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Warriors in the Crossfire

Nancy Bo Flood

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Warriors in the Crossfire Nancy Bo Flood
On the island of Saipan, in the South Pacific, the second world war is a distant idea. The Japanese have governed the island for twenty-five years and they mix regularly with the native islanders. Though no one questions who holds power, the two peoples coexist peacefully.

Joseph has known Japanese occupation for his entire life. One of the only islanders accepted by the Japanese and allowed into their school, Joseph nevertheless is the son of the Chamorro chief and proud of his heritage. He seeks to fight against the oppressors, as his warrior ancestors had, and openly defies restrictions. A greater war approaches the island, however, and the Japanese impress the indigenous men into labor camps. Before he leaves, Joseph's father takes him to the caves that their family has used to defend itself for thousands of years. On his solo journey home, Joseph's responsibility to his family becomes uncomfortably palpable. He tries to hide from his obligation, but when his father dies through the labor camps, Joseph's fantasy becomes impossible. As Joseph buries his father at sea and risks his own life, he begins to learn the true practices of a warrior. Equally difficult is taking his family to the caves, where want of food and water threatens starvation. American and Japanese troops approach the island, beginning to fight what will become one of the largest battles of the war. The stress forces Joseph to take responsibility not only for his family, but for his people as well. In this debut historical novel, Nancy Bo Flood creates a company of clear-voiced characters who move convincingly through a story of war and mounting pressure. Her experience as a resident of and teacher in Saipan inform an intimacy that quickly presents the texture of the island, its history, and its culture. Readers will feel Joseph's strain as they read about this little-known chapter of American history.

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