

Between Shades of Gray

Ruta Sepetys

Reviewed by: Pia Visaria, 13

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

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Like many others during World War II, Lina Vilkas and her family's life changed overnight. One minute she was gossiping with her best friends about the latest in fashion and the next she was being deported into a Siberian Labor Camp by the Soviets. Lina's journey is full of struggles, torture, and separation but she always seems to remain hopeful and be a beacon of light for everyone. She was deported into a Siberian Labor camp along with her mother and brother since her father was taken elsewhere by the Soviets. Despite all the hardships she faces along this journey Lina always managed to make everlasting relationships with the people she encountered and developed a sense of family with others no matter the type of circumstances she is in.

The manner in which Sepetys has narrated this story makes you feel as if you are truly in every character's shoes and are going through what they are going through. The literary elements, historic references, cliffhangers, and intense storyline make you never want to stop reading. Along with all the exciting elements, there is also something to learn from in this book. Sepetys has incorporated many subtle but powerful lessons throughout every moment of Lina's journey whether it's splitting the one potato that she gets as her ration with her roommate, or giving up her thin blanket to a friend in the brutal winters. In my opinion, "Between Shades of Gray" could be any eye opener to many about gratefulness, gratitude, and generosity.

I would recommend this book to anyone 12 and above as there is no explicit language but some reference to traumatic experiences. This book would make a great gift for history buffs, or anyone who likes to read realistic fiction!

Recommended Titles:

- "Number the Stars" by Lois Lowry
- "Fever 1793" by Laurie Halse Anderson
- "Salt to the Sea" by Ruta Sepetys
- "Making Bombs for Hitler" by Marsha Skrypuch