



My Brother, My Sister, and I

By Yoko Kawashima Watkins

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My Brother, My Sister, and I By Yoko Kawashima Watkins Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

"What do the other girls know about being hungry, homeless, and missing someone they love so much?" wonders the 13-year-old protagonist of this fictionalized memoir of Watkins's life as a refugee in post-WW II Japan, a sequel to *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*. Yoko, with her older sister and brother, lives in a clog factory warehouse and eats off wooden planks--when there is food--until the factory burns down and Yoko's sister must be hospitalized. The Kawashimas face enormous hardships: a bomb has made Yoko deaf in one ear and left her with constant back pain, and she is mercilessly tormented in school for her poverty; their mother has died and their father's fate is unknown; charges are brought against them for starting the factory fire, and for murder and theft; finding something to eat requires constant struggle. But through these miseries, the three find blessed comfort in one another--and from others as down-and-out as themselves--and Yoko and her sister eventually emigrate to America. Watkins's first-person narration is beautifully direct and emotionally honest: "I had absolutely nothing material, but I had a brother and a sister who gave me their love. They were teaching me the value of human life." Ages 11-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 5 Up-In this moving sequel to *So Far from the Bamboo Grove* (Lothrop, 1986), Yoko Watkins continues her family saga. In extreme poverty, the Kawashimas--13-year-old Yoko, her 17-year-old sister, and her 21-year-old brother--struggle to survive as refugees in post-World War II Japan. After a slow start, this autobiographical novel gains momentum as the young people lose their wretched temporary home and are accused of burning a warehouse and committing a double murder. With the aid of new friends and personal aplomb, they find clues that clear their names and lead to the discovery of the true culprits. Along the way are fascinating details of how they make do and manage to preserve their dignity; the cruelty and humiliation Yoko endures in school; the interesting friendship they share with a Burakumin (outcast) couple; and an emotional reunion with their POW father, during which they must tell him that their mother died six years ago. The style here is a great improvement over the previous book, though some stilted dialogue still intrudes. The author is at her best in narration, skillfully building suspense and getting readers sympathetically involved in Yoko's difficulties and triumphs.

John Philbrook, San Francisco Public Library

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 6-10. In the fictionalized autobiography *So Far from the Bamboo Grove* (1986), Yoko and her Japanese family escape from the Communist takeover in North Korea at the end of World War II and finally reach Kyoto, Japan, only to find themselves unwelcome there. This sequel has the same quiet honesty about ordinary people caught up in terrible times. Yoko's first-person narrative tells of a once secure middle-class child now homeless, hungry, and in danger. Mother is dead; 13-year-old Yoko and her older brother and sister struggle together to survive in Kyoto, scavenging for scraps, working at anything they can find, even cleaning toilets. Father is a prisoner somewhere; the hope of his return is like a heartbeat in everything they do. Driven from their warehouse home by fire, they find themselves accused of arson and murder, and they help the police solve the murder mystery. However, the core of the story is not the big events, but the family drama and the home the young people make together, whether in a shack or a hospital room. Their loving bonds are strong, but they're also irritable and nervy. Yoko hates her sister's bossiness, especially the insistence that Yoko go to school. The school scenes are brutal: the rich students torment Yoko as an outsider; even when she graduates with top honors, they don't want her in the class photo. Yet Watkins doesn't indulge in self-pity. Except for some occasional overwriting ("I sighed sadly"), the violent suffering is treated with restraint, as in the unforgettable vignette of a scarred atom-bomb survivor who dies an outcast.

The climax builds to Father's return, and his homecoming is described with the intense understatement that characterizes the best parts of this compelling story. *Hazel Rochman*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ann Strickland:

What do you regarding book? It is not important along with you? Or just adding material when you require something to explain what yours problem? How about your free time? Or are you busy man? If you don't have spare time to complete others business, it is make you feel bored faster. And you have spare time? What did you do? Everyone has many questions above. They need to answer that question since just their can do this. It said that about publication. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is correct. Because start from on pre-school until university need this kind of My Brother, My Sister, and I to read.

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