

BOOKNOTES

READERS GUIDE

Classroom connections

Customs and Traditions
Friendship • Survival
Cultural Prejudice • Courage
and Honor • World War II

Grades 5 up

pre-reading activity

Replicate Jane Elliott's 1968 "Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes" experiment as an introductory activity on cultural racism. Start by informing the students that they will be doing a special experiment during class. Next, divide the students into two groups: the brown eyes and the blue eyes. Anyone with green or hazel eyes will be considered outsiders and will not be able to participate in the activity. Inform the children that the brown-eyed students will be superior to the blue-eyed children due to the amount of the color-causing chemical melanin in their blood. You may elect to withdraw basic rights or classroom privileges from blue-eyed students, and you may give the brown-eyed children preferential treatment and special perks.

Allow some class time for the students to feel the full effects of the experiment while they are going about their usual work. Conclude the exercise by asking students how it felt to be excluded, put down, or superior to others. Begin to give students some background information on how Japanese Americans were treated in similar ways in the days surrounding the attacks on Pearl Harbor.

Under the Blood-Red Sun

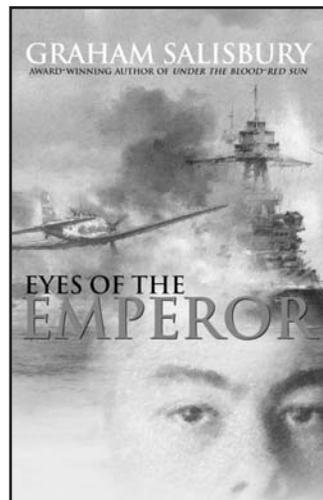
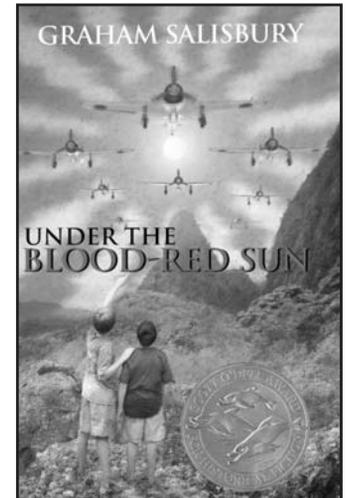
The Scott O'Dell Award
for Historical Fiction

An ALA Best Book
for Young Adults

AN ALA Notable Book

A *Booklist* Children's
Editors' Choice

Laurel-Leaf • 0-553-49487-2
Yearling • 0-440-41139-4



Eyes of the Emperor

Wendy Lamb Books • 0-385-72971-5

about the Books

Under the Blood-Red Sun and *Eyes of the Emperor* by Graham Salisbury are companion books that illustrate the impact of cultural prejudice during a time of intense fear—the invasion of Pearl Harbor.

Both novels expose the lives of Japanese American families struggling to define an American identity for themselves, while also preserving their Japanese roots and traditions. The stories bring to light the devastation and horror of the attacks on Pearl Harbor, and the shocking internment of American citizens that followed.

Eyes of the Emperor

An excerpt from the Author's Note in *Eyes of the Emperor*

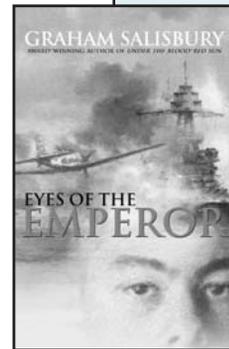
Eyes of the Emperor is a work of fiction. However, as is its companion novel, *Under the Blood-Red Sun*, it is based on factual events and incidents of World War II. . . . The twenty-six Hawaii Americans of Japanese ancestry to whom I have dedicated this novel were hand-picked for top-secret K-9 training on Cat Island, Mississippi. . . . I have been profoundly fortunate in having met and interviewed eight of the twenty-six Cat Island men [and] sixty years after their Cat Island experience, their wartime camaraderie is as strong as ever. I found them all warm, welcoming, friendly, and humble. "I was proud to do my part," Tokuji Ono said. And Ray Nosaka asked, "Remember us, so that we won't be forgotten."

Excerpted from *Eyes of the Emperor* by Graham Salisbury. Copyright © 2005 by Graham Salisbury. Excerpted by permission of Wendy Lamb Books, a division of Random House, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this excerpt may be reproduced or reprinted without permission in writing from the publisher.

about the book

Eyes of the Emperor is a riveting historical novel that exposes the reality of cultural prejudice for Japanese American soldiers during World War II.

Readers will sympathize with the young protagonist, Eddie Okubo, who tolerates unimaginable indignity—all in the name of serving his country. It will take the bonds of friendship and an innate sense of honor for Eddie to survive this period of uncertainty and panic.



Thematic Connections

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS—Eddy and Cobra capture a Japanese soldier off the coast of Hawaii. The Japanese soldier, Sakamaki, asks to be killed because he is deeply ashamed of his capture. (p. 111) Sakamaki lived by the bushido custom of ancient warriors who understood the shame of surrender and capture. (p. 113) Ask students to research the Japanese traditions of bushido and kamikaze. How did the values of these Japanese customs and traditions come into play during World War II?

FRIENDSHIP—Eddy expresses gratitude over having friends like Cobra and Slim as his comrade on Cat Island. Ask students to consider the meaning of friendship—both in the book and in real life—and write a Haiku about it. (This Japanese poem has three lines. The first line has five syllables, the second line has seven syllables, and the third line has five syllables). The teacher should model writing a Haiku for the class before having students write one of their own.

SURVIVAL—Eddy has to survive a hideous experiment on Cat Island. He narrates that he is worried for his own safety and feels like nobody is looking out for him. Ask your students to help Eddy by preparing a survival pack for him. Have students work in groups to write a survival guide for the soldiers on Cat Island. Challenge students to assemble a survival kit for Eddy that contain everything he might need to face the physical and emotional challenges of his military mission.

COURAGE AND HONOR—In a daring water rescue, Slim risks his life to save James from the rocky sea during a daunting storm. Eddy describes it as "the bravest thing I'd seen in the army so far." (p. 207) Have students analyze this scene in the book. What motivated James? How is he courageous? Discuss how courageous acts don't always have to be visible. Ask students to define courage in their own words and write a paragraph about the most courageous thing they have ever done or witnessed. As an extension activity, encourage students to find articles and pictures of teenagers who have displayed courage and post them in the classroom.

Eyes of the Emperor

connecting to the curriculum

SCIENCE—Eddy is forced to serve as human bait for dogs learning to track the scent of Japanese soldiers. Ask students to research the science and psychology behind canine training. Using reference materials, learn how scientists train animals (and people) using positive and negative reinforcement. Investigate how man can manipulate mind and brain processes.

Eddy describes the dangerous creatures in the jungle of Cat Island. (p. 172) Ask students to research the real Cat Island in Mississippi, and list the types of creatures and animals in the region. Using reference materials, research the types of dangers these creatures would pose to American soldiers stationed on Cat Island.

LANGUAGE ARTS—The storm scene in Chapter 32 (“Guts”) serves as a metaphor for the emotional turmoil of the young men on Cat Island. Ask students to review the chapter and discuss the scene. Examine how authors use natural catastrophes as metaphors in other writings. To extend the activity, make a list on the board of forces of nature like hurricanes, volcanoes, and earthquakes. Challenge students to write about a human emotion using one of the storm metaphors listed on the board.

SOCIAL STUDIES—Herbie writes a letter to Eddy saying his mother is volunteering with the Red Cross. (p. 257) Ask students to research what was happening on the home front during World War II. How were the roles of women changing in America while their husbands were away at war? What kinds of things were women doing to contribute to the war effort?

Eddy says he has “the eyes of Emperor, and that’s what scares people.” (p.88) Take students to the media center to research Emperor Hirohito of Japan. What was his role in the invasion of Pearl Harbor? What kind of leader was he?

When Eddy is bussed to Camp McCoy, he notices a prison called an internment center. Eddy explains it was “not a place for enemies, but for people kicked out of west coast states.” (p. 131) Ask students to investigate the internment camps of World War II. Find out what the American government has done recently to express regret to Japanese Americans for the internment camps.

MATH—Using maps, track Eddy’s journey from Hawaii to Mississippi (including his stops in California and Wisconsin). Calculate the total distance he traveled from his home in Honolulu to his post in Cat Island, Mississippi. Estimate the amount of time it took for him to complete his journey, one-way. Hypothesize the amount of time it would have taken if Eddy if he had been transported by plane instead.

vocabulary/ use of language

In *Eyes of the Emperor*, Graham Salisbury uses descriptive language and literary devices to vividly describe Cobra, Eddy’s best friend. (p. 30)

Point out Salisbury’s use of simile in the phrases “built like a tuna” and “strike like a snake.”

Discuss the metaphor used in the description, “A typhoon trapped in a tin can.” Ask students to identify strong and descriptive verbs like “rippled” and “strike.”

Have students describe someone, perhaps their best friend, who has a nickname that reflects their personality using a metaphor, simile, and strong verbs.

Under the Blood-Red Sun

An excerpt from Under the Blood-Red Sun

Crummp . . . thoomp, thoomp.

Tat-tat-tat-tat-tat.

My heart began pounding. I raced into the trees after Billy, nearly blinded by snapping branches. We clawed our way up the tree. When we reached the top, another plane flew past, barely higher than the trees. Billy and I waved, but the pilot didn't notice us. What was going on? They *never* flew that low.

Huge awful black clouds of smoke rolled up into the sky from Pearl Harbor. You could barely see the ships, which were lined up in neat rows like chips of gray metal. The smoke was so thick you couldn't even see the mountains. Hundreds of planes circled the sky like black gnats, peeling off and dropping down to vanish into the boiling smoke, then reappearing, shooting skyward with engines groaning, circling back, sunlight flashing when they turned.

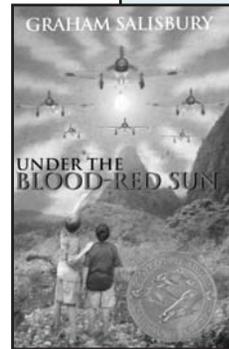
"My God," Billy whispered. *"That smoke . . . it's . . . ack-ack! . . . This is for real!"*

about the book

After the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, it is the friendship and loyalty of eighth-grader Tomi Nakaji's baseball buddies that help him through this terrifying time.

Under the Blood-Red Sun is a gripping story about family traditions, survival, friendship, courage, and honor. Young

readers will be drawn to the plight of Tomi and his family as they strive to deal with the cultural prejudice that profoundly affects their lives.



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Thematic Connections

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS—Tomi's family owns a *katana*—or samurai sword—that symbolizes honor. It has been in the family for over 300 years. Many families have items that have belonged to them for generations (e.g., a Bible, pictures, letters, antique furniture, quilt, jewelry, toys, etc). Have students ask their parents or grandparents to share with them their family's most cherished item, and find out the story behind the item to share with the class.

SURVIVAL—The Nakaji family must take many precautions to protect themselves, like observing blackout rules and hanging blankets over the windows at night in case of an air raid. Ask students other ways they might prepare for a raid in order to protect themselves and their homes.

FRIENDSHIP—What do Tomi and his friends have in common? How are they different? Ask each student to think about a special friend, then take a sheet of paper and create two columns. In one column, list how they are similar to their friend. In the other column, list their differences. After this exercise is completed, have students write a one-page paper about the qualities that bind their friendship.

COURAGE AND HONOR—Tomi is asked by his grandfather to save the family and *katana*. (p. 222) What makes Tomi finally understand the meaning of the sword? Do you think his grandfather would have felt that Tomi was worthy of the sword? How does the *katana* give Tomi the strength he needs to stand up to bully Keet Wilson?

Under the Blood-Red Sun

connecting to the curriculum

SOCIAL STUDIES—Tomi and his little sister, Kimi, can be citizens of the United States because they were born in Hawaii. Other members of the Nakaji family are not allowed citizenship. Ask students to use the library to find out how foreigners can become citizens of the United States today. What takes place at a citizenship ceremony?

In 1962, the United States government completed the USS *Arizona* Memorial, a site that has become a great tourist attraction; in 1965, Pearl Harbor was named a national historic landmark, and in 1980, it was placed under the direction of the National Park Service. Research the symbolism of the architecture of this historic memorial. What items can tourists expect to see there?

SCIENCE—The United States government orders Tomi's father's racer pigeons destroyed, because it fears they are truly messenger pigeons. Ask students to research how racer and messenger pigeons are trained. Using reference materials, find out how messenger pigeons have been used in warfare throughout history.

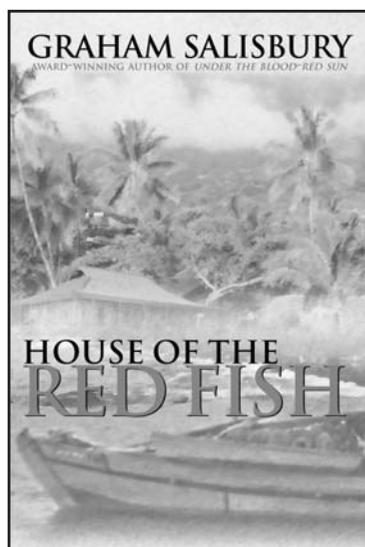
LANGUAGE ARTS—Tomi is forced to become the man of the family; he feels protective of his mother and little sister. Sometimes stories bring comfort of people in times of trouble. Challenge students to go to the library and search for a Japanese fairy tale that might be appropriate for Tomi to read to Kimi to soothe her. Ask them to share their reasons for choosing their particular stories.

MATH—Ask students to use an almanac to find out how many Japanese have become American citizens since World War II. Construct a graph that indicates the growth in the Japanese American population in the United States by specific years.

vocabulary/ use of language

In *Under the Blood-Red Sun*, Graham Salisbury uses several literary devices to create certain images: "The red suns striking down like hot stones" is an example of a simile. (p. 109) "Another dark plane charged down on us from behind, screaming out of the valley from the mountains" is an example of personification. (p. 107) Ask students to find other examples of these literary devices in the novel. Then have them rewrite favorite passages using simile and personification. Japanese words are used to authentically portray the culture of the Nakaji family: *kimpatsu*—with yellow hair (p. 3) and *gamman*—patience (p. 14). Ask students to make a glossary of Japanese words and their meanings.

Also from Graham Salisbury



House of the Red Fish

Wendy Lamb Books • 0-385-73121-3

Available Fall 2006

1943: One year after the end of *Under the Blood-Red Sun*, Tomi's family is still subject to the extreme prejudice against Japanese Americans in the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor. In the face of adversity, Tomi resolves to raise his father's fishing boat (sunken in the attack) as a symbol of hope that his family will one day be made whole.

Novel Connections

Using the books together

- Construct a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the novels *Under the Blood-Red Sun* and *Eyes of the Emperor*. Ask students to examine the books in terms of main characters, themes, literary techniques, and historical events.
- Analyze the battle scenes in both novels when Pearl Harbor is attacked. How does author Graham Salisbury construct the two scenes in similar or different ways? How does Salisbury's description of the attack reflect, or differ from, historical accounts? Ask students to investigate the historical details regarding Pearl Harbor and write their own version of the attack using the authentic details from their research.
- How is cultural prejudice inflicted on characters in both novels? Ask students to brainstorm examples of cultural discrimination from both books.

What gives both sets of characters the strength to deal with acts of prejudice? What motivates the American characters who discriminate against the Japanese Americans? How are the acts of racism in the novels similar to prejudice experienced by minority groups in America today?

- Ask students to compare the mindset of America following the Pearl Harbor invasion to the atmosphere of fear following the World Trade Center attacks. Ask students to research cultural prejudice in America following acts of war like Pearl Harbor and 9/11. If possible, encourage students to interview people who were alive during both historical events. Have students write a comparative essay that juxtaposes the culture of fear following both homeland invasions.

internet resources

Graham Salisbury

www.grahamsalisbury.com

The author's official Web site.

The History Place: World War Two in Europe

www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/timeline/ww2time.htm

A time line of World War II with photos and text.

USS Arizona Memorial

www.nps.gov/usar/

The National Park Service site for the national memorial in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, which spans the mid-portion of the sunken battleship.

For the **IMAGES OF WAR** online Educators Guide, over 250 additional guides, to sign up for our online newsletter, and to search our catalog by over 140 themes and holidays, visit Teachers @ Random www.randomhouse.com/teachers



Photo © 2003 Ray Warren

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in Hawaii, Graham Salisbury is a descendant of the Thurston and Andrews families, who were among the first missionaries to arrive in the Hawaiian islands. He grew up on the islands of Oahu and Hawaii. Later he graduated from California State University and received an MFA degree from Vermont College of Norwich University. Today, he lives in Portland, Oregon, with his family, and is a faculty member with Vermont College's new MFA program in Writing for Children. Graham Salisbury has his own Web site where students can submit their own fiction to him for feedback at www.grahamsalisbury.com