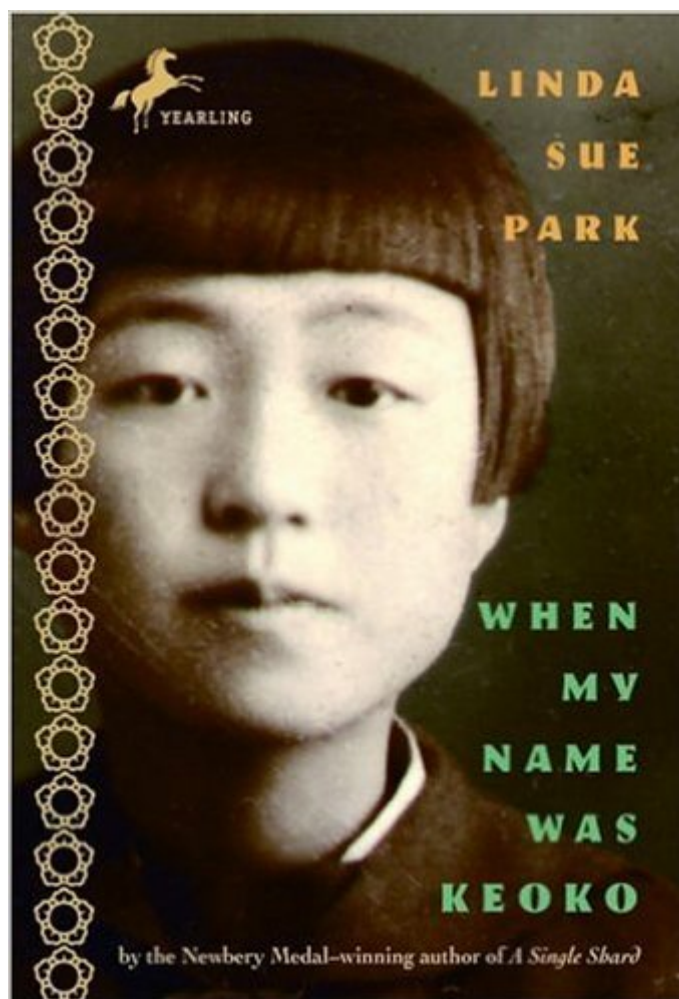


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# When My Name Was Keoko



## Synopsis

Sun-hee and her older brother Tae-yul are proud of their Korean heritage. Yet they live their lives under Japanese occupation. All students must read and write in Japanese and no one can fly the Korean flag. Hardest of all is when the Japanese Emperor forces all Koreans to take Japanese names. Sun-hee and Tae-yul become Keoko and Nobuo. Korea is torn apart by their Japanese invaders during World War II. Everyone must help with war preparations, but it doesn't mean they are willing to defend Japan. Tae-yul is about to risk his life to help his family, while Sun-hee stays home guarding life-and-death secrets.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (97 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

In 1940, by Japanese decree, Kim Sun-hee became known as Kaneyama Keoko. It was more than just the "Japanization" of her Korean name by changing the pronunciation. It was an attempt to wipe out her identity as a Korean, by forcing her to have a new Japanese name written with different kanji (Chinese characters). Linda Sue Park's *When My Name Was Keoko* tells the historical fiction tale of the Kim family from 1940 to 1945 during the final years of Korea's occupation by Japan. Told in the first person and alternating between 10-year-old daughter, Sun-hee, and 13-year-old son, Tae-yul, the tale portrays the rigid roles family members play in traditional Korean culture based on sex and birth order. Park uses the Korean terms of address such as Hynungnim (older brother used by younger brother) and Opah (older brother used by younger sister) throughout the story to help readers feel the "rank, respect, and affection" in a Korean family. A major theme in *When My Name*

Was Keoko is identity. What makes a person who they are? The characters delve into what makes them Korean. Like many imperial powers, the Japanese tried to wipe out the Korean culture without offering the people equality in return. In school, the children heard only of the perfect Emperor and superior Japan. The Japanese passed laws that repeatedly and cumulatively took away parts of the Korean people's identity. The Japanese controlled the education system and taught classes in that language. People were forbidden to speak Korean outside the home. The Japanese forced Koreans to register themselves with new Japanese names. The laws that the Japanese imposed on the Korean people and the taxes extracted grew steadily harsher.

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