



Dash

Kirby Larson

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New from Newbery Honor author Kirby Larson, the moving story of a Japanese-American girl who is separated from her dog upon being sent to an incarceration camp during WWII.

Although Mitsi Kashino and her family are swept up in the wave of anti-Japanese sentiment following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Mitsi never expects to lose her home—or her beloved dog, Dash. But, as World War II rages and people of Japanese descent are forced into incarceration camps, Mitsi is separated from Dash, her classmates, and life as she knows it. The camp is a crowded and unfamiliar place, whose dusty floors, seemingly endless lines, and barbed wire fences begin to unravel the strong Kashino family ties. With the help of a friendly neighbor back home, Mitsi remains connected to Dash in spite of the hard times, holding on to the hope that the war will end soon and life will return to normal. Though they've lost their home, will the Kashino family also lose their sense of family? And will Mitsi and Dash ever be reunited?

Dash Details

Date : Published August 26th 2014 by Scholastic Press

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Author : Kirby Larson

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Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Childrens, Middle Grade, Animals, Dogs, Fiction, War

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From Reader Review Dash for online ebook

Rebecca McNutt says

Mitsi is a young Japanese-American girl living with her family, and her dog called Dash, when she suddenly finds everything she knows being taken away and her family kept in an internment camp. Unable to take Dash with her, she gets through the increasingly-difficult days by keeping in contact with a former neighbor who knows where Dash is.

The internment camps set up during WWII often aren't talked about so much nowadays, but they're a part of history that shouldn't be forgotten because they were set up by bigotry, fear and prejudice and hopefully society won't follow the same path today that it did during the 1940's. WWII history aside, this book is also a great story about holding out hope and family unity.

Oak Lawn Public Library - Youth Services says

Title: Dash

Author: Kirby Larson

Lexile Level: 570

Pages: 243

Recommendations & Comments: One of the great things about historical fiction books is that they take events that seem long ago and far away, and they make them immediate and personal. Dash is inspired by a true story about a girl separated from her beloved dog. What's keeping them apart is one of the worst chapters from America's past, when it imprisoned its own Japanese-American citizens during World War II. It's bad enough reading about it as history, but Larson's story about Mitsi and her family is full of telling details. The fear that turns classmates and friends into bullies. The loss of treasured possessions from their home. The constant dust, mud, heat, and cold of the desert camps.

All of which sounds like it could be a downer, but it's not. Although they have plenty of setbacks, Mitsi and the others also band together to help each other, drawing strength from kindness and from their own skills. Her father helps people build furniture from scrap. Her grandmother knits clothes with other women, and her brother makes deliveries. Mitsi is sometimes frustrated, miserable, and lonely, but with help she finds ways to make friends and brighten others' lives. If only she could be with Dash again...

Stars 4 out of 5

Reviewed By: Mr. Tom

Lexile Level: 570

Pages: 243

Stars: 4 out of 5

Summary: Muddy walkways, no privacy, baking hot sun, no privacy, bad food, no privacy, smelly latrines with 10 toilet holes - definitely NO PRIVACY; but the very worst thing is NO PETS allowed. This is the life of Mitsi Kashino and her Japanese/American family after World War II begins.

Once Japan attacks Pearl Harbor the United States government fears that anyone of Japanese ancestry might be a spy for the country of Japan, therefore, all Japanese/Americans living on the west coast of the United

States are round up and forced to move to internment camps.

Mitsi is forced to leave her school and friends, but hardest of all is leaving behind her beloved dog, Dash, not knowing if she will ever see him again.

Recommendation or Comments: Good character development in a compelling story of life in an internment camp through the eyes of a 12 year old girl.

Would you recommend it to be on the Official Newbery List? Yes

Reviewed By: Michèle Freese

Teegan Hite says

Dash, by Kirby Larson, tells the story of Mitsi, a young Japanese American girl, who is taken to live in an internment camp with her family after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. This book is considered historical fiction because the story is fictional, but the historical setting and context are real. This allows readers to learn about this time in American history through the eyes of a young Japanese American girl.

Before reading this book, I had some background knowledge about World War II and the effects it had on life for different groups of people living in the United States. In high school, I read a book, which also explained the story of a person who was taken to live in an internment camp in the United States. This gave me some background knowledge about the historical context of this time period. However, I also briefly research Japanese internment camps in the United States, so I could refresh my memory.

I greatly enjoyed reading this book, as the author created a compelling story with the circumstances Japanese Americans really did face after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. I enjoyed how this story is told through the perspective of a young girl because it shows how children, who were taken to internment camps in the United States, actually felt and what they experienced. I believe this aspect of the story will make this book more relatable and easier to understand for younger readers. Thus, the book would be great to use in a classroom where the students are learning about World War II and specifically the internment camps in the United States.

As Kirby Larson crafts this story of Mitsi and her beloved dog, Dash, who she must leave behind, Larson helps the reader learn more about this time in American history, but she also makes her reader want to learn more. As I read the book, the story made me wonder more about other people's stories of their experiences in interment camps, including how much they suffered and the hardships they faced. It also made me consider the great fear the people in the United States must have felt, as they made decisions to establish these camps.

Dash, by Kirby Larson, is not only an interesting story to read, but it helps readers learn more about the effects of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the United State's involvement in World War II. As readers follow the story, they feel the pain Mitsi experienced when she is betrayed by her friends and when she has to leave Dash behind because pets are not allowed at the camps. The readers also experience the hardships and unpleasant circumstances, which were experienced by people who were forced to live in interment camps. However, the overall story does not focus on these negative experiences to cause readers to feel bad about what happened during this time in American history, but the book conveys a message of hope and shows readers the importance of making the best out of whatever circumstances you are in.

Sandy Brehl says

Even if this historical novel wasn't based on a true story, I'd believe it was. This story rings true on every level: friendship, scapegoating and bullying, fear, family, peer pressure, loss. The larger truths about wartime jingoism and community reactions is depicted with all the pain and realism necessary to make history come

alive generations later.

At the bottom, throughout the heart, and at the end of this story is the universal truth and love of a girl and her dog.

The author note explaining the real basis of this story will thrill young readers.

Jeremy Schaefer says

When choosing this book, I immediately thought of "Farewell to Manzanar" because both books discuss Japanese incarceration camps in the US. "Dash" by Kirby Larson, follows a young Japanese-American girl (Mitsi) who is separated from her dog (Dash) when she is sent to an incarceration camp. The book starts a month after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. As a Japanese-American, Mitsi faced ridicule from her fellow classmates and friends who treat her differently and is also bullied by a group of high school boys who trip her and destroy her school bag and the work inside it. Once hysterics start gripping the nation, Mitsi and her family are alienated from society and eventually are sent to live in a Japanese internment camp. This is where Mitsi sends her dog to live with her neighbor. Like most children and adults sent to these camps, Mitsi becomes depressed until she meets a new friend. Without giving too much away, I think this book is great for students wanting to know more about this time period. The fact that "Dash" is based on a true story gives this book a sense of realism which is easy to connect to. Mitsi's feelings of betrayal, loneliness, depression, and fear of her family being torn apart are all aspects not commonly found in children's books and can be humbling. From the harsh living conditions inside the camp to the feelings of occasional joy felt by Mitsi, Farmer successfully delivers a historically accurate depiction of the hardships of this era, as well as the little things that make it bearable. For example, the letters Mitsi receives from her dog, Dash, shows young readers how even in times of hardship good things can happen. "Dash" is a book about strength of family, the value of friendship, and appreciating the little things in life, which sometimes can be the only thing keeping it together. Definitely geared towards 5th grade but will certainly be on my bookshelf.

Julia Nashif says

Thank you, NetGalley and Scholastic, for this free book to review!

Things I liked:

1. Mitsi. She really is a likable protagonist. Usually when I read a book that deals with pets, the main character is over dramatic and lame, but not Mitsi. She's a sweet child who's separated from her dog/only friend.
2. The story begins after the bombing, when Mitsi comes back to school after Christmas break. In the other books I've read about the Japanese incarceration the characters just skipped school. *Dash* shows what happened to those who kept going.
3. The writing style. I could feel Mitsi's emotions despite having zero relatability to her.

Things that were meh:

1. Why did Mitsi feel like her family was falling apart? It's not the end of the world if your brother and grandma make new friends. When your brother begins stealing things, sure, but before that? It shouldn't have been a big deal.
2. The time transitions were confusing. I couldn't tell if a scene was happening a minute, a day, or weeks after the previous one.
3. What happened to the Japanese men who were separated from their families? Was it so horrible that it can't be explained in a children's book?

Would I read other books by Kirby Larson? Possibly. I'd buy this book for a tween girl who loves dogs, although for myself, I'd probably order other Kirby Larson books from the library.

Debbie Tanner says

I think Kirby Larson is a great writer and I loved the premise for this book but I completely hated the ending. The story is about a Japanese American girl living with her extended family in California at the beginning of World War 2. She has a little dog, Dash, that she loves to pieces. After Pearl Harbor, her friends abandon her and even start bullying her. When her family is sent to an internment camp, she leaves her dog with a neighbor who promises to look after him. The book goes into great detail about what life was like in the camps, but at the end of the book, she gives us this sparkly gift wrapped ending. The dad is happy making beautiful furniture out of scraps of lumber he's scavenging! The brother stands up to the camp bully! The girl's new best friend's dad comes back after years of interrogation (apparently completely untraumatized)! And she gets her dog back because the kind commandant of the camp lets her! Oh those resourceful Japanese! Really? It just seemed super condescending.

Jessica Fether says

I finished reading this to my third graders a few days ago. I personally would give it 4 stars, but my students loved it. So, the 5 star rating is for them. :)

Sydney Valerio says

Dash, by Kirby Larson was a novel that I really enjoyed reading. History is always something that has been something that really interested me, and being able to read about it in a novel like this makes it all the more interesting. Sometimes reading about history can be boring, and you can't really get into the book or relate. Although I can't relate to this story completely, having a young girl as the main character is something that gives the reader something to relate to. Even if you weren't around for the attacks on Pearl Harbor and World War II, you can try and put yourself into the shoes of this young girl getting separated from her dog which is something many people can relate to.

Mitsi Kashino was just a young girl when the attacks happened, and she never expected something like this to happen to her. She never expected to lose her home, let alone her dog Dash. Being a girl myself, and having pet dogs, I can't imagine going through a traumatic event such as World War II and losing my pets. I

found Mitsi to be very inspiring as her and family never gave up no matter what was thrown at them, and she would stop at nothing to try and be re connected with her dog again. I enjoyed the aspect of the story where Mitsi's neighbor back home would write her letters, and act as if her dog Dash was writing them to her. It added a really personal aspect, and helped Mitsi and her family get through this hard time in their life. It gave them hope that hopefully they would be able to go back to their life and their beloved pet.

I really enjoyed reading this story, and I think that it would be perfect for a classroom of young students that are learning about history. The author takes such an important event in history and makes it into this novel that students can relate to and feel connected to while they are still learning history. Most people, especially myself have a soft spot for dogs, so being able to learn about history and read about a dog is something I think many people would enjoy.

Betsy says

Read full review on Redeemed Reader

Larson is a talented author, but her treatment of the Japanese-American experience is not as strong as it might be. Camp conditions are portrayed clearly, but the end of the book leaves Mitsi's family settling in, happy for small victories (such as their new ability to keep their pets). The camps are not condoned, but perhaps the picture would be more effective if there weren't quite so many loose ends tied up so neatly. Still, this is a worthy addition to the genre of middle-grade WWII novels, not least because it does treat the Japanese-American experience in the camps on our soil. A suitable read for younger readers who are just beginning to learn about this troubling period in history, *Dash* will work well alongside other Holocaust stories for the eight- to ten-year-old crowd and should prompt some thought-provoking questions in its young readers.

Brooke Cavey says

"*Dash*" by Kirby Larson, is about a girl and her dog during World War Two and their journey being a part due to the war. With the bombing of Pearl Harbor, forced America to create interment camps for Japanese-citizens including the young girl named Mitsi Kashino. With interment camps; Japanese-Americans were only allowed to bring things they could carry, so unfortunately for Mitsi she had to leave her beloved dog, Dash, behind. Throughout the whole book Mitsi and her neighbor who kindly took Dash in, were writing back and forth, responding with Dash's point of view. This really helped Mitsi stay connected with her dog and the world beyond the fence. Mitsi and her family struggled a lot with the transition between being free compared to fenced in but overall at the end brought the family closer and connected them with their Japanese roots. I really enjoy this book from taking a huge part in history and using it for a story between a girl and her dog. This book would be really great in a 5th or 4th grade class based on how it has really good historic facts but at the same time has a really cute story that goes with it. Would extremely recommend this book to other students and teachers! I personally knew a lot before reading this book based on Pearl Harbor and treatment of Japanese-American being a huge topic in history, that many history classes teach. While reading I did look up facts presented in the book to check for credibility, this was mostly for treatment of the Japanese during this time period. This book made it more interesting to me, due to how the author used a human to dog relationship compared to human to human relationship. It made me think differently on this

whole time period due not thinking on what happens to the animals that are left behind.

Vicki Cose says

An excellent book from the perspective of the Japanese people who resided in the US during WWII who were sent to camps. An enduring story of survival and how pets are important to people's lives.

Michelle says

This book wasn't my favorite, although if you like dogs, you might like it better. It does tell the story about a Japanese descent family who are relocated after the Bombing of Pearl Harbor--a sad time in America's history. I felt it too easily glossed over the hardships of these families who has to give up their homes and belongings to live in horrible conditions. The story seems geared to elementary age students, so maybe that is why the hardest part for the protagonist is leaving her dog. Somehow, even though there seems no way for the people to earn money, they always seemed to have lots of money to send mail or buy treats. Even the thievery of the teens is no biggie--they steal hundreds of dollars, but all is forgiven at the end with no legal issues.

I didn't love it, but it is nice that his time period did get some mention in a book about World War 2--it wasn't about the Germans. I just felt like it was too simplistic. Again, probably geared towards elementary students, but an opportunity was missed.

Alex (not a dude) Baugh says

Last year, Kirby Larson introduced us to Hobie Hanson and his dog Duke. Hobie somewhat reluctantly volunteered Duke to be part of the country's Dogs for Defense program. This year, Larson introduces us to Mitsi Kashino and her dog Dash.

It's January 1942, one month after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. So far, things haven't been very different for Mitsi, 11, and her family, Japanese Americans living in Seattle, Washington. But on the first day back to school, after the Christmas holidays, all that suddenly changes. First, Mitsi's two best friends aren't at their usual meeting place, and at school they give her a cold shoulder. Other classmates also ignore her in class and at recess. On the way home from school in the rain, she is surrounded by a group of high school boys, who trip her causing her to fall and who tear up and kick everything in her school bag into puddles. Luckily, a new neighbor, Mrs. Bowker comes along and breaks it up.

Change becomes even more apparent. Cameras and radios had to be turned into the government, some of the Japanese men are being taken away by the FBI and even Mitsi's grandmother, Obaachan, must register as an alien because she was born in Japan. Getting to know Mrs. Bowker seems to be one part of Mitsi's life that is pleasant, that and the comfort of her beloved little dog Dash.

But then April comes and with it the news that the Kashino family, along with all the other Japanese American families living in Seattle are to be sent to an internment camp for the duration of the war. Each family member can bring just one suitcase. Naturally, Mitsi assumes she can bring Dash with her, but when she finds out that no pets are allowed in the camp, she is devastated. What can she do with Dash to keep him safe? Knowing that Mrs. Bowker lives alone, and might want some company, Mitsi asks her if she would be willing to take care of Dash temporarily. Luckily, kind-hearted Mrs. Bowker agrees.

Losing everything, including her dog and her two best friends was a hard blow for Mitsi. Now, Mitsi and her family must adjust to their new life behind a barbed-wire fence, surrounded by soldiers with rifles watching their every move. One bright spot for Mitsi are the wonderful letters she receives from Dash, telling her about life with Mrs. Bowker. But even that isn't quite enough to pull Mitsi out of the depression she falls into. But a new best friend just might do the trick.

I have always believed that every person's experience of World War II is similar but different from everyone else. And each novel I read reflects that. Dash is based on a true story and much of what Mitsi does is taken from that story, giving the novel its sense of reality.

Dash spends a lot of time what life was like between the bombing of Pearl Harbor and life in an internment camp. It would seem that it took a while after the initial shock of the bombing on December 7, 1941 for people to begin to be aware of such anti-Japanese feelings that they could turn on old friends and neighbors so vehemently, as it did with Mitsi and the kids she went to school with. In that respect, Larson gives the reader a good picture of what it was like.

Larson also gives a good depiction of the internment camps, which were really fit only for the horses many of them were meant to house, and life was always dirty and unpleasant. She really conveys the sense of betrayal, loneliness and the fear of the family coming apart that Mitsi experiences on top of losing everything she has known her whole life.

I like the way Larson shows the reader that even in times of great distress and hardship, good things can happen and in the end this is a story about the strength of family, the value of true friendship and learning to appreciate what is really important.

Dash will be of special interest to anyone who is a dog lover, or has an interest in WWII history on the home front.

This book is recommended for readers age 9+

This book was obtained from the publisher

This review was originally posted on The Children's War

Deseree Jones says

This book was nothing like I thought it would be! I truly enjoyed it. It gave me a look on the inside of how it was for little kids during World War II when the Japanese had to go to camps.

What I love about this story is that dog, Dash, and the way he made Mitsi more optimistic on life and gave her hope. I thought that the lady that took in Dash for her was so kind to do that, and it gave Mitsi a sense of

comfort knowing that he was in a good home while she was taken away from hers. This book gave a child's perspective on how it was going through all that in a way that other children can understand and empathize with and I think that is really important. It made history interesting and I feel young students would actually really enjoy it; mainly because of the dog which is a good way to keep history kid friendly!

I thought it was really sweet that Mitsi's friend back home had been writing letters to her as Dash without her knowing. She felt like she had lost her best friend so it was sweet that she was writing her through her dog's eyes.

Throughout her time at the camp, she made the best of it. She had friends, helped others out, did good deeds and spent a lot of time with her family, especially her brother, Ted. I think this book also implies the importance of family needing to stick together in hard times.

I really liked this book. It did not have the happy ending of her returning to her home, because that was not reality for the history part of it. But she did end up getting to have Dash with her and that was good enough.
