

Yoshiko Uchida

So It Won't Happen Again

Yoshiko Uchida (1921–1992) was in her last year of college when the United States entered World War II. Like most other people of Japanese descent on the West Coast, Uchida and her family were uprooted by the government and forced to go to an internment camp. She and her family lived at Tanforan Racetrack in horse stall 40, answering to Family Number 13453 instead of their own name. Uchida later gave the same family number and “address” to the fictional family in her short story “The Bracelet.” Uchida said that in writing about the internment camps, she tried to give readers a sense of the courage and strength that enabled most Japanese Americans to endure this tragedy.

There was another reason that she wrote about the camps:

“I always ask the children why they think I wrote *Journey to Topaz* and *Journey Home*, in which I tell of the wartime experiences of the Japanese Americans. . . . ‘To tell how you felt? To tell what happened to the Japanese people?’

‘Yes,’ I answer, but I continue the discussion until finally one of them will say, ‘You wrote those books so it won’t ever happen again.’



And that is why I wrote this book. I wrote it for the young Japanese Americans who seek a sense of continuity with their past. But I wrote it as well for all Americans, with the hope that through knowledge of the past, they will never allow another group of people in America to be sent into desert exile ever again.”

For Independent Reading

Uchida’s many novels for young people include *Journey to Topaz* and its sequel, *Journey Home*. She also wrote a trilogy about a Japanese American girl called Rinko: *The Jar of Dreams*, *The Best Bad Thing*, and *The Happiest Ending*.