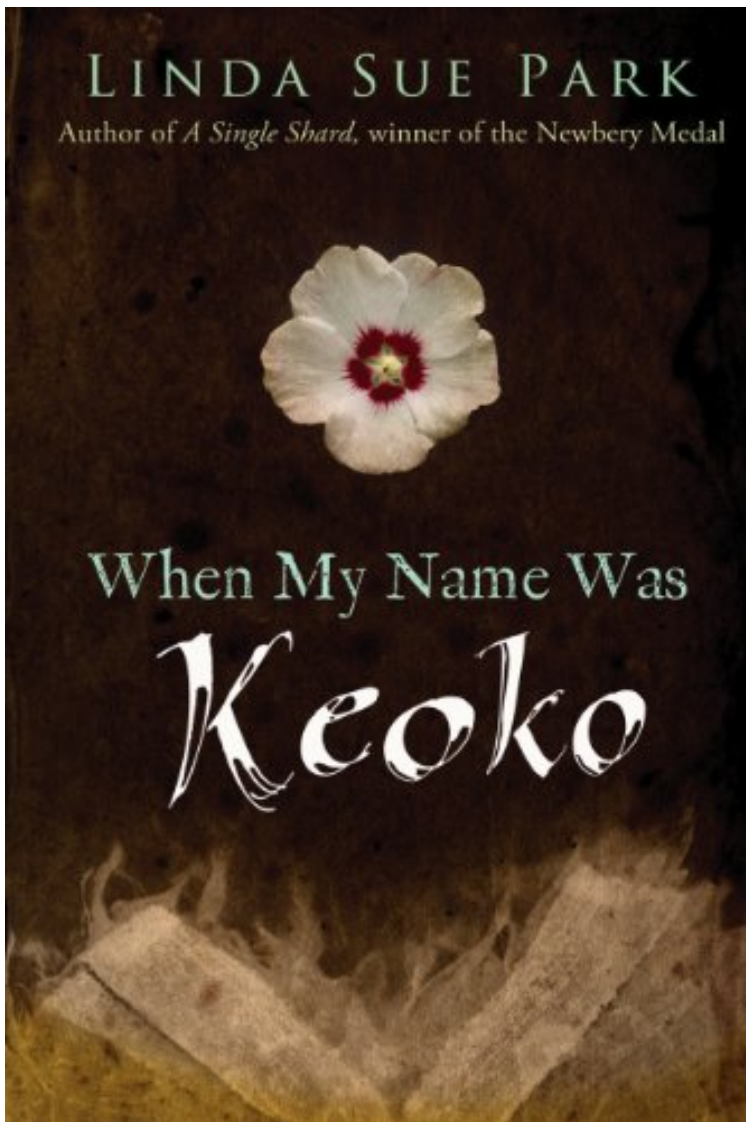


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When My Name Was Keoko



Par Linda Sue Park
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Description : Description du produitSun-hee and her older brother, Tae-yul, live in Korea with their parents. Because Korea is under Japanese occupation, the children study Japanese and speak it at school. Their own language, their flag, the folktales Uncle tells themeven their namesare all part of the Korean culture that is now forbidden. When World War II comes to Korea, Sun-hee is surprised that the Japanese expect their Korean subjects to fight on their side. But the greatest shock of all comes when Tae-yul enlists in the Japanese army in an attempt to protect Uncle, who is suspected of aiding the Korean resistance. Sun-hee stays behind, entrusted with the life-and-death secrets of a family at war.

Prsentation de l'diteurSun-hee and her older brother, Tae-yul, live in Korea with their parents. Because Korea is under Japanese occupation, the children study Japanese and speak it at school. Their own language, their flag, the folktales Uncle tells themeven their namesare all part of the Korean culture that is now

forbidden. When World War II comes to Korea, Sun-hee is surprised that the Japanese expect their Korean subjects to fight on their side. But the greatest shock of all comes when Tae-yul enlists in the Japanese army in an attempt to protect Uncle, who is suspected of aiding the Korean resistance. Sun-hee stays behind, entrusted with the life-and-death secrets of a family at war..comInspired by her own family's stories of living in South Korea during the Japanese occupation in the years preceding World War II, Newbery Medal-winning author Linda Sue Park chronicles the compelling story of two siblings, 10-year-old Sun-hee and 13-year-old Tae-yul, and their battle to maintain their identity and dignity during one of Korea's most difficult and turbulent times. In alternating first-person chapters, they relate their family's troubles under the strict fascist regime. The Kim family is stripped of their cultural symbols, only permitted to learn Japanese history and language, and forced to convert their names to Japanese. Sun-hee, now Keoko, struggles to reconcile her Korean home life with her Japanese school and friends, while Tae-yul, now Nobuo, attempts to convert his growing anger into a more positive passion for flight and airplanes. Both are worried for their uncle, whom they discover is printing an underground Korean resistance paper. When Sun-hee inadvertently puts her uncle's life in danger, she sets in motion a chain of events that results in her brother volunteering as a pilot for the Japanese near the end of WWII. While Sun-hee and her parents wait in breathless uncertainty to hear from Tae-yul, the war rushes to a close, leaving Korea's destiny hanging in the balance. This well-researched historical novel is accompanied by a thoughtful author's note that explains what happened to Korea and families like the Kims after WWII and a bibliography to entice interested young readers into learning more about a topic largely unknown to American audiences. (Ages 10 to 14) --Jennifer Hubert

Extrait1. Sun-hee (1940)"It's only a rumor," Abuji said as I cleared the table. "They'll never carry it out."My father wasn't talking to me, of course. He was talking to Uncle and my brother, Tae-yul, as they sat around the low table after dinner, drinking tea.I wasn't supposed to listen to men's business, but I couldn't help it. It wasn't really my fault. Ears don't close the way eyes do.I worked slowly. First I scraped the scraps of food and dregs of soup into an empty serving dish. Then I stacked the brass bowls--quietly, so they wouldn't clang against one another. Finally, I moved around the table and began putting the bowls through the little low window between the sitting room and the kitchen. The kitchen was built three steps down from the central courtyard, and the sitting room three steps up. From the window I could reach a shelf in the kitchen. I put the bowls on the shelf one at a time, arranging them in a very straight line.The longer I stayed in the room, the more I'd hear.Uncle shook his head. "I don't know, Hyungnim," he said, disagreeing respectfully. "They're masters of organization--if they want this done, you can be sure they will find a way to do it. And I fear what will happen if they do. Our people will not stand for it. I am afraid there will be terrible trouble--"Abuji cleared his throat to cut off Uncle's words. He'd noticed me kneeling by the table with the last of the bowls in my hands; I was listening so hard that I'd stopped moving. Hastily, I shoved the bowl through the window and left the room, sliding the paper door closed behind me.What rumor? What was going to happen? What kind of trouble?When I asked Tae-yul later, he said it was none of my business. That was his answer a lot of the time. It always made me want to clench my fists and stamp my foot and hit something.Nobody ever told me anything. I always had to find out for myself. But at least I was good at it.You had to do two opposite things: be quiet and ask questions. And you had to know when to be quiet and who to ask.When was easy. I was supposed to be quiet most of the time. The youngest in the family was never supposed to talk when older people were talking. And girls weren't supposed to talk much anyway, not when men or boys were around. So listening was easy for me; I'd done it all my life.But lots of times I didn't learn what I wanted to know by listening. That was when I had to ask questions.I could have asked my mother, Omoni, when we were doing housework together. But I'd learned that it was useless to ask her most questions. Either she didn't know the answer or she wouldn't tell me. Men's business, she'd say.Abuji knew almost all the answers. I was sure of that. But I hardly ever asked him. He always said exactly what he wanted to say, and no more.That left Uncle and Tae-yul. Usually, I tried Uncle first. He was quite cheerful about answering me most of the time. And when he wasn't around, I'd ask my brother. Firstborn son, only son--the men usually included him in their talks.Tae-yul was thirteen, three years older than me. He was often impatient when I asked questions, and acted as if I were stupid for asking in the first place. But that was better than not knowing things.Listening and asking weren't enough, of course. After that came the hard part--the figuring out.They'll never carry it out. . . . They're masters of organization. . . . I knew who "they" were. The Japanese. Whenever there was talk that I wasn't supposed to hear, it was almost always about the Japanese.A long time ago, when Abuji was a little boy and Uncle just a baby, the Japanese took over Korea. That was in 1910. Korea wasn't its own country anymore.The Japanese made a lot of new laws. One of the laws was that no Korean could be

the boss of anything. Even though Abuji was a great scholar, he was only the vice-principal of my school, not the principal. The person at the top had to be Japanese. The principal was the father of my friend Tomo. All our lessons were in Japanese. We studied Japanese language, culture, and history. Schools weren't allowed to teach Korean history or language. Hardly any books or newspapers were published in Korean. People weren't even supposed to tell old Korean folktales. But Uncle did sometimes--funny stories about foolish donkeys or brave tigers, or exciting ones about heroes like Tan-gun, the founder of Korea. Tae-yul and I loved it when Uncle told us stories. We still spoke Korean at home, but on the streets we always had to speak Japanese. You never knew who might be listening, and the military guards could punish anyone they heard speaking Korean. They usually didn't bother older people. But my friends and I had to be careful when we were in public. Every once in a while another new law was announced, like the one when I was little that required us to attend temple on the Emperor's birthday. I decided that this must be the rumor--Abuji and Uncle had heard about a new law. I was right.

2. Tae-yul Sun-hee is a real pain sometimes. Always asking questions, always wanting to know what's going on. I tell her it's none of her business, which is true. Abuji would tell her if he wanted her to know. But I don't know what's happening either. Why hasn't he told me? It's not like I'm a little kid anymore--I'm old enough to know stuff. One day I get home from school and Uncle comes in right after me. He's early, it's way before dinnertime. He's got a newspaper in one hand, and he walks right past me without even saying hello. "Hyungnim!" he calls. Abuji is in the sitting room. Uncle goes in and closes the door behind him. I listen hard, but I can't hear anything--until Uncle raises his voice. "I won't do it!" he shouts. "They can't do this--they can't take away our names! I am Kim Young-chun, I will never be anyone else!" Omoni and Sun-hee come out of the kitchen and look at me. I turn away a little, annoyed that I don't know what's going on. Just then Abuji opens the door and waves his hand toward us. So we all go into the room. Uncle is pacing around like crazy. Abuji reads out loud from the newspaper: "By order of the Emperor, all Koreans are to be graciously allowed to take Japanese names." "Graciously allowed . . ." Uncle says. His voice is shaking, he's so mad. "How dare they twist the words! Why can't they at least be honest--we are being forced to take Japanese names!" Abuji reads some more to himself, then says, "We must all go to the police station in the next week to register." Uncle curses and pounds his fist against the wall. My name, Tae-yul, means "great warmth." My grandfather--Abuji's father--chose it. It's one of our traditions for the grandfather to do the naming.