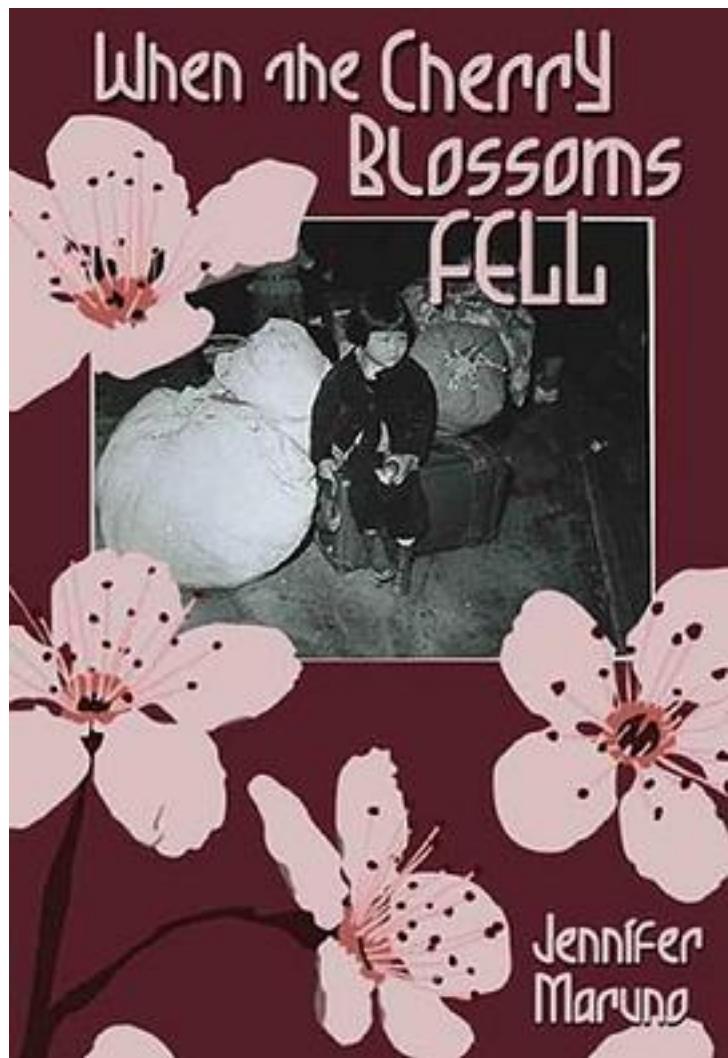


When the Cherry Blossoms Fell



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Nine-year-old Michiko Minagawa bids her father goodbye before her birthday celebration. She doesn't know the government has ordered all Japanese-born men out of the province. Ten days later, her family joins hundreds of Japanese-Canadians on a train to the interior of British Columbia. Even though her aunt Sadie jokes about it, they have truly reached the "Land of No." There are no paved roads, no streetlights and no streetcars. The house in which they are to live is dirty and drafty. Michiko is puzzled and angry as to why her mother expects her to be grateful for this vacation. Michiko's uncle Ted finds work building wooden houses in the nearby orchard. Michiko, seeing the plans, can't understand two families in one house. Edna Morrison, a good-hearted town person, enrolls Michiko in the local school. Her teacher changes her name to Millie Gawa. It is here she learns the truth of her situation. George, a local bully informs them all of the country's "Japanese Problem." But another boy, Clarence, covers her true identity by declaring her to be a Kootenay Indian. Michiko's deceit, however, comes back to haunt her when it prevents her from warning her grandfather about bears roaming the road. She must face the worse winter in forty years and her first Christmas without her father. But will she face up to her true heritage?

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