

How a Children's Book Set During WWII Captures What's Happening with ICE Today

#SonOfJae reviews Katie Yamasaki's "Fish for Jimmy"



K-CULTURE WITH JAE-HA KIM

NOV 11, 2025



5



1

Share



All images drawn by Katie Yamasaki, from her children's book *Fish for Jimmy*

When my son was little, we used to read together every day. I always tried to make sure that he read some books that had historical significance, especially regarding Korea. But it was also important that he learned about the shameful things that had occurred (and are currently ¹ occurring ² right now) in the United States.

We had a discussion about what really happened between the Pilgrims and Native Americans when he was in kindergarten. And a few years later, we had an age-appropriate talk about concentration camps.

After he read and re-read Katie Yamasaki's book *Fish for Jimmy*, which is based on her family's real-life experiences of being forced to leave their homes and relocated to internment "camps" because they were Japanese Americans, he wrote a review that proved that even little kids understand institutional racism. They may not know the exact words to use, but they can see the difference between right and wrong. Unlike too many adults, they *get it*.

It struck me that the author's telling of a horrific part of U.S. history isn't in the past, because it's happening again. And just as before, it's being sanctioned by the president of the United States. Parents and children are separated. They're grabbed off the streets and sent away to god knows where.

Fear, ignorance, racism, and xenophobia have been weaponized. Will it ever end?

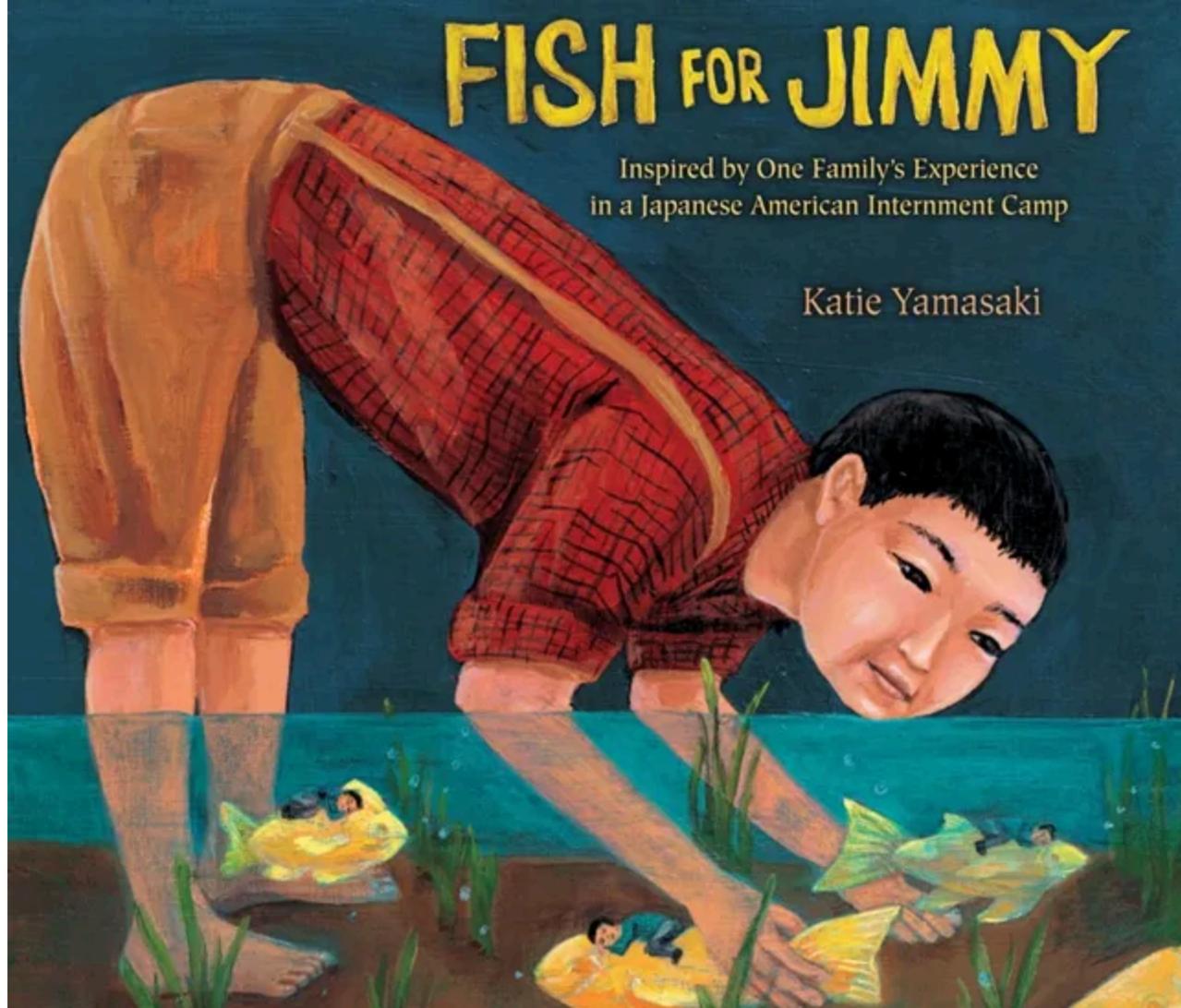
#SonOfJae is making his K-Culture with Jae-Ha Kim debut.

Note: He was about nine years old when he wrote this review.

Fish for Jimmy

By: #SonOfJae (then age 9)

Rating: A billion out of 4 stars!



Fish for Jimmy is about a Japanese family who lived in the United States a long time ago. The mother and father were born in Japan and moved to America for a better life. They have two sons: Taro and his younger brother, Jimmy.

I am inferring that Taro was born in Japan and Jimmy was born in the U.S., because of their names.

In the beginning, everything is great. They live in California, where Taro and Jimmy swim in the Pacific Ocean.



Then in December of 1941, not long after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, the FBI showed up at their house and took their dad to prison for being Japanese. The FBI was just being really dumb.

Soon the U.S. and Japan were at war and everyone who was Japanese — even if they were American citizens — was put into prison camps just for looking different, which was so unfair. The rest of the family was sent to a different prison camp.

Jimmy was so sad that he wouldn't eat the food they served in prison camp. He wanted to eat his mother's yummy Japanese cooking.



Taro had promised his father that he would take care of the family. So one night, he snuck out of the campsite and ran as far as he could until he found a stream. There, he caught seven fish to take back to prison camp.

His mother cooked the fish and the three of them enjoyed a delicious meal. It was the first time his mother laughed in a long time.

Jimmy laughed, too, and asked Taro, “Are these Pacific fish? Did they come from far away like us?”

Months later, their father was released from prison and joined them. But it was still prison. The FBI just called it a camp to make it sound better.

The end.



© 2025 JAE-HA KIM | All Rights Reserved

- 

The ICE Roundup in Georgia & the Threat of K-pop Idols Being Deported
K-CULTURE WITH JAE-HA KIM · SEP 15
[Read full story →](#)
- 

If You're Not a White U.S. Citizen, Get a Passport and/or a Certificate of Citizenship ASAP
K-CULTURE WITH JAE-HA KIM · OCT 11
[Read full story →](#)



5 Likes · 1 Restack

[← Previous](#)

Discussion about this post

[Comments](#) [Restacks](#)