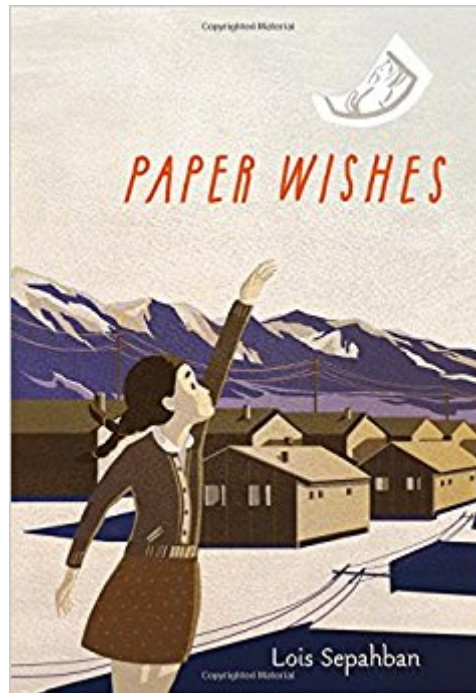




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# Paper Wishes



## Synopsis

Ten-year-old Manami did not realize how peaceful her family's life on Bainbridge Island was until the day it all changed. It's 1942, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and Manami and her family are Japanese American, which means that the government says they must leave their home by the sea and join other Japanese Americans at a prison camp in the desert. Manami is sad to go, but even worse is that they are going to have to give her and her grandfather's dog, Yujiin, to a neighbor to take care of. Manami decides to sneak Yujiin under her coat and gets as far as the mainland before she is caught and forced to abandon Yujiin. She and her grandfather are devastated, but Manami clings to the hope that somehow Yujiin will find his way to the camp and make her family whole again. It isn't until she finds a way to let go of her guilt that Manami can reclaim the piece of herself that she left behind and accept all that has happened to her family.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 550 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 192 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 69 customer reviews

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Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

“This historical debut speaks volumes of love and longing.” —Kirkus Reviews, starred review  
“A superior story of survival and love set during this dark time in American history.” —School Library Journal, starred review  
“This engaging...book offers a personal perspective on events and reasons to care about the outcome. A

fine selection for historical-fiction fans. *Booklist* “Engrossing and heartrending. *Publishers Weekly* “...with the memory of the internment camps being volleyed about in current presidential campaign rhetoric, comes Lois Sepahban’s *PAPER WISHES*, a devastating and brave fiction debut that recounts the plight of Manami, a girl from Bainbridge Island, Wash., who is sent to the Manzanar camp in the California desert...What sets Manami’s story apart is the delicate way Sepahban handles her obsession with and guilt about leaving the dog behind. An introvert who is made mute by the trauma she experiences, Manami expresses herself by drawing pictures, , including the images of Yujiin that she throws in the Manzanar winds as prayers or wishes for the dog’s return. We watch as she negotiates the unknown through a generous teacher and family members, including a grandfather who is with her at the “prison-village, a stroke of luck, since most nisei did not have that advantage...although the tone is sober and sad, it’s also a *Find Your Voice* novel in which a mute child finds her voice, at last. *The New York Times* “Lois Sepahban presents a somber but emotionally true story of WWII Japanese American internment in *Paper Wishes*. In 1942, ten-year-old Manami and her family are forced to leave their home on Bainbridge Island, Washington, for Manzanar, an internment camp in the California desert. Grandfather has arranged for their beloved dog Yujiin to stay with their pastor, but Manami hides the pup in her coat instead. On the mainland, a soldier discovers him, and he is left behind in a crate, his fate unknown. Heartbroken, Manami becomes mute. Her emotional trauma is sensitively portrayed, but she recovers her voice when she needs it most, and the story closes on a hopeful note. *The Horn Book*

Lois Sepahban lives in Herrodsburg, Kentucky, where she writes children’s nonfiction books for the school library market. *Paper Wishes* is her first novel. Visit her online at [loissepahban.com](http://loissepahban.com).

I just finished reading this book to my son and daughter, ages 10 and 8. My father, their grandfather, and his entire family were interned at Topaz in Delta, Utah during the war, ripped from their home in Oakland, CA. While I have tried to explain the camps to them many times, this thoughtful book, told from the perspective of a girl, really struck a cord with them and gave them insight as to what the camps really meant to families, to a child in particular. They could empathize with the hardship and guilt of having to give up a loved one and part of the family. We all had tears in our eyes after several chapters. They now have a better understanding of a part of American history that should never be forgotten. And they learned that the human spirit is strong and resilient, and that love keeps people

together.

Rating: 3.5/5 You know what? A book about a kid getting sent to a prison camp

isn't sad enough. Nope, nope, nope. In order to make it truly sad, you have to pry the kid's beloved pet away from her while she's on the way to the prison camp. Needless to say, this book is not one of those "let's gloss over this dreadful topic for the sake of kids' sensitivities" books. And that is one thing I appreciate about this book. I recently read some excerpts of an E.B. White interview in which he talks about writing for children. In it, he said, "Anyone who writes down to children is simply wasting his time. You have to write up, not down. Children are demanding. They are the most attentive, curious, eager, observant, sensitive, quick, and generally congenial readers on earth. They accept, almost without question, anything you present them with, as long as it is presented honestly, fearlessly, and clearly." Lois Sepahban seems to follow this line of thinking. There are some beacons of light (Manami's sweet and supportive best friend, her loving family, her understanding and generous teacher), but the book doesn't look at what a shitty situation the prison camps were (the climate, the living conditions, the losses, the lack of freedom) through rose-colored glasses. It's a good (if brief) introduction to a very heavy topic for kids.

This is such a good book for young readers to learn about the internment camps for Japanese Americans during WW2. I used these with my fifth graders for a book club. Most of them had no idea that these camps existed. The story grabbed them and opened up an opportunity to discuss this difficult time in our history.

Paper Wishes is about a Manami, a Japanese-American girl who is relocated from her island home to an internment camp in the middle of the desert during WWII. The shock of her new life in a prison camp combined with the trauma of being forced to abandon her dog, takes the words away from Manami, and she spends much of the book in silence. Life in the prison camp is nothing like life back on the island where she walked on the beach with her dog and Grandpa. Where she loved her school and playing with her friends. Where she didn't have to share a small room with her parents and grandfather, and other families too. Where there is only dust and soldiers and not enough tea. As much as your heart will break for Manami, Lois Sepahban is masterful at weaving hope and love and friendship into this story. The book is rich in details

you can feel the dust on your skin and the heat of the harsh sun. Beautifully written, this is a book that belongs on everyone's shelves.

This book is beautifully written. You will be invested in the characters and the story. This is the first book of 2016 that I added to my Newbery watch list. Excellent for grades 4 and up.

I'm reading this book aloud to my kids (8 and 10 yrs) and we are fully immersed. The stripped down prose gives the story great atmosphere and we are all rooting for the brave little main character Manami. This book is a new classic.

A gentle, yet powerful story written from the perspective of a young Japanese-American girl as she and her family have to endure evacuation and internment during World War II. Although young, her strength shines throughout the story and we are drawn into all the she and her family must face as their lives change before them. The deep love and devotion that the family shares, helps carry them through this difficult period. A simple and beautiful story that readers of any age will enjoy and opens our eyes to a sad part of our American history.

This book told an important story about the internment of Japanese Americans during World War 2, including some things I didn't know about the riot at Manzanar. However, the story was not that engrossing. The part about her selective mute problem, her dog, the notes she sent to her dog, her expecting the dog to read the notes and travel from Seattle to Manzanar, all seemed kind of stupid. Not believable. However, I'm an old man, and I think this book is aimed at kids, so they might like it much more than I did. This book was recommended by my school district's head librarian, after I told her about "The War that Saved My Life," which I loved. This one not so much. However, I finished it, and that's always a good sign.

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