

FORGIVENESS

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By **Hiro Kanagawa**

Adapted from the book *Forgiveness: A Gift From My Grandparents* by **Mark Sakamoto**

Directed by **Stafford Arima**

GRADE RECOMMENDATION

Grade 8+

CONTENT ADVISORY

This performance contains racial slurs, coarse language, scenes of violence and war, and representations of alcohol abuse and PTSD.

[Please see the show page for more information.](#)

SYNOPSIS

Adapted from the Canada Reads-winning memoir by Mark Sakamoto, *Forgiveness* tells the story of two people traumatized but not broken by the Second World War. Mitsue Sakamoto and her family are sent to a civilian internment camp in the Canadian interior after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Ralph MacLean joins the Canadian army and endures years of privation in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp. When the conflict ends, Mitsue and Ralph are forced to confront their long-buried anger and grief when Mitsue's son and Ralph's daughter fall in love. An emotional map across time, this story of love and family is a testament to the power of choosing forgiveness over hatred.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

GLOBAL COMPETENCIES

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Innovation and Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Global Citizenship and Sustainability

GRADE 8

- The Arts
- Language
- Social Studies: History and Geography

GRADES 9-12

- The Arts
- Canadian and World Studies
- English
- Health and Physical Education

GRADES 11-12

- Social Sciences and Humanities

POST-SECONDARY

- Suitable for courses in disciplines such as Arts, Asian Studies, Canadian Studies, Cultural Studies, Creative Writing, Drama and Theatre, English, Gender Studies, Global Studies, History, Human Rights, Peace Studies, Social Development Studies, Social Justice, Teacher Education

THEMES

- Agency and Voicelessness
- Canadian History: Pre- and Post-World War II
- The Cost of War
- Empathy and Understanding
- The Experience of Prisoners of War
- Family
- Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Reparations
- Gender and Power
- Generational Conflict and Connection
- Identity and Heritage
- Japanese Canadian Internment
- Legal and Moral Justice
- Love and Loss
- Memory and Legacy
- Personal and Inter/Cultural Identity
- Resilience and Hope
- Sense of Self
- Survival, Trauma and Healing
- War and Peace

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What do you already know about World War II? In your opinion, does learning about the history of war impact our future actions? Explain your thinking.
- What does forgiveness mean to you? What does forgiveness feel like? Consider what it means to reconcile personal forgiveness with collective or inter/national conflicts and experiences. In what ways might forgiveness be different in those instances?
- Do you think art created in response to war can shift people's beliefs and actions about violence and armed conflict? Why or why not?

STUDY GUIDES

[View](#) all 2025 Shorts and Study Guides for selected 2025 plays along with those from previous seasons free of charge.



[Stratford Public Library's 2025 Season Reading Lists](#)

BOOKING INFORMATION: TICKETS, WORKSHOPS AND CHATS

STUDENT MATINÉES

You may book any available date, but selected student matinée performances for this show are at 2 p.m. on the following dates:

- Friday, May 23
- Friday, June 13
- Thursday, September 4
- Tuesday, September 9
- Friday, September 12
- Wednesday, September 17

WORKSHOPS & CHATS

Workshops and Chats (virtual, onsite or at your school/centre) can be booked by calling the Box Office at 1.800.567.1600 or by emailing educate@stratfordfestival.ca

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