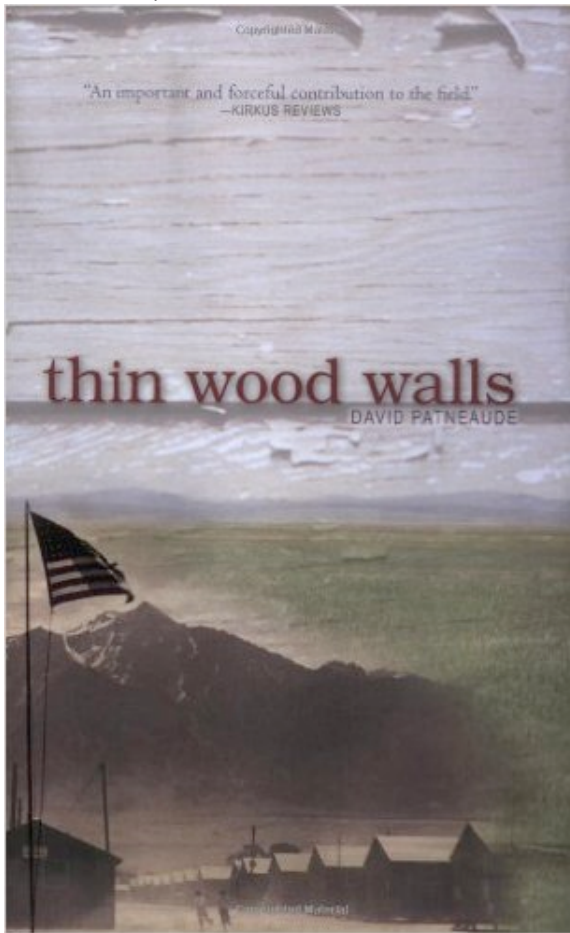


Thin Wood Walls

Willa Rudel, Grade 7



David Patneaude's novel Thin Wood Walls is a sad but true story about a boy during World War two. It is very different from his more recent book *Epitaph Road*, a dystopian story about a post-apocalyptic world where women control the planet, and the number of males is maintained at a strict minimum. *Thin Wood Walls* is a historical fiction story of a Japanese-American boy during World War two. This story did not actually happen, but it is quite similar to thousands of forgotten tales.

This novel is quite similar to other historical fiction accounts of the Japanese internment in the US.. It starts in Seattle, before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Joe and his family live in peace, as do the many Japanese-American families near them. That all changes when the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor. Overnight, no one seems to trust anyone who looks like him and his family. His dad is taken by the FBI because he might have been a spy,

and the bullies descend on Joe like flies. As the neighbors begin to turn on them, so too does the government.

The writer uses very descriptive vocabulary and sensory details, from the setting to the personalities of the family members, and everything in between. The characters are very realistic, and act like anyone in their shoes would. The grandmother is stubborn and sneaky, but also kind and gentle. Joe's older brother is determined to show the government he is not the enemy, and outraged that he was being judged. Joe, on the other hand is confused and scared, but he's not sure which side he is on. "My stomach knotted... 'what does this order mean for us?'" (p. 69). This shows how confused and scared he is extremely well, but without spelling it out. I thought it was a very strong book overall, but one thing the author could have done is to add a twist- the story played out like any other book of this genre would. It was kind of predictable.

This book was written for teenagers and young adults, but any adult could read it and learn something new. If someone has read mostly books about Nazi Germany, this book provides a whole other side to the fight. It shows that no two people are the same, no matter how alike they look, and that you should never judge a book by its cover.