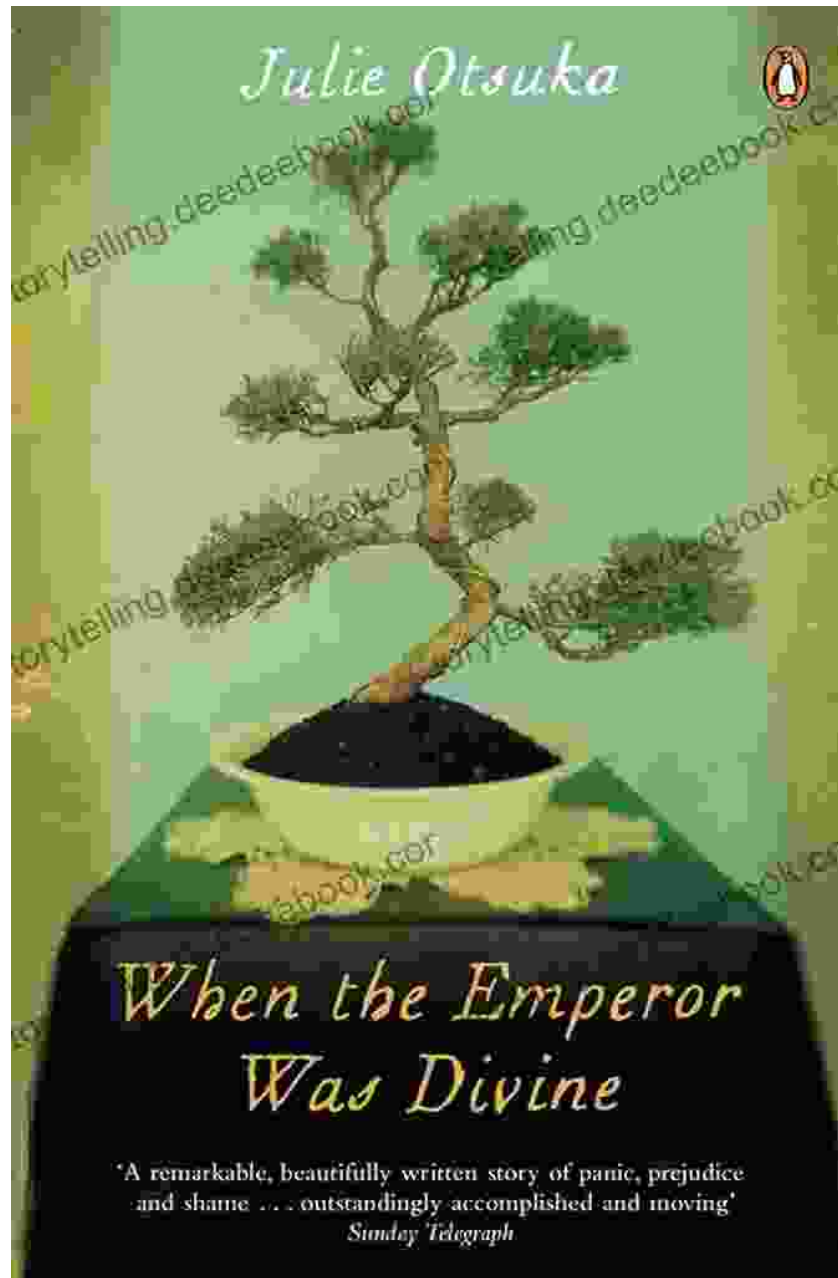
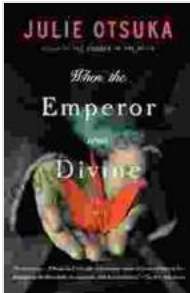


When the Emperor Was Divine: A Stirring Tale of Japanese-American Internment



Julie Otsuka's 2002 novel, *When the Emperor Was Divine*, is a haunting and lyrical exploration of the experiences of Japanese-Americans during World War II. The novel follows a group of Japanese-American families as

they are uprooted from their homes and sent to internment camps. Otsuka's spare and evocative prose captures the fear, confusion, and resilience of these families as they struggle to survive in a world that has turned against them.



When the Emperor Was Divine by Julie Otsuka

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 1246 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
X-Ray : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 162 pages



When the Emperor Was Divine is a powerful reminder of the dangers of prejudice and discrimination. The novel also sheds light on the experiences of Japanese-Americans during World War II, a chapter in American history that is often overlooked.

Themes

When the Emperor Was Divine explores a number of important themes, including:

- **Race and identity:** The novel examines the ways in which race and ethnicity shape our experiences and identities. The Japanese-American characters in the novel are forced to confront their own identities and the ways in which they are perceived by others.

- **Prejudice and discrimination:** The novel also explores the dangers of prejudice and discrimination. The Japanese-American characters in the novel are subjected to discrimination and violence, simply because of their race.
- **Loss and resilience:** The novel also explores the themes of loss and resilience. The Japanese-American characters in the novel experience great loss, but they also show great resilience in the face of adversity.

Characters

When the Emperor Was Divine features a large cast of characters, each of whom offers a unique perspective on the events of the novel. Some of the most important characters include:

- **The narrator:** The narrator of the novel is a young Japanese-American girl who witnesses the events of the novel firsthand. Her perspective provides a unique and intimate look at the experiences of Japanese-Americans during World War II.
- **The father:** The narrator's father is a proud and hardworking Japanese-American man. He is determined to provide a good life for his family, but he is also forced to confront the prejudice and discrimination that Japanese-Americans face.
- **The mother:** The narrator's mother is a kind and loving woman. She is the glue that holds the family together during their time in the internment camp.
- **The brother:** The narrator's brother is a young boy who is full of energy and curiosity. He is often the source of comic relief in the novel,

but he also provides a poignant reminder of the innocence that is lost during wartime.

Historical Context

When the Emperor Was Divine is set during World War II, a time of great upheaval and uncertainty for Japanese-Americans. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States government ordered the internment of all Japanese-Americans, regardless of their citizenship or loyalty. Over 120,000 Japanese-Americans were sent to internment camps, where they lived in harsh conditions and were subjected to discrimination and violence.

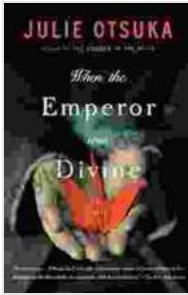
The internment of Japanese-Americans was a dark chapter in American history. It is a reminder of the dangers of prejudice and discrimination, and the importance of protecting civil liberties.

Impact

When the Emperor Was Divine has been praised for its spare and evocative prose, its complex and sympathetic characters, and its insightful exploration of race, identity, and discrimination. The novel has won numerous awards, including the National Book Award for Fiction and the California Book Award for Fiction. It has also been adapted into a successful stage play.

When the Emperor Was Divine is a powerful and moving novel that sheds light on a dark chapter in American history. The novel is a reminder of the dangers of prejudice and discrimination, and the importance of protecting civil liberties.

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