

Finding Moon Rabbit

J. C. Kato

JC²

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Heart Mountain, an internment camp in Wyoming, is brought to heartbreaking life in *Finding Moon Rabbit*, J. C. Kato and JC²'s sensitive historical novel about surviving injustice with hope.

Because of Executive Order 9066, Koko and her Japanese American family are sent to a war relocation center. They're separated from Koko's father, who is ushered elsewhere. Koko's longing to reunite with him pairs with her vibrant exploration of the camp's barracks and hidden corners, where other internees show her how it's possible to believe in goodness—even under the threat of being shot for crossing a barbed-wire barrier.

Koko's spirited encounters with Japanese American people across several generations bring her closer to her heritage. As she maintains her hope of being reunited with her father, she hears cultural stories and haiku, and observes a game of Go. There are sharp examples of individual courage, but also peeks into daily life: there's excitement about joining the Girl Scouts; Koko meets a grandfatherly companion and receives help from a postal clerk. The internees start a library and a garden. Thus, Koko's strong community persists, despite the War Relocation Authority's rules.

The period is captured in rich and realistic terms, via sketches, news items, and mentions of historical figures. There are considerations of the differences surrounding military service and Japanese nationalism; the internees become aware of people's racist fears about them. Through it all, clever Koko is guided by her own set of rules; these are used to track her maturation. She helps others—that is her rewarding means of being a loyal American.

Subtle in honoring human resilience, *Finding Moon Rabbit* is a valuable historical novel that examines internment through a girl's fears and wishes.

KAREN RIGBY (July / August 2022)

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