

LOVE IN THE LIBRARY

Maggie Tokuda-Hall illustrated by Yas Imamura



Maggie Tokuda-Hall illustrated by Yas Imamura

ISBN: 978-1-5362-0430-8

Also available as an e-book

Common Core Connections

This guide, which can be used with large or small groups, will help students meet several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts. These include the reading literature standards for key ideas and details, craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL), as well as the speaking and listening standards for comprehension and collaboration and for presentation of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL). Questions can also be used in writing prompts for independent work (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W).

ABOUT THE BOOK

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Tama is sent to live in an incarceration camp in the desert. All Japanese Americans from the West Coast—elderly people, children, babies—now live in incarceration camps like Minidoka. To be who she is has become a crime, it seems, and Tama doesn't know when or if she will ever leave. Trying not to think of the life she once had, she works in the camp's tiny library, taking solace in pages bursting with color and light, love and fairness. And she isn't the only one. George waits each morning by the door, his arms piled with books checked out the day before. As their friendship grows, Tama wonders: Can anyone possibly read so much? Or is *she* the reason George comes to the library every day? Beautifully illustrated and complete with an author's note and a photo of the real Tama and George, this book tells the love story of the author's grandparents while shedding light on a shameful chapter of American history.

This teachers' guide prompts students to study the narrative and pictures closely, emphasizing the well-chosen language and images, key historical details, and topics of humanity, resilience, and injustice.


CANDLEWICK PRESS
www.candlewick.com

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Before reading the book, look closely at the cover illustration and the small pictures on the title page. What do they suggest about the book's content? What can you guess about the setting and the characters?
2. Why were Tama, George, their families, and the other Japanese Americans sent to Minidoka and other incarceration camps? Based on the story and the author's note, talk about the injustice of the government moving and locking up citizens who had committed no crimes.
3. Describe Tama and George, drawing from the narrative and what you learned from the pictures. What were they like? What did they have in common? How were they different?
4. Choose a few pictures of Tama and George to study closely. What emotions can you see in their faces and their body language? How do the pictures relate to the text on those pages? What do the pictures add that isn't in the text?
5. What aspects of people's lives at Minidoka were similar to their lives before they were sent there? What aspects of incarceration camp life were different from their previous lives? Base your answers on both the narrative and the pictures.
6. Discuss the description of Minidoka and the other camps as "uncomfortable." What made life at Minidoka difficult for Tama, George, and the other prisoners besides the lack of freedom? What did they do to try to make life better? Give specific examples.
7. What do you learn about the passing of time and seasons at Minidoka? List all the references in the narrative and the pictures that indicate the seasons are changing, and describe how the changing seasons affected the prisoners.
8. The author's note uses the phrase "incarceration camp," while the narrative uses "prison camp." Discuss the meaning of the word "incarceration," looking it up if it's unfamiliar. Compare the phrases, also considering the word "camp" and your associations with it. How do the pictures emphasize that Tama and the others were imprisoned and not free to leave?
9. Find the places where the narrative uses the word "constant." When does "constant" describe negative situations? When does it describe positive ones? Analyze how the words "miracle" and "miraculous" are used in the story and why they were so important given Tama's circumstances.
10. Tama searches for a word that captures her feelings of being "scared and sad and confused and frustrated and lonely and hopeful." Why do you think George sums up those feelings as "human"? How does he apply the word "human" to himself? Discuss these sentences: "But to fall in love in a place like Minidoka, a place built to make people feel like they weren't human—that was miraculous. That was humans doing what humans do best."

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The Miracle of Books

Tama finds it magical that the books in the library contain “worlds bursting with color and light.” The illustrations show images from stories such as a knight and a ship. Have students draw similar pictures that show themselves in a library surrounded by images from their favorite books. Have them share the pictures in small groups and talk about the books they like.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.S.1.

Torn from My Home

The last pages of the story contain a sentence from Tama’s journal. Ask students to write at least five journal entries of their own based on imagining themselves leaving home and arriving at Minidoka. The entries should express what they experience and how they feel about it, incorporating details from the book’s narrative and pictures.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.

Batter Up!

From the library, Tama can see and hear a baseball game outside of the window. Share the following short video about the importance of baseball for people in the incarceration camps, created by a nonprofit dedicated to teaching history through baseball. Hold a class discussion about what the students learn from the video and why baseball mattered so much. Discuss what the video conveys about the determination and resilience of those at the incarceration camps.

From American Innings: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRFK9vvQgCw>

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.S.1.

What to Pack?

Some Japanese Americans had as little as forty-eight hours’ notice that they had to leave. Others had six days. Have your students imagine that it’s 1941 and they and their family are suddenly told they’ll be moved far away to a place with mostly empty buildings. Each student can bring only one small suitcase. Have them consider what five to ten small things they would pack besides clothing. They should keep in mind that in 1941 they would not have had any electronics except perhaps a family radio, but no computer, smartphone, television, or the like. Each student should draw a suitcase with the items, adding short explanations for each choice, and then compare their choices.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.

Family History

In *Love in the Library*, the author tells her grandparents’ story. What stories do your students’ relatives or others in your community have about the past? Ask students to investigate this question at home and wherever they talk with community members. Have them collect stories, write brief accounts of them, and share them with the class. Then arrange for some of the relatives and community members to tell their stories in person to the class and answer questions.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.S.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.

ABOUT MAGGIE TOKUDA-HALL

Photo by Red Scott



Maggie Tokuda-Hall is the author of *Also an Octopus*, illustrated by Benji Davies, and the novel *The Mermaid, the Witch, and the Sea*. She lives in Oakland, California.

Also by Maggie Tokuda-Hall:



Also an Octopus

HC: 978-0-7636-7084-9

PB: 978-1-5362-1591-5

Also available as an e-book

ABOUT YAS IMAMURA

Photo by Yas Imamura



Yas Imamura is the illustrator of *The Very Oldest Pear Tree* by Nancy I. Sanders, *Winged Wonders* by Meeg Pincus, and other books for children. She lives in Portland, Oregon.



*The Mermaid, the Witch,
and the Sea*

HC: 978-1-5362-0431-5

PB: 978-1-5362-1589-2

Also available as an e-book

This guide was prepared by Kathleen Odean, a school librarian for more than fifteen years who now gives professional development workshops for educators about new books for children and teens. She chaired the 2002 Newbery Award Committee and served on earlier Caldecott and Newbery Award committees.

