

Between Shades of Grey

Ruta Sepetys

Reviewed by: Rachel Johnson, 41

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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During World War II in Lithuania, Lina is a young girl of 15, her younger brother who's 11 and their mother are dragged from their home one night by the Soviet guards. Along with other families, they are forced on a train car that is normally used for animals and taken to a labor camp in Siberia where they must work for survival. Lina and her family have been separated from her father who is in a different train car and headed for prison.

The journey is long and the conditions are bad. Once at the labor camp they are forced to work for rations. They find comfort in each other by telling stories from home and letters that have been sent. One day they find out that half of the people will be moved to a different location. Lina and her family are on that list. They are taken to a ship that is headed for the arctic. Now in a different camp, where conditions are worst, the people have to learn how to survive.

Between Shades of Grey is a fictional story that's based on real events. It tells the story of a somber time in history. Under Stalin's rule, the Soviets took innocent people from their homes in the Baltics and not only made them work. They were starved, subjected to sexual assault, beaten, and murdered. There is a large amount of death throughout the book. The story is heartbreaking and the author didn't hold back on detailing the horrors people endured. It's a MUST-READ book for people who are interested in history but be aware it is detailed. I would recommend you buy the book for ages 14+ because of the subject matter.

Recommended Titles

Salt to Sea, by Ruta Sepetys

All The Light We Cannot See, by Anthony Doerr

Postcards from No Man's Land, by Aidan Chambers

