. Have students consider the type of propaganda in a book about this subject. Then have them write copy for the book jacket.
- Sophie expresses many jealousies in the book. Write a letter that she might write to Toby that expresses her deepest jealousy regarding his relationship with Simon.
- Veronica asks Anthony to deliver a package containing a collection of the most important pages of her *Brief History of Montmaray* to Aunt Charlotte. Ask students to select one important event in the novel and illuminate it as a short story.
- There are several possible heroes or heroines in the novel. Ask students to pick one and write a personal essay from the characters point of view about their role in the escape and rescue efforts on Montmaray.



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www.randomhouse.com/teachers



Search over 100 themes and holidays
for books for your classroom!

INTERNET RESOURCES

American Red Cross During World War II

www2.redcross.org/museum/exhibits/ww2.asp

World War II Timeline 1939–1945

www.worldwar-2.net

National World War II Memorial

www.wwiimemorial.com

Greece in the Second World War

www.ahistoryofgreece.com/worldwarII.htm