



BREAKING THE SILENCE

One sunny day my brother, Yoneichi, and I sat on a log floating in front of our home at Shawnee Beach on Vashon Island, Washington. I was four years old and Yoneichi was six. On that peaceful day in 1929 we could not know about the difficult future my family would face.

Thirteen years later, World War II broke out and a wave of anti-Japanese prejudice swept across the United States. The government forced my family to leave our secure island home and face a hostile and violent world at war. I did not know that our own country would confine my family in an internment camp simply because we looked like the enemy.

Some seventy-five years later, I gaze long and hard at this photo, recalling my innocence, joy, and security. With what I know now, how I wish I could have held that little girl in the photo and reassured her: “Have faith in your family and the ultimate goodness of people. Especially have faith in yourself to survive the tragic events yet to come. In spite of all the terror, pain, depression, and tears in your future, you will reach a final hopeful conclusion.”

Over the years, I have learned faith, hope, and love in a world gone crazy. I have carved out a life marked by reason and patience for myself and for my three children. I also learned the



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Mary and Yoneichi.

importance of speaking, telling my story, in the hope that history will not repeat itself.



I wanted to create a young reader's version of my story because I was quite young when this story began. As a teenager, I faced great uncertainty and danger in the United States and worldwide. This story tells how my family lived through that time and learned many important lessons about love and courage. I hope this story offers you hope and inspiration to face whatever challenges may come your way in your own life.

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Mary Matsuda, 5, and her brother, Yoneichi, 7.