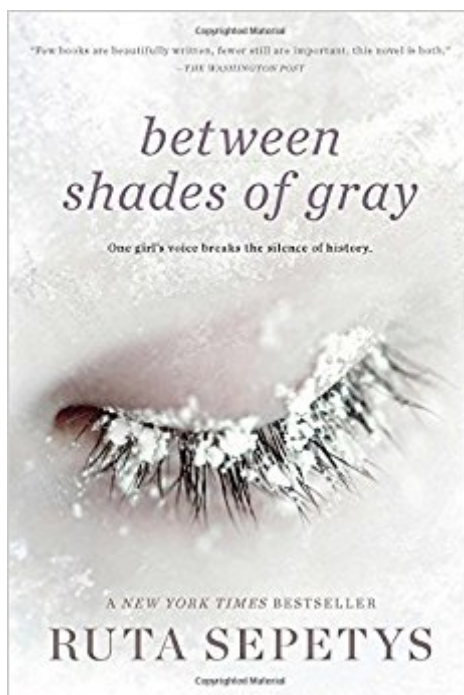


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Between Shades Of Gray



Synopsis

"Few books are beautifully written, fewer still are important; this novel is both."--The Washington Post
From New York Times bestseller Ruta Sepetys, author of *Salt to the Sea* A New York Times notable book
An International Bestseller
A Carnegie Medal Nominee
Fifteen-year-old Lina is a Lithuanian girl living an ordinary life--until Soviet officers invade her home and tear her family apart. Separated from her father and forced onto a crowded train, Lina, her mother, and her young brother make their way to a Siberian work camp, where they are forced to fight for their lives. Lina finds solace in her art, documenting these events by drawing. Risking everything, she imbeds clues in her drawings of their location and secretly passes them along, hoping her drawings will make their way to her father's prison camp. But will strength, love, and hope be enough for Lina and her family to survive? A moving and haunting novel for readers of *The Book Thief*

Book Information

Lexile Measure: HL490L (What's this?)

Paperback: 384 pages

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Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 1,335 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #4,705 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #4 in [Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Military](#) #5 in [Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Holocaust](#) #5 in [Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Europe](#)

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Starred Review Sepetys' first novel offers a harrowing and horrifying account of the forcible relocation of countless Lithuanians in the wake of the Russian invasion of their country in 1939. In the case of 16-year-old Lina, her mother, and her younger brother, this means deportation to a forced-labor camp in Siberia, where conditions are all too painfully similar to those of Nazi concentration camps. Lina's great hope is that somehow her father, who has already been arrested

by the Soviet secret police, might find and rescue them. A gifted artist, she begins secretly creating pictures that can--she hopes--be surreptitiously sent to him in his own prison camp. Whether or not this will be possible, it is her art that will be her salvation, helping her to retain her identity, her dignity, and her increasingly tenuous hold on hope for the future. Many others are not so fortunate. Sepetys, the daughter of a Lithuanian refugee, estimates that the Baltic States lost more than one-third of their populations during the Russian genocide. Though many continue to deny this happened, Sepetys' beautifully written and deeply felt novel proves the reality is otherwise. Hers is an important book that deserves the widest possible readership. Grades 7-12. --Michael Cart --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Praise for *Between Shades of Gray*:
--"A superlative first novel. A hefty emotional punch."
--The New York Times Book Review
--"Few books are beautifully written, fewer still are important; this novel is both."
--The Washington Post
--"A superb though grueling novel."
--The Wall Street Journal
--"An eye-opening reimagining of a very real tragedy written with grace and heart."
--Los Angeles Times
--"An engrossing and poignant story of the fortitude of the human spirit in a dark time in Lithuanian history."
--Associated Press
--"Brave Lina is a heroine young and old readers can believe in."
--Entertainment Weekly
--"Please read this small window into a tragedy."
--NPR
--"Beautifully written and researched, it captures the devastation of war while celebrating the will to survive."
--Family Circle
--"A harrowing page-turner."
--Publishers Weekly, starred review
--"A gripping story."
--School Library Journal, starred review
--"Bitterly sad, fluidly written"
--Sepetys' flowing prose gently carries readers.
--Kirkus, starred review
--"Beautifully written and deeply felt"
--an important book that deserves the widest possible readership.
--Booklist, starred review
--"A haunting chronicle, demonstrating that even in the heart of darkness love is the most powerful army."
--The Horn Book Magazine
--"Stalin deported and murdered millions, but he could not destroy the seeds of memory, compassion, and art that they left behind. From those seeds, Ruta Sepetys has crafted a brilliant story of love and survival that will keep their memory alive for generations to come."
--Laurie Halse Anderson, bestselling author of *Speak* and *Wintergirls*
--"In terrifying detail, Ruta Sepetys re-creates World War II coming of age all too timely today. *Between Shades of Gray* is a document long overdue."
--Richard Peck, Newbery Award-winning author of *A Year Down Yonder*
--"Between Shades of Gray is a story of astonishing force. I feel grateful for a writer

like Ruta Sepetys who bravely tells the hard story of what happens to the innocent when world leaders and their minions choose hate and oppression. Beautiful and unforgettable. --Susan Campbell Bartoletti, Newbery Honor-winning author of *Hitler Youth* "Sepetys has penned a harrowing and heartbreaking novel. Beautifully written and important. --Harlan Coben, international bestselling author of *Shelter* • Ruta Sepetys

This book follows the life of Lena's family and other families when they were hauled away by the Soviet secret police. They are thrown into a cattle car en route to Siberia. Lina and her family are separated from her father and in order to reach his prison camp, she passes along clues in the form of drawings. But will that be enough to be reunited again? "Sure, we were safe. Safe in the arms of hell. I don't have a lot to say about this book because I just can't. This book left me speechless. It was so fascinating how Ruta Sepetys wrote a tragic story to let us know the truth about the crimes of Stalin. I don't even know how those people survived such terrible things, but as Ruta said, they had love and they survived through love. Not just love in a romantic way, it was love for a lot of things, especially their families. I was hooked with the story since the first chapter. Ruta's writing is beautiful, and even though this isn't a love story (for me), it was beautiful in its own way. I liked how those people did almost the impossible to survive, to feed their children, to find their lost ones. There was sorrow, pain, suffering, loss, love but most important, there was hope. Every single death touched my heart, and when I read this book I had to hold my tears because if I started crying, I wouldn't stop. "Evil will rule until good men or women choose to act. As soon as I finished this I didn't know what to do. You know, after reading such a tragic story is very hard to forget about it, to just pretend you didn't read that ugly side of history of humanity. History teachers should give this book to their students because I think is extremely important to know this side of the story to know the truth. I know this is a story of fictional characters, but what makes it important is that this story reflects the true story that took the lives of 20 millions of innocent people, and that's a LOT of people. I'm pretty sure most of us didn't know this side of the story, and also we think our history classes failed us, but know you can educate yourself thanks to Ruta Sepetys. I don't encourage people to read this book because it is pretty or happy, because it isn't. I encourage people because this story is important. It's not always easy to write such a serious

topic for young adults but I think Ruta did it and captured it perfectly.

“My art teacher had said that if you breathed deeply and imagined something, you could be there. You could see it, feel it. During our standoffs with the NKVD, I learned to do that. I clung to my rusted dreams during the times of silence. It was at gunpoint that I fell into every hope and allowed myself to wish from the deepest part of my heart. Komorov thought he was torturing us, but we were escaping into a stillness within ourselves. We found strength there. I kept pausing when I could find myself thinking of my friend Kelli’s words while reading *Beneath Shades of Gray*: “My heart is broken. And break my heart this quiet little story did. Words, other than Kelli’s, fail me. Having had a friend whose grandfather lived through this period, this place and time, I still had no real idea of what atrocities were committed, endured. I tried to go back to reading something else this morning and closed that book. I can’t bring myself to take those other words in just yet. While this is a fictional account, the atrocities were real. It will, hopefully, take me some time before I find myself getting upset over my charger for my laptop shooting sparks enough so my laptop remained uncharged for the last several days. As it was, I managed to get a new charger ordered with a few clicks on my phone and problem solved. Truly, there are much worse things in life than we even want to think about. Or, to borrow thoughts from Kelli again, “lucky, lucky, lucky.”

Great historical novel depicting a harsh reality of Soviet Europe in the 20th century. I became so engrossed that I forgot that it was fiction-- and began searching for Alina’s drawings.

Historical fiction as beautifully and carefully done as this, is important; the content is meant to do much more than entertain, it is meant to teach, to warn and to validate. In the author’s note, Ruta tells the reader that the stories relayed in this book are based on anecdotal testimonies. An intimate and crude window into the realities that warfare/foreign military occupation/deportation really entail and their imminent and ultimate connection to genocide. History teaches us that intolerance, greed and power can do more than poison nations, it can destroy them. Read on and take heed of the message.

Haunting and devastatingly rich with historic trauma and persevering that can be felt over a half century later. Based on true events, this novel is a look at another side to the devastation felt

throughout a time period when nothing was certain and your very life was everything. These locations and events are not chronicled enough through historic fiction, and I'm grateful to Ruta Sepetys for giving these people and countries a voice.

Lina is a Lithuanian girl who likes to draw and who is close to her family. Her middle class existence shifts quickly into a nightmarish, cruel realm when her family is deported and separated. Lina, her mother, and brother are in one train car while her father is in another. Herded like cattle, they're taken to a labor camp where they dig for beets and do other grueling tasks for long, hard hours. While she's suffering through starvation and cold weather, Lina strives to be reunited with her father. Despite all her hardships, alongside her mom and little brother, Lina's hope doesn't vanish. And she will survive. This was difficult to read. The scenes involving Soviet soldiers and officers brutalizing people were hard to digest. Nevertheless, this is an amazing piece of historical fiction. When I think about the 1940's and the World War II era involving Europe, I usually picture Hitler and his crimes against humanity. I didn't know about this piece of history involving Stalin, the Soviet Union, and Lithuanians who were sent to Siberian labor camps.

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