

Dear Jamie Ford,

I read your book Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet a few summers ago and I still think about it a lot. It made me think about how lucky I was that I didn't have to go through what the Japanese had to go through at that time. It didn't make any sense to me why people were sending Japanese-Americans to internment camps. In many parts of this book, it was hard for me not to burst out in tears.

Two of my very good friends are Japanese, people just like the rest of us. If they had to be sent away, it would be heartbreaking. In fact, one of their great-grandmothers had to be sent away to the Minidoka Internment Camp in Idaho that you mentioned in your story. My friend took a long bus ride to Minidoka not too long ago with her great grandmother right before her great grandmother died.

After I read your book, I was inspired to go to the Panama Hotel in Seattle's International District. I ran into the manager of the hotel, and I was lucky enough to get a tour around it! He talked about what had happened back then. I looked at the black and white photos filled with expressions of sorrow. Seeing the display of the belongings left in the hotel from these people made your book come even more to life. Reading a book that was set in my hometown tickled my curiosity to explore new things that I haven't even noticed until now.

Your book has made me realize that I am so lucky that I'm not treated how the Japanese-Americans were during World War II. Sometimes I feel guilty because I complain about little things like "I'm hungry!" or "I don't want to clean my room", not realizing that I have it easy. I don't get called mean names just because of where I'm from and I don't have to be punished and sent away from my closest friends and neighborhood. Thank you for teaching me this valuable lesson of understanding other people around me who may have difficulties that I can't see.

Sincerely,
Clare Doran