



## Missing in Action

*Dean Hughes*

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## **Missing in Action** Dean Hughes

Dirty. Lazy. Good-for-nothing. Jay Thacker is used to hearing himself called names because his dad is half-Navajo. But he's hoping, now that he and his mom have moved to stay with his grandparents because of WWII, that things could be different. Delta is a tiny town in Utah, nothing like Salt Lake, where they used to live. And Jay's grandfather is an elder in the church, a beloved and well-respected man. Jay begins to make friends and even to make some money as he works the fields for his grandfather. There's just one problem: he works alongside a young man named Ken, who's from the camps in nearby Topaz. Which means Ken is a Jap. And Jay's dad, who's been fighting for the navy out in the Pacific, was recently declared Missing in Action.

An understated and moving story about an unlikely friendship from the author of the acclaimed **SOLDIER BOYS**, this is one of Dean Hughes's best novels to date.

## **Missing in Action Details**

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Author : Dean Hughes

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## From Reader Review Missing in Action for online ebook

### Shauna says

Jay Thacker and his Mom have moved from Salt Lake City, UT to Delta, UT to move in with his Grandparents. His Father's joined the Navy to fight in WWII and his ship went down. His Father has not been found.

Jay meets some new boys in town playing baseball and Gordy, who likes to call Jay, "chief" because Jay is part Navajo Indian, become friends.

Jay is sent to work on his Grandfather's farm with Ken who is Japanese American and has been relocated to the Japanese internment camp. Jay learns to deal with prejudice during a war and a small town mind set and the realities of what kind of Father he had.

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### Grossmatthew says

I thought the book was amazing it was one of the best books i have read in my whole life. Jay thacker is is a kid who likes to play ball, his dads off fighting in the war and they haven't heard from him in awhile.

Everyone says that hes dead but jay thinks hes a prisnor in war. He and just moved to a small town in Utah and he doesn't have many friends. One night he is a a baseball field watching some kids his age playing some ball, one kid was trash talking the other teams pitcher. The kid yelled to jay if he wanted to play with them and jay accepted the invite. He played right field with another kid.he played the whole game with the kids and he started to be there friends. that is just a sneak peak at the book if you want the rest you will have to read it for yourself. I would give this book 4 out of 5 stars I gave it 4 stars because I liked the book a lot but it could have had more detail in some areas of the book. This book is one of the best books i have read, having his farther in war was a big detail in the book because he prayed every night that his dad would come home. Jay having no friends to start off with was also good because by the end of the book he was friends with all the kids in town. Jays mom told him that his dad would be coming home and stuff like that but the truth is his dad beat him all the time and they got in to a lot of arguments but his mom stuck with him for some reason. His dad got drunk almost every night but when he left to join the navy his mother started to drink and that made him mad. His mother eventually stopped and that made him happy his grandfather was also happy too. Jay turned out to be a great ball player his hitting got better and hi fielding did too.

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### Emma Nunamaker says

Missing in Action

By: Dean Hughes

Review by: Emma Nunamaker

I have never experienced any physical or verbal abuse from my parents or friends, but the author Dean Hughes made me feel the pain the main character Jay went through at the time. The story of Jay made me feel like I was him and made me feel the pain he was going through.

Jay was the main reason why i read this book. The reason is because the way he reacts to things. In the

situations he was put in, i would have reacted the same way! Not only would we react the same, we both have the same personality. That is why he was my reason to read the book.

In town there is a boy named Gordy. He is a bigger boy with big front teeth. Gordy had his own baseball team, so when Jay also known as "Chief" joined their team with just a little bit of knowledge on how to play from his dad before he left from war.

During this time, a war between America and the Japanese was occurring. On Jay's Grandpa's' farm there was a what they call a "Jap". His name was Ken. Shortly after working with Ken he got to like him, but was not aloud to tell his friends because Jay thought he would get made fun of. When Gordy found out he told Jay he was fine with Ken and told him about their big plans to go the major league Baseball team.

Missing in Action is filled with a lot of sadness and suspense. I never knew that a book could make you tear up..... but i did.

Jay is pictured as a Navajo aka an Indian. He was always asked the same thing anytime he met someone new. "What are you?" "What?" "Are you indian?" "Not exactly!" Jay's father was Indian so he is only half Indian.

There were many amazing things about the book but many not useful parts. In the book Jay has many flashbacks about the same things but in a different point of view. In another part they keep describing what the farm looked like and the types of trees that were at the location where the story was taking place.

The lesson i got out of this book is to not take advantage of ANYTHING! You need to be grateful for what you have because it may not be there forever. Jays dad was sent to war. He was on a boat that was shot down..... So Jay claims his dad is "Missing in Action." Is he held captive or is he dead?

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### **Isaak says**

Very good book and very action packed.

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### **Hunter says**

It was not what I thought it was about

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### **Maria says**

Jay Thatcher and his mother have moved in with his grandparents in Delta, Utah. His father is missing in action, when his ship was sunk in the Pacific. Delta is a small town next to the Topaz Japanese American relocation camp and Jay has a lot to learn about war, trust and prejudice.

Why I picked it up: I loved Hughes Rumors of War Children of the Promise series and I was curious about his WWII story for children.

Why I finished it: Powerful! And there are few that know about the Japanese relocation camps. It's good to expose children to our own history. This is a good book about looking beyond the stereotypes to individual behind.

Age range: Upper elementary, middle school range.

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### **Melanie says**

Jay Thacker and his mom have left Salt Lake City and moved to Delta, Utah to live with his mom's parents. His father left for the war with the Navy and is officially Missing in Action. Jay is convinced his father will return and doesn't understand why his mother isn't as positive and won't pray as much as he does.

Jay is part Navajo and is often judged for it. When he finds a group of boys in the neighborhood who play baseball, he warily joins the group. The boys give him a hard time at first but eventually learn to just accept him. But then Jay is asked to work on his grandfather's farm with Ken, a young Japanese-American man who helps with the day to day chores of the farm. Jay has to overcome many of his own prejudices to finally become comfortable working with Ken. They become friends after awhile.

When the other boys find out that Jay is friends with a "Jap" they aren't as accepting. Jay has to find a way to be who he is and deal with the negativity around him.

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### **Mary Sanchez says**

Twelve-year old Jay Thatcher and his mother move in with his grandparents in a small Mormon, Utah community because his half Navajo father is missing in action in WWII which causes Jay to put his father on a pedestal as a war hero. Jay is thrust in the middle of action as he confronts prejudice as the boys in town nickname him, "Chief." Jay also confronts his own prejudices against the Japanese as he enjoys his friendship with the likeable young Japanese-American man, Ken, who lives in a nearby Utah internment camp and works for Jay's grandfather. Ken models for Jay and his baseball buddies what it means to be an all American boy and to be respected as a man. Jay comes to realize his own father, who is probably not coming back alive, is not a hero because of his abusive past but because Jay's father and mother's people came from a long line of good people, Jay also came from those good people too. There are a lot of issues for the young reader to ponder in this story.

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### **Patti Sabik says**

Moving provides Jay's an opportunity to change his identity, but unfortunately he still has to deal with his Navajo heritage stigma, his dad missing in action on the pacific front, and challenges with Ken a new friend from the Japanese internment camp.

I found this book quite slow and difficult to plow through. I was expecting to read more about WWII, the home front, and possibly about life on a Japanese internment camp. Instead, the book was extremely baseball heavy so most of the "action" revolved around the sport. Bullying, racism and tolerance were central themes with a common denominator being baseball. I was intrigued to see two different covers for this book; one emphasizing the soldier and one with the son in baseball gear prominently in the foreground. Apparently I

wasn't the only one to view this book to be more appropriate for sports enthusiasts than those interested in WWII historical fiction. All-in-all a decent read, but quiet and reflective.

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### **Bruce says**

I gave it three stars. However, if I were to rate it for the age group it was written for it would definitely rate higher. I read this with my grandson, age 13, and he gave it 4 stars. I agree with his assessment. The book is intended for grades 5 through 9.

The story takes place during World War II, and describes the situation and issues around Japanese-American internment camps. It also discusses the issues of being identified as an American Indian, and being a part of an abusive family. These issues are treated fairly and with respect, and help young adults see how opinions are formed from different perspective.

Perhaps the greatest truth learned from the story is how destructive life can be when we are not truthful and honest about what we are thinking and feeling, and hard it can be to do so. Yet, when we are open and honest, good things can happen.

I recommend this book for those of appropriate age and interested in historical fiction.

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### **Mary says**

Youth book, so aimed at tween/teens. Does make you think about prejudice, of all kinds. Half-Navajo boy meets a 'jap' boy from Utah internment camp during WWII.

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### **Darin says**

Missing in action by Dean Hughes is an interesting book that really brings you back to the struggles of world war 2. Not the actual fighting but the struggles of the families back in the US waiting to recover their family members remains. Thomas is one such boy and this book follows his mind as he struggles to find his identity in a new town. It was better than what I thought it was going to be like and I recommend it to you.

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### **Michael Kerr says**

Jay is an outsider due to his Navajo heritage, and has trouble fitting in when he moves to his mother's small hometown in Utah. It doesn't help that his father is listed as missing in action as the Navy ship he was on went down in the Pacific. To top things off, his grandfather puts him to work with a Japanese-American teen who had been interned nearby. This is a coming-of-age tale, in which the magical thinking of childhood slowly ebbs away in the face of reality, and Jay begins to learn to think for himself.

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**Kirra B. says**

Missing in action is really good. towards the end it gets boring. i would give it a 4 1/2 star rating. missing in action is about a boy who moves to delta and is adjusting to the kids there.

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**Erick says**

What the book was about a boy who didn't really get to know his dad and thought he was in outcast in the book. He moved into his town being 1/4 indian even though he looked full indian and during that time indians were getting made fun off and all were thought they thiefs. But a group of kids liked him that were into baseball and so was the kid. Later on the kid told his friends that that he got letters from his dad even though he didn't because he thought his father was dead. So me makes up a lie that his father is still alive knowing that he is dead trying to make himself better. At the end of the story the kid had a baseball game and all the fathers were there but his and later found out that his father was still alive on some island was so happy.

One thing that i didn't like about the story was how long the story was and how long it took a long time to find his father. For example the begging just had some boring parts and some parts didn't really make any sense. Also some parts didn't have anything to do with the book and that was a whole chapter.

I wouldn't recommend this book to a lot people about to people that are into long books. Or people who are into long books and want to understand the main character's background. Overall this book is still good and could teach a thing or 2. Mostly a few things that kids used to do back in the day.

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