



***Elements of: Farewell  
to Manzanar***

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# *Historical Narrative*

**"Farewell to Manzanar" is a historical narrative because:**

- It presents factual events based on actual historical circumstances.
- It offers a personal perspective on the experiences of Japanese-Americans during World War II.
- It contextualizes events within the broader historical context of wartime discrimination.
- It provides a reflective analysis of the lasting impact of internment on individuals and communities.



# ***Theme – Cultural Identity and Belonging***

- Jeanne struggles to reconcile Japanese cultural heritage with American patriotism amidst prejudice and xenophobia.
- Generational differences exist between the Issei and the Nisei, emphasizing their divergent cultural assimilation and patriotism approaches. While the Issei prioritize preserving Japanese cultural norms, the Nisei often feel alienated from their Japanese identity and strive to conform to American ideals, facing challenges of acceptance and discrimination in the process.
- Jeanne and her peers grapple with the desire to belong in mainstream American society, despite facing discrimination and prejudice. The narrative portrays their efforts to embrace American culture and achieve social acceptance, juxtaposed with the barriers and challenges they encounter in asserting their identities as thoroughly American citizens.



# *Theme - Internment and Family Life*

- The Wakatsukis prioritize family unity amidst adversity, emphasizing the importance of familial bonds in overcoming challenges.
- At first, internment strengthens the Wakatsukis' commitment to each other as they navigate the hardships of camp life together. The shack represents physical and emotional shelter, as Woody's efforts to fix it up symbolize the family's determination to maintain normalcy and safety.
- Internment disrupts the traditional family structure, leading to conflicts and changes in dynamics. Papa's descent into alcoholism and loss of leadership within the family. Papa's character transformation reflects the impact of internment on familial relationships.
- Jeanne and her siblings navigate newfound independence while mourning the loss of their previous family structure. Jeanne's defiance of Papa's wishes and pursuit of education and marriage outside of traditional norms. Highlights the irony of newfound freedom amidst the loss of familial cohesion.



# ***Story Symbolism– Stone***

- Stones symbolize endurance in both Japanese culture and the context of life in Manzanar during internment.
- Papa's singing of the Japanese national anthem after a public disagreement signifies his resolve to stand firm amidst internment pressures.
- Rock gardens in Manzanar, inspired by Japanese tradition, combine Japanese and American identities, allowing internees to endure and thrive while preserving their culture.



# ***Story Symbolism - Barbed Wire***

- Barbed wire initially represents the harsh reality of imprisonment and exclusion for Jeanne and her family upon their arrival at Manzanar.
- As internees adapt to life at the camp, the significance of the barbed wire evolves, becoming less visible and even providing a sense of comfort and safety within the confines of the camp.
- The perception of the barbed wire as protective underscores the pervasive racism and hostility faced by Japanese Americans upon their release from internment, highlighting the complex symbolism of the fence as both a barrier and a boundary.

