

LETTERS FROM RIFKA

LETTERS FROM RIFKA IS A COMPELLING HISTORICAL NOVEL THAT TRANSPORTS READERS TO EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY EASTERN EUROPE AND AMERICA, FOLLOWING THE BRAVE JOURNEY OF A YOUNG JEWISH GIRL, RIFKA, AS SHE ESCAPES PERSECUTION IN RUSSIA AND SEEKS FREEDOM IN THE UNITED STATES. THIS ARTICLE DELIVERS A THOROUGH EXPLORATION OF THE BOOK'S PLOT, THEMES, CHARACTERS, AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT, MAKING IT A VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND LITERARY ENTHUSIASTS. DELVING INTO THE AUTHOR KAREN HESSE'S WRITING STYLE, THE IMPACT OF THE EPISTOLARY FORMAT, AND THE ENDURING RELEVANCE OF THE STORY, READERS WILL GAIN A COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF WHY LETTERS FROM RIFKA REMAINS AN ESSENTIAL PIECE OF YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE. ADDITIONALLY, THE ARTICLE DISCUSSES NOTABLE QUOTES, EDUCATIONAL USES, AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, ENSURING AN INFORMATIVE AND ENGAGING READING EXPERIENCE.

- OVERVIEW OF LETTERS FROM RIFKA
- PLOT SUMMARY AND STRUCTURE
- MAIN CHARACTERS IN LETTERS FROM RIFKA
- THEMES AND MOTIFS
- HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND ACCURACY
- KAREN HESSE'S WRITING STYLE
- THE EPISTOLARY FORMAT
- NOTABLE QUOTES AND LITERARY ANALYSIS
- EDUCATIONAL USES AND CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS
- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

OVERVIEW OF LETTERS FROM RIFKA

LETTERS FROM RIFKA, WRITTEN BY KAREN HESSE, IS A CELEBRATED YOUNG ADULT HISTORICAL NOVEL FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1991. THE BOOK CHRONICLES THE HARROWING YET HOPE-FILLED JOURNEY OF RIFKA, A TWELVE-YEAR-OLD JEWISH GIRL FLEEING THE TUMULTUOUS ENVIRONMENT OF RUSSIA IN 1919 WITH HER FAMILY. FACING ANTI-SEMITIC PERSECUTION, RIFKA'S FAMILY EMBARKS ON A DANGEROUS MIGRATION TO AMERICA. THE NARRATIVE UNFOLDS THROUGH RIFKA'S LETTERS TO HER COUSIN TOVAH, OFFERING AN INTIMATE GLIMPSE INTO HER THOUGHTS, FEARS, AND TRIUMPHS. AS RIFKA ENCOUNTERS OBSTACLES SUCH AS ILLNESS, SEPARATION, AND CULTURAL BARRIERS, THE STORY HIGHLIGHTS THEMES OF RESILIENCE, IDENTITY, AND THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE. LETTERS FROM RIFKA HAS BEEN PRAISED FOR ITS AUTHENTIC PORTRAYAL OF HISTORY AND ITS POWERFUL MESSAGE OF COURAGE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY.

PLOT SUMMARY AND STRUCTURE

SETTING AND HISTORICAL BACKDROP

SET DURING THE AFTERMATH OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, LETTERS FROM RIFKA CAPTURES THE REALITY OF JEWISH FAMILIES ESCAPING THE VIOLENCE AND OPPRESSION OF EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY EUROPE. THE JOURNEY TAKES RIFKA ACROSS RUSSIA,

POLAND, BELGIUM, AND ULTIMATELY TO ELLIS ISLAND IN NEW YORK. THE AUTHENTIC SETTINGS PROVIDE A VIVID BACKDROP FOR THE CHARACTER'S EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL TRIALS.

EPISTOLARY NARRATIVE

THE NOVEL IS STRUCTURED AS A SERIES OF LETTERS WRITTEN BY RIFKA TO HER BELOVED COUSIN TOVAH. THIS FORMAT ALLOWS READERS TO EXPERIENCE EVENTS THROUGH RIFKA'S PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE, DEEPENING THE EMOTIONAL RESONANCE OF HER STRUGGLES AND VICTORIES. EACH LETTER DELIVERS INSIGHTS INTO HER DAILY LIFE, HISTORICAL EVENTS, AND HER INNER GROWTH.

MAJOR PLOT POINTS

- RIFKA'S FAMILY DECIDES TO FLEE RUSSIA DUE TO ANTI-SEMITIC THREATS AND CONSCRIPTION.
- THEY TRAVEL SECRETLY, FACING DANGEROUS BORDER CROSSINGS AND ILLNESS.
- RIFKA CONTRACTS RINGWORM AND IS SEPARATED FROM HER FAMILY IN BELGIUM.
- SHE OVERCOMES LONELINESS, BEFRIENDS OTHER REFUGEES, AND LEARNS NEW LANGUAGES.
- RIFKA'S DETERMINATION AND COMPASSION HELP HER SURVIVE ELLIS ISLAND'S RIGOROUS MEDICAL INSPECTIONS.
- THE FAMILY IS ULTIMATELY REUNITED AND SETTLES IN AMERICA, FULFILLING THEIR DREAM OF FREEDOM.

MAIN CHARACTERS IN LETTERS FROM RIFKA

RIFKA

RIFKA IS THE PROTAGONIST WHOSE RESILIENCE AND EMPATHY DRIVE THE STORY. THROUGH HER LETTERS, READERS WITNESS HER TRANSFORMATION FROM A FRIGHTENED CHILD TO A COURAGEOUS YOUNG WOMAN. RIFKA'S ABILITY TO ADAPT AND HER LOVE FOR HER FAMILY UNDERSCORE HER STRENGTH.

RIFKA'S FAMILY

HER PARENTS AND BROTHERS PLAY CRITICAL ROLES, EACH FACING THEIR OWN CHALLENGES DURING THE MIGRATION. THE FAMILY DYNAMIC HIGHLIGHTS THEMES OF LOYALTY, SACRIFICE, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE.

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

THROUGHOUT HER JOURNEY, RIFKA ENCOUNTERS A VARIETY OF INDIVIDUALS—FROM HELPFUL STRANGERS TO OTHER REFUGEES—WHO INFLUENCE HER OUTLOOK AND CONTRIBUTE TO HER PERSONAL GROWTH. THESE RELATIONSHIPS ENRICH THE NARRATIVE AND REINFORCE THE NOVEL'S CENTRAL THEMES.

THEMES AND MOTIFS

PERSEVERANCE AND HOPE

LETTERS FROM RIFKA ILLUSTRATES THE POWER OF HOPE AND PERSEVERANCE IN OVERCOMING ADVERSITY. RIFKA'S UNWAVERING SPIRIT, EVEN WHEN SEPARATED FROM HER FAMILY OR FACING ILLNESS, EMBODIES THE TRIUMPH OF HUMAN RESILIENCE.

IDENTITY AND BELONGING

THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY AND A SENSE OF BELONGING IS CENTRAL TO RIFKA'S JOURNEY. AS SHE NAVIGATES FOREIGN CULTURES AND LANGUAGES, RIFKA GRAPPLES WITH HER HERITAGE AND THE MEANING OF HOME.

PREJUDICE AND TOLERANCE

THE NOVEL CONFRONTS ISSUES OF ANTI-SEMITISM AND PREJUDICE, SHEDDING LIGHT ON HISTORICAL INJUSTICES. RIFKA'S EXPERIENCES HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPATHY, UNDERSTANDING, AND TOLERANCE.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND ACCURACY

JEWISH IMMIGRATION

LETTERS FROM RIFKA IS ROOTED IN THE REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES OF JEWISH IMMIGRANTS FLEEING PERSECUTION IN THE EARLY 1900S. THE DEPICTION OF BORDER CROSSINGS, MEDICAL INSPECTIONS, AND CULTURAL CHALLENGES REFLECT EXTENSIVE HISTORICAL RESEARCH.

LIFE IN ELLIS ISLAND

RIFKA'S STRUGGLES AT ELLIS ISLAND, INCLUDING MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND BUREAUCRATIC HURDLES, ACCURATELY PORTRAY THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE DURING THIS ERA. THE NOVEL OFFERS READERS AN AUTHENTIC GLIMPSE INTO THE HOPES AND HARDSHIPS OF NEWCOMERS TO AMERICA.

KAREN HESSE'S WRITING STYLE

AUTHENTIC VOICE

KAREN HESSE'S WRITING IS CHARACTERIZED BY ITS AUTHENTICITY AND EMOTIONAL DEPTH. THROUGH THE EPISTOLARY FORMAT, SHE CAPTURES THE NUANCES OF RIFKA'S VOICE, MAKING THE PROTAGONIST RELATABLE AND COMPELLING FOR READERS OF ALL AGES.

DESCRIPTIVE IMAGERY

HESSE EMPLOYS VIVID IMAGERY AND SENSORY DETAILS TO BRING HISTORICAL SETTINGS TO LIFE. HER ATTENTION TO CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIFFERENCES ENHANCES THE REALISM AND EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE NOVEL.

THE EPISTOLARY FORMAT

ADVANTAGES OF LETTER WRITING

THE EPISTOLARY FORMAT ALLOWS FOR A HIGHLY PERSONAL AND INTROSPECTIVE NARRATIVE. READERS GAIN DIRECT ACCESS TO RIFKA'S THOUGHTS, EMOTIONS, AND OBSERVATIONS, FOSTERING A DEEP CONNECTION WITH HER CHARACTER.

IMPACT ON STORYTELLING

THIS STRUCTURE PROVIDES IMMEDIACY AND INTIMACY, MAKING HISTORICAL EVENTS AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES MORE ACCESSIBLE. THE FORMAT ALSO EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION DURING TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY.

NOTABLE QUOTES AND LITERARY ANALYSIS

MEMORABLE QUOTES

- "I AM LEARNING HOW TO BE BRAVE, TOVAH, EVEN WHEN I AM SCARED."
- "AMERICA IS NOT A WORD, IT IS A PLACE FULL OF DREAMS AND HOPE."
- "SOMETIMES, KINDNESS FROM STRANGERS IS ENOUGH TO KEEP YOU ALIVE."

SYMBOLISM AND LITERARY DEVICES

LETTERS FROM RIFKA EMPLOYS SYMBOLISM, SUCH AS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LETTERS AND THE MOTIF OF JOURNEYS, TO CONVEY DEEPER MEANINGS. HESSE'S USE OF FORESHADOWING AND METAPHOR ENRICHES THE TEXT'S EMOTIONAL AND THEMATIC IMPACT.

EDUCATIONAL USES AND CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

LETTERS FROM RIFKA IS FREQUENTLY USED IN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULA TO TEACH HISTORICAL FICTION, IMMIGRATION, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE. ITS ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE AND RELATABLE PROTAGONIST MAKE IT SUITABLE FOR A WIDE RANGE OF LEARNERS.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

- EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION ON IDENTITY AND FAMILY.
- ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT.
- CREATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS BASED ON LETTER FORMATS.

- DEBATES ON TOLERANCE, PREJUDICE, AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: WHAT IS THE MAIN THEME OF LETTERS FROM RIFKA?

A: THE MAIN THEME OF LETTERS FROM RIFKA IS PERSEVERANCE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY, WITH ADDITIONAL EMPHASIS ON IDENTITY, BELONGING, AND THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE.

Q: WHO WROTE LETTERS FROM RIFKA AND WHEN WAS IT PUBLISHED?

A: LETTERS FROM RIFKA WAS WRITTEN BY KAREN HESSE AND FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1991.

Q: IS LETTERS FROM RIFKA BASED ON A TRUE STORY?

A: WHILE THE NOVEL IS NOT BASED ON A SPECIFIC TRUE STORY, IT IS INSPIRED BY THE REAL EXPERIENCES OF JEWISH IMMIGRANTS DURING THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY.

Q: WHY IS THE EPISTOLARY FORMAT IMPORTANT IN LETTERS FROM RIFKA?

A: THE EPISTOLARY FORMAT OFFERS READERS A PERSONAL AND IMMERSIVE PERSPECTIVE, ALLOWING THEM TO CONNECT MORE DEEPLY WITH RIFKA'S EMOTIONS AND EXPERIENCES.

Q: WHAT AGE GROUP IS LETTERS FROM RIFKA SUITABLE FOR?

A: THE BOOK IS SUITABLE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL READERS, GENERALLY AGES 10 AND UP.

Q: WHAT HISTORICAL EVENTS ARE REFERENCED IN LETTERS FROM RIFKA?

A: THE STORY REFERENCES THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, ANTI-SEMITIC PERSECUTION, AND JEWISH IMMIGRATION TO AMERICA FOLLOWING WORLD WAR I.

Q: HOW DOES RIFKA'S CHARACTER CHANGE THROUGHOUT THE NOVEL?

A: RIFKA GROWS FROM A FRIGHTENED, UNCERTAIN CHILD INTO A RESILIENT AND COMPASSIONATE YOUNG WOMAN AS SHE FACES AND OVERCOMES NUMEROUS CHALLENGES.

Q: WHAT LESSONS CAN STUDENTS LEARN FROM LETTERS FROM RIFKA?

A: STUDENTS CAN LEARN ABOUT EMPATHY, COURAGE, CULTURAL DIVERSITY, AND THE HISTORICAL REALITIES OF IMMIGRATION.

Q: HOW ACCURATE IS THE PORTRAYAL OF ELLIS ISLAND IN THE NOVEL?

A: THE DEPICTION OF ELLIS ISLAND IN LETTERS FROM RIFKA IS HISTORICALLY ACCURATE, REFLECTING THE MEDICAL INSPECTIONS AND BUREAUCRATIC CHALLENGES FACED BY IMMIGRANTS.

Q: WHY IS LETTERS FROM RIFKA CONSIDERED AN IMPORTANT WORK OF HISTORICAL FICTION?

A: THE NOVEL IS VALUED FOR ITS AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION OF HISTORY, ITS ENGAGING PROTAGONIST, AND ITS ABILITY TO FOSTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE.

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Letters from Rifka: A Journey of Courage and Resilience

Introduction:

Have you ever yearned to understand the profound strength of the human spirit in the face of unimaginable adversity? Letters from Rifka, a poignant and powerful young adult novel, offers just that. This post delves deep into the compelling narrative of Rifka, a young Jewish girl escaping the pogroms of Tsarist Russia, exploring the themes, characters, and lasting impact of this unforgettable story. We'll uncover why this book continues to resonate with readers, examining its historical context and its enduring message of hope and perseverance. Prepare to be moved by the journey of a young girl whose letters reveal a world of hardship and unexpected beauty.

Understanding the Historical Context of Letters from Rifka

Before diving into the narrative, understanding the historical backdrop of Letters from Rifka is crucial. The book is set during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a period marked by intense anti-Semitism in Russia. The pogroms, violent attacks against Jewish communities, forced many families, including Rifka's, to flee their homes in search of safety and a better future. This historical context imbues the story with a gravity that resonates deeply with readers, offering a glimpse into a brutal and often forgotten chapter of history. Understanding this context enhances the appreciation for Rifka's bravery and the challenges she faces.

The Power of Epistolary Storytelling

Letters from Rifka utilizes the epistolary format, meaning the story unfolds through a series of letters written by Rifka herself. This narrative technique allows for a unique level of intimacy with the character. We witness her innermost thoughts, fears, and hopes as she navigates her perilous journey. The immediacy of the letters creates a powerful emotional connection with the reader, making Rifka's experiences feel intensely personal and real.

Rifka's Journey: From Despair to Hope

Rifka's journey isn't just a physical one; it's a profound emotional and spiritual odyssey. She faces unimaginable hardships: poverty, prejudice, loss, and the constant threat of violence. Yet, amidst the despair, her resilience shines through. Her letters reveal her unwavering spirit, her capacity for love and kindness, even in the darkest of times. She learns to rely on her faith, her family, and the kindness of strangers. This transformation from a scared, vulnerable girl to a resourceful and determined young woman is a testament to the human spirit's capacity for enduring hardship.

Exploring Key Themes in Letters from Rifka

Letters from Rifka explores several powerful themes that contribute to its lasting impact.

Family and Loyalty: The bond between Rifka and her family, particularly her younger sister, is a central theme. Their love and support for each other are their greatest strengths, allowing them to navigate unimaginable difficulties. This unwavering family loyalty provides a powerful counterpoint to the prejudice and cruelty they face.

Faith and Resilience: Rifka's faith provides her with solace and strength throughout her ordeal. Her belief in a higher power gives her the fortitude to persevere in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. This aspect of the story resonates deeply with readers, emphasizing the power of faith as a source of hope and resilience.

Courage and Perseverance: The story is fundamentally a testament to the human capacity for courage. Rifka's journey is fraught with danger and uncertainty, yet she bravely faces each challenge, never giving up hope for a better future. Her perseverance serves as an inspiration to readers, reminding them of the importance of strength and determination in the face of adversity.

The Importance of Human Kindness: Despite the pervasive prejudice, Letters from Rifka also highlights the acts of kindness and compassion offered by individuals along Rifka's journey. These small acts of humanity offer a powerful counterpoint to the cruelty and underscore the importance of empathy and compassion.

The Enduring Legacy of Letters from Rifka

Letters from Rifka is more than just a historical fiction novel; it's a powerful testament to the human spirit's enduring strength. It's a story that continues to resonate with readers of all ages, offering valuable lessons about resilience, faith, family, and the importance of human connection. Its impact lies in its ability to connect readers with a young girl's experiences, allowing them to empathize with her struggles and celebrate her triumphs. It's a book that stays with you long after you finish reading it, prompting reflection on the power of hope and the importance of remembering history.

Conclusion:

Letters from Rifka offers a captivating and deeply moving journey through a challenging historical period. It's a story that will stay with you long after you turn the final page, leaving you with a profound appreciation for the strength of the human spirit and the enduring power of hope. Through Rifka's compelling narrative, readers gain a deeper understanding of history, resilience, and the unwavering bonds of family and faith.

FAQs:

1. Is Letters from Rifka suitable for all age groups? While appropriate for young adults, the themes of poverty, prejudice, and violence may be challenging for younger readers. Parental guidance is suggested for younger audiences.
2. What makes Letters from Rifka unique among historical fiction novels? The epistolary format and the intimate portrayal of Rifka's emotions contribute to its uniqueness. It provides a very personal and immediate account of historical events.
3. What historical accuracy can be expected from Letters from Rifka? While a work of fiction, the novel is grounded in the historical reality of the pogroms in Tsarist Russia, offering a realistic portrayal of the challenges faced by Jewish communities during that period.
4. Are there any discussions of faith in Letters from Rifka? Yes, Rifka's faith plays a significant role in her journey, offering her comfort and strength in the face of hardship.
5. What are some similar books to Letters from Rifka? Readers interested in similar historical fiction focusing on young women's resilience might also enjoy books exploring themes of immigration, survival, and family loyalty during periods of social unrest. Researching books focused on the Jewish experience in Eastern Europe during the same period could lead to further insightful reading.

letters from rifka: Letters from Rifka Karen Hesse, 2009-01-06 From Newbery media winner Karen Hesse comes an unforgettable story of an immigrant family's journey to America. America, the girl repeated. What will you do there? I was silent for a little time. I will do everything there, I answered. Rifka knows nothing about America when she flees from Russia with her family in 1919. But she dreams that in the new country she will at last be safe from the Russian soldiers and their harsh treatment of the Jews. Throughout her journey, Rifka carries with her a cherished volume of poetry by Alexander Pushkin. In it, she records her observations and experiences in the form of letters to Tovah, the beloved cousin she has left behind. Strong-hearted and determined, Rifka must

endure a great deal: humiliating examinations by doctors and soldiers, deadly typhus, separation from all she has ever known and loved, murderous storms at sea, detainment on Ellis Island--and is if this is not enough, the loss of her glorious golden hair. Based on a true story from the author's family, *Letters from Rifka* presents a real-life heroine with an uncommon courage and unsinkable spirit.

letters from rifka: *Letters from Rifka* Karen Hesse, 1992-07-15 Publisher Description

letters from rifka: The Storyteller's Beads Jane Kurtz, 1998-04-15 Running for their lives to escape the political upheaval in Ethiopia, two young girls from different faiths form an unlikely friendship.

letters from rifka: *Letters from Cuba* Ruth Behar, 2020-08-25 Pura Belpré Award Winner Ruth Behar's inspiring story of a young Jewish girl who escapes Poland to make a new life in Cuba, while she works to rescue the rest of her family The situation is getting dire for Jews in Poland on the eve of World War II. Esther's father has fled to Cuba, and she is the first one to join him. It's heartbreaking to be separated from her beloved sister, so Esther promises to write down everything that happens until they're reunited. And she does, recording both the good--the kindness of the Cuban people and her discovery of a valuable hidden talent--and the bad: the fact that Nazism has found a foothold even in Cuba. Esther's evocative letters are full of her appreciation for life and reveal a resourceful, determined girl with a rare ability to bring people together, all the while striving to get the rest of their family out of Poland before it's too late. Based on Ruth Behar's family history, this compelling story celebrates the resilience of the human spirit in the most challenging times.

letters from rifka: *The Music of Dolphins* Karen Hesse, 2016-08-30 "This powerful exploration of how we become human and how the soul endures is a song of beauty and sorrow, haunting and unforgettable." —School Library Journal (starred review) A Publishers Weekly Best Book of the Year A School Library Journal Best Book of the Year An ALA Best Book for Young Adults A Book Links Best Book of the Year A New York Public Library Children's Title for Reading and Sharing Mila becomes famous around the world when she is rescued from an unpopulated island off the coast of Florida. Years ago, Mila went missing from a boat crash, and she has been raised by dolphins from the age of four. Researchers teach Mila language and music. But she also learns about rules and expectations, about locked doors and broken promises, disappointment and betrayal. The more Mila finds out about what it means to be human, the more she longs for her home in the ocean . . . "As moving as a sonnet, as eloquently structured as a bell curve, this book poignantly explores the most profound of themes—what it means to be human . . . All together, a frequently dazzling novel." —Publishers Weekly (starred review) "Her mind and spirit shaped by the dolphins who raised her, a feral child views herself and her human captors from a decidedly unusual angle in this poignant story . . . A probing look at what makes us human, with an unforgettable protagonist." —Kirkus Reviews "Mila's rich inner voice makes her a lovely, lyrical character." —VOYA Magazine

letters from rifka: *Brooklyn Bridge* Karen Hesse, 2008-09-02 Karen Hesse has achieved many honors for her more than twenty books over the course of her award-winning career: the Newbery Medal, the Scott O'Dell Historical Fiction Award, the MacArthur Fellowship Genius Award, and the Christopher Medal. Her novels burn with intensity, and keenly felt, deeply researched, and are memorable for their imagination and intelligence. So it is with great pride and excitement that we present Karen Hesse's first novel in over five years: *Brooklyn Bridge*. It's the summer of 1903 in Brooklyn and all fourteen-year-old Joseph Michtom wants is to experience the thrill, the grandeur, and the electricity of the new amusement park at Coney Island. But that doesn't seem likely. Ever since his parents—Russian immigrants—invented the stuffed Teddy Bear five months ago, Joseph's life has turned upside down. No longer do the Michtom's gather family and friends around the kitchen table to talk. No longer is Joseph at leisure to play stickball with the guys. Now, Joseph works. And complains. And falls in love. And argues with Mama and Papa. And falls out of love. And hopes. Joseph hopes he'll see Coney Island soon. He hopes that everything will turn right-side up again. He hopes his luck hasn't run out—because you never know. Through all the warmth, the

sadness, the frustration, and the laughter of one big, colorful family, Newbery Medalist Karen Hesse builds a stunning story of the lucky, the unlucky, and those in between, and reminds us that our lives—all our lives—are fragile, precious, and connected. *Brooklyn Bridge* is a 2009 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

letters from rifka: *A Time of Angels* Karen Hesse, 1997-10 Sick with influenza during the 1918 epidemic and separated from her two sisters, a young Jewish girl living in Boston relies on the help of an old German man, and her visions of angels, to get better and to reunite herself with her family.

letters from rifka: *Come On, Rain!* Karen Hesse, 2016-01-26 Newbery Medalist Karen Hesse recreates the body and soul-renewing experience of a summer downpour after a sweltering city heat wave. Come on, rain! Tess pleads to the sky as listless vines and parched plants droop in the endless heat. Up and down the block, cats pant while heat wavers off tar patches in the broiling alleyway. More than anything, Tess hopes for rain. And when it comes, she and her friends are ready for a surprising and joyous celebration....Through exquisite language and acute observation, Newberry medalist Karen Hesse recreates the glorious experience of a quenching rainstorm on a sweltering summer day. Jon J Muth's masterful and lyrical watercolors perfectly reflect the spirit of the text.

letters from rifka: Witness (Scholastic Gold) Karen Hesse, 2013-03-01 Newbery Medalist Karen Hesse immerses readers in a small Vermont town in 1924 with this haunting and harrowing tale. Leanora Sutter. Esther Hirsh. Merlin Van Tornhout. Johnny Reeves . . . These characters are among the unforgettable cast inhabiting a small Vermont town in 1924. A town that turns against its own when the Ku Klux Klan moves in. No one is safe, especially the two youngest, twelve-year-old Leanora, an African-American girl, and six-year-old Esther, who is Jewish. In this story of a community on the brink of disaster, told through the haunting and impassioned voices of its inhabitants, Newbery Award winner Karen Hesse takes readers into the hearts and minds of those who bear witness.

letters from rifka: *Phoenix Rising* Karen Hesse, 2009-02-17 Nyle's life with her grandmother on their Vermont sheep farm advances rhythmically through the seasons until the night of the accident at the Cookshire nuclear power plant. Without warning, Nyle's modest world fills with protective masks, evacuations, contaminated food, disruptions, and mistrust. Nyle adjusts to the changes. As long as the fallout continues blowing to the East, Nyle, Gran, and the farm can go on. But into this uncertain haven stumble Ezra Trent and his mother, refugees from the heart of the accident, who take temporary shelter in the back bedroom of Nyle's house. The back bedroom is the dying room: It took her mother when Nyle was six; it stole away her grandfather just two years ago. Now Ezra is back there and Nyle doesn't want to open her heart to him. Too many times she's let people in, only to have them desert her. Karen Hesse's voice and vision are grounded in truth; she takes on a nearly unharnessable subject, contains it, and makes it resonate with honesty. Part love story, part coming of age, *Phoenix Rising* is a tour de force by a gifted writer.

letters from rifka: Darby Jonathon Scott Fuqua, 2014-09-23 Darby's first-person narrative is frank and immediate . . . expressing what it's like for an ordinary white kid who suddenly discovers evil — and courage — where she lives. — BOOKLIST From my back porch, I can see where my best friend lives. Evette's tenant house sits on my daddy's property . . . but on account of her being black and me being white, she hardly ever comes in my house, and I don't go in hers. My daddy says that's just the way it is. Darby Carmichael thinks her best friend is probably the smartest person she knows, even though, as Mama says, Evette's school uses worn-out books and crumbly chalk. Whenever they can, Darby and Evette shoot off into the woods beyond the farm to play at being fancy ladies and schoolteachers. One thing Darby has never dreamed of being - not until Evette suggests it - is a newspaper girl who writes down the truth for all to read. In no time, and with more than a little assistance from Evette, Darby and her column in the Bennettsville Times are famous in town and beyond. But is Marlboro County, South Carolina, circa 1926, ready for the truth its youngest reporter has to tell?

letters from rifka: *Night Job* Karen Hesse, 2024-10-15 With lyrical narration and elegant, evocative artwork, Newbery Medalist Karen Hesse and illustrator G. Brian Karas share the nighttime

experience of a father and child. When the sun sets, Dad's job as a school custodian is just beginning. What is it like to work on a Friday night while the rest of the city is asleep? There's the smell of lilacs in the night air, the dusky highway in the moonlight, and glimpses of shy nighttime animals to make the dark magical. Shooting baskets in the half-lit gym, sweeping the stage with the game on the radio, and reading out loud to his father in the library all help the boy's time pass quickly. But what makes the night really special is being with Dad. Newbery Medalist Karen Hesse's quietly powerful story of a boy and his father is tenderly brought to life by G. Brian Karas in this luminous tribute to an enduring, everyday sort of love.

letters from rifka: Letters from Rifka Karen Hesse, 1992 In letters to her cousin, a young Jewish girl chronicles her family's flight from Russia in 1919 and her own experiences when she must be left in Belgium for a while when the others emigrate to America.

letters from rifka: Wish on a Unicorn Karen Hesse, 2015-11-17 Now I didn't believe a broken-down old unicorn could make wishes come true . . . not for a minute. But what if it could? Mags has a lot to wish for—a nice house with a mama who isn't tired out from work; a normal little sister; a brother who doesn't mooch for food; and, once in a while, she'd like some new clothes for school. When her sister Hannie finds a stuffed unicorn, Mags's wishes start to come true. She knows the unicorn can't really be magic, but she won't let anything ruin her newfound luck—even if it means telling her own sister to believe something that can't possibly be true.

letters from rifka: If the World Were a Village David J. Smith, 2002 This unusual picture book shrinks the world's population down to a village of 100 to help children better understand who we are, where we live, how fast we are growing and more. Thought-provoking and highly effective, this world-in-miniature will open eyes to a wider view of our planet and its human inhabitants.

letters from rifka: Rob Roy Walter Scott, 1872

letters from rifka: The Alpine Path - The Story of My Career L. M. Montgomery, 2017-09-21 This memoir offers a charming and intimate look into the life and career of one of literature's most cherished writers, Lucy Maud Montgomery, the author of the Anne of Green Gables series. In this captivating narrative, Montgomery takes readers on a journey through her childhood, filled with dreams and imaginings that would later shape her literary voice. She vividly recounts her early years on Prince Edward Island, sharing the experiences and influences that sparked her love for storytelling. As Montgomery progresses from a young girl with a passion for writing to a celebrated author, she candidly describes the challenges and triumphs she faced along the way. Her inspirational road to literary success is a testament to her perseverance, creativity, and unwavering belief in her craft. Originally published as a series of autobiographical essays in the Toronto magazine *Everywoman's World* from June to November in 1917, *The Alpine Path: The Story of My Career* not only provides valuable insights into Montgomery's personal and professional life but also serves as an encouraging tale for aspiring writers and dreamers.

letters from rifka: The Little Women Letters Gabrielle Donnelly, 2012-06-05 With her older sister planning a wedding and her younger sister preparing to launch a career on the stage, Lulu can't help but feel like the failure of the Atwater family. Lulu loves her sisters dearly and wants nothing but the best for them, but she finds herself stuck in a rut. When her mother sends her to look for some old family recipes in the attic, she stumbles across a collection of letters written by her great-great-grandmother Josephine March. Jo writes in detail about every aspect of her life: her older sister Meg's new home and family; her younger sister Amy's many admirers; the family's shared grief over losing Beth; and her own feelings towards a handsome young German. As Lulu delves deeper into the lives of the March sisters, she finds solace and guidance, but can her great-great-grandmother help Lulu find a place in a world so different from the one Jo knew?--From publisher description.

letters from rifka: Playing Atari with Saddam Hussein Jennifer Rozines Roy, Ali Fadhil, 2018 For forty-two days in 1991, eleven-year-old Ali Fadhil and his family struggle to survive as Basra, Iraq, is bombed by the United States and its allies.

letters from rifka: Cajun Night Before Christmas Trosclair, 2015-12-01 A version in Cajun

dialect of the famous poem *The Night Before Christmas*, set in a Louisiana bayou.

letters from rifka: *Away* Jane Urquhart, 2010-10-29 A stunning, evocative novel set in Ireland and Canada, *Away* traces a family's complex and layered past. The narrative unfolds with shimmering clarity, and takes us from the harsh northern Irish coast in the 1840s to the quarantine stations at Grosse Isle and the barely hospitable land of the Canadian Shield; from the flourishing town of Port Hope to the flooded streets of Montreal; from Ottawa at the time of Confederation to a large-windowed house at the edge of a Great Lake during the present day. Graceful and moving, *Away* unites the personal and the political as it explores the most private, often darkest corners of our emotions where the things that root us to ourselves endure. Powerful, intricate, lyrical, *Away* is an unforgettable novel.

letters from rifka: **The Upstairs Room (Winner of the Newbery Honor)** Johanna Reiss, 2011-07-13 This Newbery Honor-winning book shows us that in the steady courage of a young girl lies a profound strength that can transcend the horrors of war. This is the true story of a girl's extraordinary survival during the German occupation of Holland of World War II. Annie was only ten years old, but because she was Jewish, she was forced to leave her family, her home, and everything she knew. Annie was taken in, far from home, by complete strangers who risked everything to help her. They showed Annie where she had to stay - the cramped upstairs room of their farmhouse. She would remain there while Nazis, who were ever vigilant, patrolled the streets outside. If Annie made even a sound from upstairs, or if a nosy neighbor caught sight of her in the window, it would surely mean a death sentence for her and the family that took her in. Elie Wiesel writes, "This admirable account is as important in every aspect as the one bequeathed to us by Anne Frank. A Newbery Medal Honor Book, ALA Notable Book, and winner of the Jewish Book Council Children's Book Award. Be sure to read the moving sequel *The Journey Back* by Johanna Reiss.

letters from rifka: *Mieko and the Fifth Treasure* Eleanor Coerr, 2003-04-14 When the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, Mieko's nearby village was turned into ruins, and her hand was badly injured. Mieko loves to do calligraphy more than anything, but now she can barely hold a paintbrush. And she feels as if she has lost something that she can't paint without-the legendary fifth treasure, beauty in the heart. Then she is sent to live with her grandparents and must go to a new school. But Mieko is brave and eventually learns that time and patience can help with many things, and may even help her find the fifth treasure.

letters from rifka: **Hiding in Plain Sight** Theresa Miles, 2021-06 Personal memoirs of my journey through life acknowledging my true identity as I should be living, but could not reveal that truth until my sixth decade of life. The cost of that revelation has been immeasurable in expenses and change in relationships, but laden with learnings this book will share with readers experiencing similar challenges with either themselves. or looking for answers to questions in their relationships with loved ones. From early childhood through the end of a lengthy career, the next chapter is committed to volunteer and foundation formation for homeless LGBTQ+ experiencing a similar path.

letters from rifka: *My Thumb* Karen Hesse, 2016-07-26 Even though she's outgrown other babyish things, a young girl finds she still needs to suck her thumb.

letters from rifka: *Lavender* Karen Hesse, 2015-11-17 Codie loves to spend time with her favorite aunt, Alix. Her aunt is a talented seamstress, and Codie knows that the perfect gift for Alix's new baby is a handmade blanket. Codie wants to have the blanket done before the baby is born. Suddenly, the baby is coming early. Will Codie be able to finish the blanket in time?

letters from rifka: *Letters from Rifka* by Karen Hesse Jean Jamieson, 2000

letters from rifka: *Sing Down the Moon* Scott O'Dell, 2010-09-13 Newbery Honor Book In this powerful novel based on historical events, the Navajo tribe's forced march from their homeland to Fort Sumner is dramatically and courageously narrated by young Bright Morning. Like the author's Newbery Medal-winning classic *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, Scott O'Dell's *Sing Down the Moon* is a gripping tale of survival, strength, and courage.

letters from rifka: *The Mistress of Nothing* Kate Pullinger, 2010-08-15 Lady Duff Gordon is the toast of Victorian London society. But when her debilitating tuberculosis means exile, she and her

devoted lady's maid, Sally, set sail for Egypt. It is Sally who describes, with a mixture of wonder and trepidation, the odd menage (marshalled by the resourceful Omar) that travels down the Nile to a new life in Luxor. When Lady Duff Gordon undoes her stays and takes to native dress, throwing herself into weekly salons, language lessons and excursions to the tombs, Sally too adapts to a new world, which affords her heady and heartfelt freedoms never known before. But freedom is a luxury that a maid can ill-afford, and when Sally grasps more than her status entitles her to, she is brutally reminded that she is mistress of nothing. **Winner of the Governor General's Award for Fiction

letters from rifka: Just Juice Karen Hesse, 1998 Realizing that her father's lack of work has endangered her family, nine-year-old Juice decides that she must return to school and learn to read in order to help their chances of surviving and keeping their house.

letters from rifka: Life in the Present Tense Rifka Rosenwein, 2007 For seven years, Rifka Rosenwein voiced the pleasures and frustrations of her life in The Home Front, a monthly column in The New York Jewish Week. Whether discussing religion and family, her torchbearer perspective as the daughter of Holocaust survivors, or the tensions between motherhood and career, Rifka's storytelling always struck a chord with readers. Rifka captures the details of motherhood - from the first love in kindergarten, to the first painful separation of overnight camp, to the discovery that her daughter might just need a doll after all. After her diagnosis of terminal cancer, her columns describe life on cancer time. She generously shared with readers the steadfast support of friends and community. Together, the 64 columns collected in Life in the Present Tense are a death-defying celebration of life.

letters from rifka: Gittel's Journey Lesléa Newman, Amy June Bates, 2019-02-05 Gittel and her mother were supposed to immigrate to America together, but when her mother is stopped by the health inspector, Gittel must make the journey alone. Her mother writes her cousin's address in New York on a piece of paper. However, when Gittel arrives at Ellis Island, she discovers the ink has run and the address is illegible! How will she find her family? Both a heart-wrenching and heartwarming story, Gittel's Journey offers a fresh perspective on the immigration journey to Ellis Island. The book includes an author's note explaining how Gittel's story is based on the journey to America taken by Lesléa Newman's grandmother and family friend.

letters from rifka: If Your Name Was Changed at Ellis Island Ellen Levine, Wayne Parmenter, 1994-08 If You... series.

letters from rifka: Adolescents in the Search for Meaning Mary L. Warner, 2006 As is painfully evident from the reports of school shootings, gang violence, dysfunctional family life, and from statistics on adolescent suicide, many teens live troubled lives. Even those who live a normal life still face the challenges adults face, but teens are also engaged in establishing independence and finding their identity. However, few adolescents have the same resources as adults for surviving life challenges. Building from the idea that story is a powerful source of meaning, particularly those stories that resonate with our own lives, this book suggests that the stories of other young adults offer a resource yet to be fully tapped. Adolescents in the Search for Meaning begins from the perspective of young adults by sharing the results of a survey of over 1400 teens and also includes the insights of authors of Young Adult Literature. The book presents over 120 novels that teens have identified as meaningful as well as books recommended by YA authors and experts in the field of YA literature. For any teacher, librarian, parent or counselor wanting to reach young adults, this book is ideal.

letters from rifka: Gerald and Elizabeth D. E. Stevenson, 2003-01-02 Gerald Brown is a handsome and brilliant young engineer - wrongfully accused of stealing diamonds from his South African firm. Why has he been framed? Elizabeth Burleigh is a beautiful and talented West End actress - compelled to deny what marriage could bring her. What is the secret that impairs her love? Gerald and Elizabeth are half-brother and sister. They are reunited in London and together they face the mysteries that have made them both so unhappy.

letters from rifka: Pushkin Poems Alexander Pushkin, 2017-01-19 Read Pushkin's most famous poems without the need for a dictionary with this insightful edition. Passages in Russian and

English word-by-word translation are displayed side by side on separate pages, the stressed syllables labeled in bold for each Russian word, thereby eliminating the need for a dictionary. Study Pushkin's most moving passages with ease. This edition is a must for Russian language learners and Russian literature lovers wanting to study Pushkin.

letters from rifka: *Stowaway* Karen Hesse, 2000-11 A fictionalized journal relates the experiences of a young stowaway from 1768 to 1771 aboard the Endeavor which sailed around the world under Captain James Cook.

letters from rifka: *A Galaxy of Sea Stars* Jeanne Zulick Ferruolo, 2020-02-04 A Bank Street Best Book of 2021 *A Galaxy of Sea Stars* is Jeanne Zulick Ferruolo's second middle-grade novel—a heartwarming story about family, loyalty, and the hard choices we face in the name of friendship. Sometimes, the truth isn't easy to see. Sometimes, you have to look below the surface to find it. Eleven-year-old Izzy feels as though her whole world is shifting, and she doesn't like it. She wants her dad to act like he did before he was deployed to Afghanistan. She wants her mom to live with them at the marina where they've moved instead of spending all her time on Block Island. Most of all, she wants Piper, Zelda, and herself—the Sea Stars—to stay best friends, as they start sixth grade in a new school. Everything changes when Izzy's father invites his former interpreter's family, including eleven-year-old Sitara, to move into the marina's upstairs apartment. Izzy doesn't know what to make of Sitara—with her hijab and refusal to eat cafeteria food—and her presence disrupts the Sea Stars. But in Sitara Izzy finds someone brave, someone daring, someone who isn't as afraid as Izzy is to use her voice and speak up for herself. As Izzy and Sitara grow closer, Izzy must make a choice: stay in her comfort zone and risk betraying her new friend, or speak up and lose the Sea Stars forever.

letters from rifka: *Anna of All the Russias* Elaine Feinstein, 2007-12-18 In this definitive biography of the legendary Russian poet, Elaine Feinstein draws on a wealth of newly available material—including memoirs, letters, journals, and interviews with surviving friends and family—to produce a revelatory portrait of both the artist and the woman. Anna Akhmatova rose to fame in the years before World War I, but she would pay a heavy price for the political and personal passions that informed her brilliant poetry. In *Anna of All the Russias* we see Akhmatova's work banned from 1925 until 1940 and again after World War II. We see her steadfast opposition to Stalin, even while her son was held in the Gulag. We see her abiding loyalty to such friends as Mandelstam, Shostakovich, and Pasternak as they faced Stalinist oppression. And we see how, through everything, Akhmatova continued to write, her poetry giving voice to the Russian people by whom she was, and still is, deeply loved.

letters from rifka: *Sable* Karen Hesse, 2015-11-17 Tate is overjoyed when a scrawny mutt turns up in the yard one day. She even persuades Mam and Pap to let her keep Sable, named for her dark, silky fur. But before long, the dog begins to cause trouble with the neighbors and Mam and Pap decide the dog must go. But Tate doesn't give up easily . . . and neither does Sable.

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