**Hannah Staska**

**Mod 12/13**

**Summary**

I read the book *So Far From the Bamboo Grove* by Yoko Kawashima Watkins. This book is a true story in which the author was the main character and experienced this adventure.

This book is about a teenage girl named Yoko who lives with her family in North Korea, but is of Japanese descent. The Japanese and Korean people are fighting in World War ll and they are on opposite sides. Because of this, her father is away working in Manchuria as a Japanese government official. Yoko's brother is working at a factory to help the Japanese with their supplies for war. When a town near the Kawashima's home is attacked, Mother, sister (Ko), and herself has to flee. From North Korea, they decide to try and leave Korea all together and go to Japan. They know this will be a dangerous idea, but it is the only thing they can do to save their lives. Yoko, Ko, and Mother are very sad and feel terrible about leaving without Brother, Hideyo.

This book is mainly about Yoko, Ko, and their Mother's journey to try to get to Japan without being killed by the Korean Communist Army and Japanese. At times, they didn't have anything to eat or a place to stay, but they had each other to keep them going along on their adventure/journey.

**Recommendation**

I read the book *So Far From the Bamboo Grove*. I liked this book and would highly recommend it if you like reading about a different culture. Readers who like when the characters take an adventure/journey would love this book.

One reason I would recommend this book is because it has some Korean and Japanese culture and custom in it. Throughout the book, the family sometimes talks in Korean or Japanese language. I thought it was interesting because some of the words were shown in that language. Another example of when the Korean culture was shown was how transportation was different in Korea than in Japan. When Yoko, Ko, and Mother were in Korea, they either had to walk or take a train to get from city to city. When they reached Japan, there were a few automobiles/vehicles. Another aspect in the book that shows Japanese customs is when it briefly describes what Japanese do when people pass away.

I would recommend this book to people who like books that describe an adventure or journey that the characters take. Yoko, Ko, and Mother take a colossal journey from North Korea to Japan. To get to Japan, they not only have to ride trains, but have to walk mile after mile. Even though you might think a train would be a huge advantage so they don’t have to walk, it was actually a disadvantage at times. It was dangerous for them to be on trains because the Korean Communist Army would sometimes drop bombs on the trains. Also, because so many people wanted to flee the country, the train carts were so crammed. The people had to go without food and little water for days! Most travelers were miserable. These examples show the difficult journey they had to take to get to Japan.

I liked the book *So Far From the Bamboo Grove* because I not only learned about the Korean and Japanese cultures, but also because the book was an adventurous true story. Those are two main reasons I would recommend this book to others.