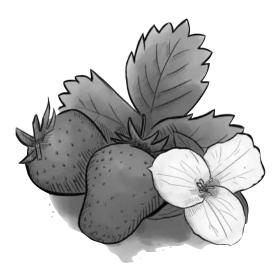
## The Hopes and Dreams Series Japanese-Americans

# Sent Away

A story based on history



Second Edition

### Tana Reiff

Illustrations by Tyler Stiene



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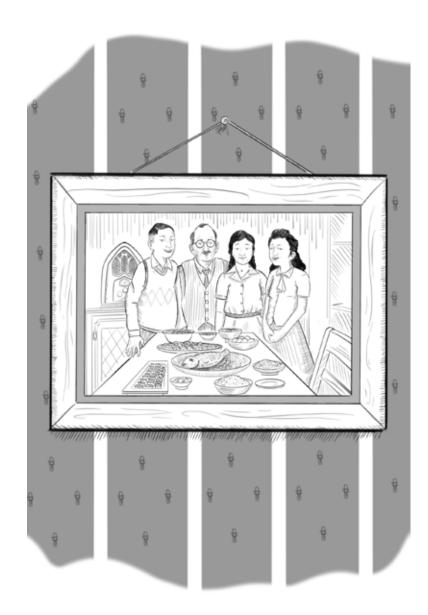
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### The Hopes and Dreams Series by Tana Reiff

The Magic Paper (Mexican-Americans)
For Gold and Blood (Chinese-Americans)
Nobody Knows (African-Americans)
Little Italy (Italian-Americans)
Hungry No More (Irish-Americans)
Sent Away (Japanese-Americans)
Two Hearts (Greek-Americans)

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### 1 Happy New Year

Northern California, 1941

For the Higashi family, New Year's was the best day of the whole year. Keiko, the daughter, looked down the long table. "In all my 15 years, our New Year's food has never looked so beautiful!" Keiko told her mother.

Keiko's favorite foods were laid out to see and to smell. Every food had meaning. Lotus roots, for a clear future. Dark green seaweed, to bring joy. Black soybeans, as a wish for good health.

Grilled whitefish, as a prayer for success. Bright pink shrimp, for a long life. White and gold eggs, shaped like hearts, to bring good fortune.

"Take a picture!" Keiko begged her father.

"Everyone stand around the table,"
Papa said.
He pointed his little box camera at Mama and Keiko. "Tatsu, get into the picture!" he called to his son. "Stand behind your mother and sister. You are taller than they are." Tatsu did as his father asked.

Just as Papa
was about to
take the picture,
Mrs. Finn from next door
walked in.
"Get into the picture!"
she said to Mr. Higashi.
"Give me the camera.
I'll take a picture
of all four of you."

Papa stepped in beside Tatsu. The camera flash went off.

"What a beautiful family!" said Mrs. Finn.

"And a happy one!"
Papa smiled.
He put his arms
around the other three.

"Come and eat with us," Mama told Mrs. Finn. "No, no," said Mrs. Finn. "I just came to wish you a Happy New Year!"

Mrs. Finn left some special cookies she had made. Then the four Higashis sat down at the table. Each of them put their hands together and said, "Itadakimasu."\*

The meal began with hot soup and rice cakes.
The food kept coming for hours.

<sup>\*</sup> The Japanese word *itadakimasu* means "I humbly receive," but when relating to food, it is often compared to "Let's eat," "Bon appétit," or "Thanks for the food."

When the meal was over. Papa had something to say. "We have come a long way," he began. "Today, we are a lucky family. We have a good life in America. We have everything that we need. We have so much to give thanks for. On this day, we wish for a long, happy, healthy life."

He went on to tell the family story. Keiko and Tatsu had heard the story many times before. It was a long story. But it was a good one. They did not mind hearing it one more time.



### 2 Papa's Story

Papa told about how he left Japan. He went to Hawaii as a young boy. In Hawaii he cut sugar cane. It was back-breaking work.

Then he came to northern California.
He picked vegetables and fruit — beets, grapes, grapefruit — all year long.
He worked hard.

He saved up money to get married. But in those days there were few Japanese women in California. So Papa had his picture taken. He sent the picture to his family back in Japan. They sent him a picture of a young Japanese woman. The marriage went on the books in Japan.

The "picture bride" came to America.
Papa met her as she got off the ship with many other young women.

Papa and his bride were lucky. They liked each other. They had two children. Tatsu, the boy, was first. Keiko, the girl, was second.

As a young family man, Papa had big ideas. He wanted to grow strawberries. Many American farmers thought that strawberry farming was too hard. Japanese workers did not think it was too hard. Papa saw a chance to make money. However, California law did not let Japanese people own farmland. So Papa leased some land.

After Tatsu was born, Papa had another idea. Children born in America were U.S. citizens. As citizens, they could own land. So Papa bought some land in his son's name. A few years after that
Papa had yet another idea.
He could see
that some farm workers
needed a place to live.
So he leased
a big house.
He turned it
into a boarding house.
Mama was the one
who ran it.

The boarding business did very well.
The family lived in five nice, large rooms on the third floor.

With the strawberries and the boarding house, the young couple made a good living. But California had many laws against the Japanese who lived there.

In some places the Higashis were not welcome. Still, by New Year's Day 1941 the Higashi family had a very good life.

Papa said it was important for Keiko and Tatsu to hear this story every now and then.



### 3 War with Japan

One day in early December Mama was home alone. Mrs. Finn came running into the house. She was crying.

"Did you hear the news?" she asked Mama. "Japan has bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii!"

"Oh, no!" cried Mama. "I can't believe it!"

It was December 7, 1941. It was the day the United States got into World War II.\*

<sup>\*</sup> II is the Roman numeral for the number 2: "World War Two."

And it was the first day of a long, hard time for the Japanese in America.

The newspapers and radio said that anyone from Japan was on the wrong side of the war. Some people said that the Japanese in America were working for the Japanese government. As days and weeks went by, these bad feelings only grew worse.

"Be home by 8:00," Papa told Tatsu and Keiko one morning.

"Why?" they both asked at the same time.

"It's the law for everyone from Japan," Papa explained.

As he spoke, he took the box camera out of the drawer.

"Are you taking our picture?" Keiko asked him.

"No," he said without looking at her. "I must turn it in at the police station. We may not own a camera now. No short-wave radios or guns, either, if we had them "

One day at dinner Mama wasn't eating. She looked upset.

"What's the matter?" Papa asked.

"Today I heard something at the market," said Mama.

"Everyone from Japan might be sent away while the war is on."

"But Tatsu and I are U.S. citizens!" cried Keiko. "And you and Papa are our parents. They can't send us away, can they?"

No one had an answer to Keiko's question.

Then in April the bad news came. In ten days all Japanese and Japanese-Americans had to leave their homes. They would go to camps far from home. They could take along only what they could carry. They were told they were being sent away for their own safety.

"Our home is the safest place," said Keiko. "I want to stay here."

"You may be right," said Papa. "But we will do whatever the U.S. government tells us to do. We must show that we are with the Americans."

On May 1, the Higashi family was told to report to a church. From the church, they would be taken to the first camp.

They would stay there until the main camp was ready.

They had only ten days to sell or store their things. Only ten days to close their businesses. Only ten days to say goodbye to the good life they had built.

### **Glossary**

Definitions and examples of certain words and terms used in the story

### Chapter 1 — Happy New Year page 1

**lotus** — A flower that grows on the surface of the water.

Lotus roots for a clear future.

**flash** — A sudden, bright light for taking photographs in dark places.

went off (to go off) — to start, as a sound or light or alarm that happens very suddenly. *The camera flash went off.* 

#### Chapter 2 — Papa's Story page 6

went (to go) on the books — To become official.

The marriage went on the books in Japan.

**leased (to lease)** — To rent something, often requiring a contract.

So Papa leased some land.

**boarding house** — A building where people rent a room and buy the meals served by the owner.

He turned it into a boarding house.

#### Chapter 3 — War with Japan page 11

short-wave radio — A radio that can get signals from distant places.

No short wave radios, or guns . . .

#### Chapter 4 — The Race Track Camp page 17

**broom** — A household tool used to clean the floor by brushing.

She left the broom standing against the back door.

turned into (to turn into) — To change from one form to another.

It had been turned into a camp.

**armed guards** — Guards are uniformed men who protect or control. Armed means they have guns.

Keiko watched as armed guards closed the gate behind them.

barbed wire — Metal "string" that has sharp points on it.

The gate was covered with barbed wire.

chill — A sudden cold feeling caused by fear or anxiety.

A chill went down Keiko's back.

horse stalls — Small "rooms" for horses in a building called a stable.

Horse stalls were all around the track.