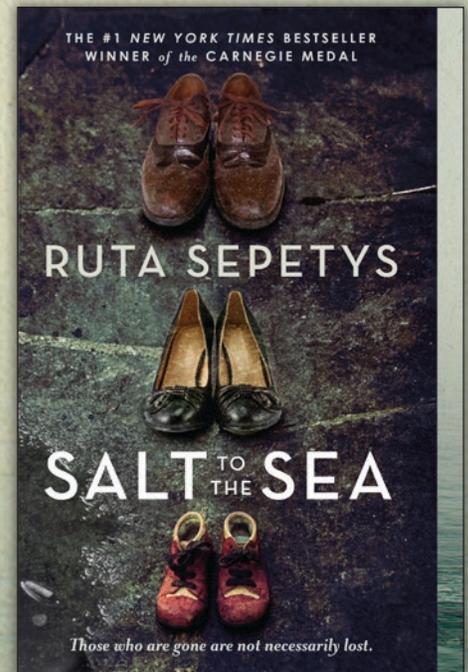
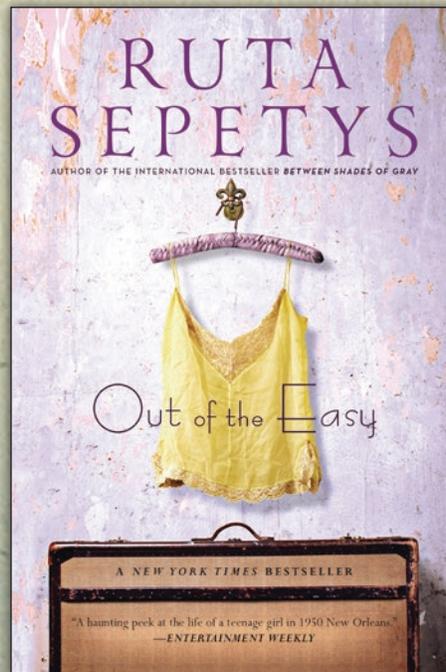
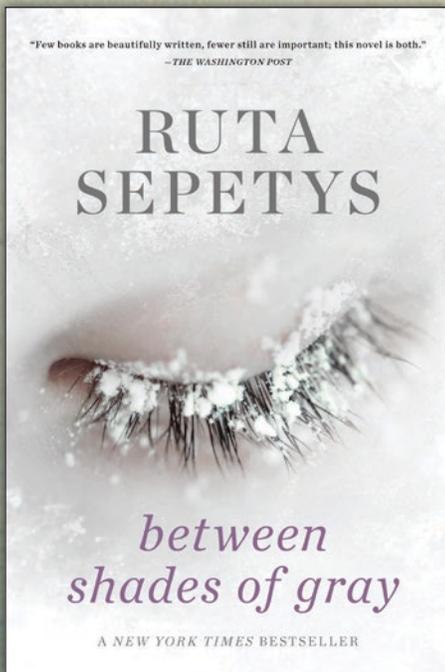




An Educator's Guide to **RUTA SEPETYS**

Connecting history to ourselves
through Young Adult Literature



THE ACTIVITIES IN THIS GUIDE ALIGN WITH COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
AND FIT INTO THE CURRICULUM FOR GRADES 7-10



Dear Educator,

History is mankind’s most essential mode of storytelling. Prehistoric cave paintings, ancient chronicles, scholarly studies of historical evidence, multimedia productions, and of course today’s social media timelines, walls, feeds, and stories . . . our fascination with the rich and dynamic forms of the human experience is one of our most basic interests. Historical fiction can be a powerful transition into a **deeper understanding of history**, offering learners a personalized experience as a scaffold for building a more purposeful study of the **realities beyond the fiction**.

This guide is designed as a **comprehensive teaching tool** for educators’ use of Sepetys’ novels in the classroom. Teachers who use only one of the novels will find pre-reading activities, discussion questions, research projects, and prompts specific to each novel.

In addition, the guide is designed so that educators may also utilize **literature circles** in the classroom, allowing for more than one of these books to be used simultaneously. In this model, each student selects one of the books to read independently. During class time, students are divided into reading groups for each novel. Common Core curricular objectives ask that students read and comprehend complex texts independently and proficiently. Both student choice in reading and small group discussion contribute to a positive experience for students. You will find pre-reading activities that can apply to all of the novels, as well as post-reading prompts that invite **cross-text comparisons**.

Sepetys’ novels offer emotionally and intellectually engaging characters and compelling narratives that not only foster a desire to see how the story ends for the characters, but to learn more about the stories behind the story. Her masterful use of little known but riveting events within a broader historical context sparks curiosity, an impulse to investigate the fact that is interwoven with the fiction, and a desire to pursue other such events that may have been pushed behind others that are deemed more significant or influential. Of course, it is the personal stories—like those of Sepetys’ characters—that remind teachers and students alike that history moves not just on the decisions and actions of great, transcendent figures, but also on those of seemingly normal people, young and old, who, like us, seek a fulfilling path through the events that frame their own lives.

Sincerely,

Penguin Young Readers School & Library Marketing Team

This guide was created by Dr. Rose Brock, an assistant professor in the Library Science Department of the College of Education at Sam Houston State University and by Michael Brock, an AP European History and IB History of the Americas HL teacher at Coppell High School in Coppell, Texas.



PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

CONNECTING

As a pre-reading activity, have students complete the following anticipation guide. Have students read each statement independently and check whether they agree with the statement or not.

AGREE	DISAGREE	STATEMENTS
		When in danger, it is best to play it safe rather than take a risk.
		In a dangerous or survival situation, one must make decisions that are best for themselves and their family members, even if harm may come to others as a result.
		Losing some personal freedom or opportunity is acceptable if it benefits others—individuals, the community, or society as a whole.
		If one disagrees with a rule, a policy, or “the way things are done,” it is better to remain silent than speak out and risk punishment.
		Commitment to duty, honor, or personal friendships should outweigh individual misgivings in times of moral crisis.
		A civilized society would ensure that its functions never allow a child to be harmed intentionally.

After completing the anticipation guide, discuss each point and allow students to address and connect with situations that support their positions.

BRAINSTORMING

Moderate a brainstorming session about the following questions:

- What are the character traits that most help us overcome challenges around us that are beyond our control?
- Who are some figures in history who, to you, embody the ability to persist and overcome the challenges of major historical events?
- How important are interpersonal relationships in helping us to overcome adverse events?

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Break into groups and discuss first impressions of the book.

If students selected a book from various options, ask them to defend or explain their choice. If the class is reading one book, tell them why you assigned that specific title. Then, ask students to share their first impressions of the book:

- What do you glean from the title and the cover art?
- Read the author’s dedication page. Can any conclusions be drawn about the author from the dedication?
- Review the pages that follow the author’s dedication page. What has been included there? Why do you think it is included? What correlations do you expect that it has to the story?
- Based on this assessment, what is the book going to be about? How do you know?

EXTENSIONS

Use the writing prompts that follow to allow students the opportunity to develop a free response essay on living through significant events in history:

- “To what extent are our lives a product of the times that we live in?”
- “For young people, what are the circumstances of history and daily life that were most challenging to endure? How did do they do it?”

All of Sepetys’ novels contain the theme of journey. Ask students if they had only twenty minutes to pack or were forced to take a trip like the characters, what would they take with them and why? Consider having the students put the items in a suitcase and photograph them with their phone, then share the images for discussion.

FIRST CHAPTERS

Give students the opportunity to read the first chapter of each book. Because of the narrative style of *Salt to the Sea*, have them read the first section for each of the story’s four narrators.

Break students into small groups and have them discuss the events that look to be unfolding for the characters introduced in the first chapter(s). Discuss prior knowledge of the setting of the story. Based on what they already know about the time and place of the novel, what kinds of things do they expect the characters to be confronted with? What kinds of themes should they expect to see?

OVERCOMING THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST

Ruta Sepetys’ novels take place during poignant periods in history, and the characters must overcome the challenges in their daily lives by also maneuvering around the obstacles placed in their way by events in the past, both recent and distant. In discussion or as writing prompts, and with a singular or a comparative focus on Sepetys’ novels, reflect on and analyze how the characters manage this task. Think about how it affects their interpersonal relationships in the story, how it causes them to change or to adapt as the story unfolds, and how things might have been different for them in other circumstances of time and place. Finally, consider how each of us must manage this same challenge in our own lives.

***Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.2. Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 7.1., S.L. 8.1., S.L. 9-10.1., S.L. 7.2., S.L. 8.2., S.L.9-10.2., S.L. 7.3., S.L. 8.3., S.L. 9-10.3.*



INTERDISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATIONS: TAKING SEPETYS' HISTORICAL FICTION BEYOND THE NARRATIVE

GEOGRAPHY AS CHARACTER

In all three stories, setting serves to be as much of a character in each story's unfolding as the human characters. Develop a character profile using an "I Am" poem for the key characteristics of the setting.

The purpose of this strategy is to help students demonstrate knowledge of a character in the novels by following written prompts to complete a poem about the character (in this case, the setting). Students can be given the prompts to follow on a worksheet, or alternatively, students may create an original slideshow using PowerPoint, Prezi, iMovie, Haiku Deck, etc. The lines of the "I Am" poem below have been adapted from a human character to reflect the nature of elements of setting. Consider these options for poem subjects: *BSoG—Siberia, the transport train, the camps of the gulag; OotE—the French Quarter, Marlowe's Bookstore, Willie's house, Shady Grove; SttS—East Prussia, Poland, Götenhafen, the Amber Room, the S.S. Wilhelm Gustloff.*

"I AM" POEM

FIRST STANZA:

I am (name the setting character)

I wonder (something the setting character is curious about in the events of the story)

I hear (sounds the setting character hears, or perhaps sounds that those beyond it cannot)

I see (sights the setting character sees, or perhaps sights that those beyond it cannot)

I know (something the setting character can claim to know based on events that occur within it)

SECOND STANZA:

I am not fooled by (something those in the setting character try to do or hide, but that the setting character won't allow)

I feel (something the setting character "experiences" due to events that unfold within it)

I touch (some unique way in which the setting character connects to those interacting with it)

I worry (something the setting character fears will happen if events continue as they are)

I cry (something tragic that the setting character knows or suspects will happen)

I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

THIRD STANZA:

I understand (some point of wisdom the setting character has due to its broad point of view)

I say (something that the setting character claims due to its history)

I dream (something the setting character wishes would happen based on its history)

I try (something the setting character would try to do if it could make its dream a reality)

I hope (something the setting character hopes those who interact with it will do to help achieve its dream)

I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD SUPPORTING CAST

In each story, there are important adult characters who guide the protagonists. Assign students to develop a "travel guide" kit for the adult characters who help to guide each story's heroines/heroes through the events. This can be done as a writing activity or by developing a drawing of the stories' "travel guides" replete with their gear. Examples for the characters fitting this activity would be: *BSoG—Elena Vilkas, Mr. Stalas; OotE—Willie, Cokie; SttS—"the Shoe Poet," Eva, Florian's father.*

YOUTH AND HISTORY

Sepetys' books give us the opportunity to consider the experiences of youth in both major historical events, such as Stalin's *gulag* or Europe's Eastern Front in World War II, and in day-to-day life in the past, such as New Orleans in the 1950s. Research youth history in these eras to learn more about the roles that young people have played in the course of events:

- Youth in Nazi Germany (think of both Florian and Albert as touchstones)
- Youth in occupied territories in war (Joana, Lina, and Emilia)
- Youth in the Stalinist era in the USSR (Lina, Jonas, Andrius, and Joana)
- Youth in the midst of political turmoil (Lina, Joana, and Florian)
- Youth and organized crime (Josie and Jesse)
- Young women and college life in the US in the 1950s (Josie and Charlotte)

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

In all three stories, key protagonists are driven by hope—be it as nuanced as dreams for a better life, as personal as hopes to get out of a bad situation, or as primal as simply surviving another week, or day, or hour. Develop a virtual “hope chest” for various characters in the three novels in which you place symbols or embodiments of their hopes and dreams, and correlate them with the things that are obstacles for achieving them. Connect this to a journal entry in which you identify objects or symbols that serve as sources of hope for you and that help to drive you to overcome obstacles.

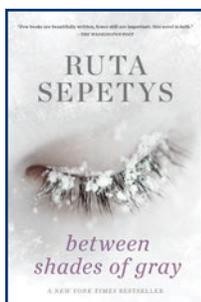
CHARACTER STUDY

Each of these novels takes us through a riveting narrative, and as we read we use our mind to picture the events as they unfold. Imagine that each novel is being made into a movie. Use posterboard, a website, or a video trailer to assign actors/actresses to play the key characters. But do this with a twist! The actors must not be actual performers, but instead be characters from other books, movies, or TV shows (e.g., rather than having Joana Vilkas be played by an actress like Alicia Vikander, she might be played by Talisa Stark from *Game of Thrones*—a principled character with a strong desire to help people, but who also has strong leadership qualities). For each character pair, provide a rationale for linking the characters.

BEATING THE ODDS

Protagonists in each novel must not only overcome the events surrounding them, but must also overcome aspects of their own backgrounds that we could easily argue are overwhelming, oppressive, and unfair. Develop a poster, short video, or some other product that emphasizes the personal traits that help these characters overcome the parts of their identity that are not of their doing, but must be dealt with as they move on with life. (Ex.: *BSoG*—all protagonists must overcome being identified by the NKVD as traitors, Lina and her family must overcome belonging to an undesirable nationality (Lithuanian), Andrius must overcome his mother's arrangement with the NKVD officers; *OotE*—Josie must overcome being the daughter of a prostitute with no known father, Jesse must overcome an alcoholic and abusive father, Patrick must overcome his father's descent into mental illness; *SttS*—Joana and Emilia must overcome being ethnic Balts in Nazi territory, Florian must overcome his guilt over working with Nazi art “collectors,” Emilia must overcome her rape and subsequent pregnancy.)

BETWEEN SHADES OF GRAY



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 of their location in her drawings 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?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

***Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 7.1., S.L. 8.1., S.L. 9-10.1., S.L. 7.2., S.L. 8.2., S.L. 9-10.2., S.L. 7.3., S.L. 8.3., S.L. 9-10.3. Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 7.1., W. 8.1., W. 9-10.1., W. 7.2. W. 8.2., W. 9-10.2., W. 7.3, W. 8.3, W. 9-10.3.*

1. When Jonas observes his mother smashing her beloved china and crystal before they depart their home, he asks her why she is destroying these items, and she replies, “Because I love them so much” (pg. 18). Do you consider this an act of rebellion? In your opinion, is her reaction appropriate? How might this be seen as an attempt to control the situation?
2. Using textual examples, what are some of the specific ways the deportees fight back against the NKVD? To what extent are these acts of resistance effective?
3. Being held prisoner brings out the best and worst in some of the deportees. Consider and discuss some of the ways that individuals extend their assistance and support on the deportation trains, in the Altai *kolkhoz*, and in the Tromfimovsk camp. How do these conditions qualify their actions—in other words, how does the context justify or not justify their actions?
4. Compare the way in which Lina tells the story to how it unfolds through the actions and words of some of the other characters—Elena, Andrius, Jonas, the bald man, even Nikolai Kretzky. How might the story be different for these narrators. What feelings does Lina’s candor evoke in you?
5. How does Sepetys use the embedded flashbacks to help readers understand why Lina’s family has been rounded up for punishment? Do you agree with their choices? Why or why not?
6. Upon arriving at the country train depot, the NKVD officers begin sorting the prisoners, and Lina asks, “Have you ever wondered what a human life is worth? That morning, my brother’s was worth a pocket watch” (pg. 35). To what extent do you interpret this as a turning point in the story?
7. Throughout the novel, Lina uses her passion for her art to remain connected to her family and the outside world. What are some of the specific ways she does this? Do you think this is a form of resistance to Stalinism?
8. Consider the consequences of not signing the documents that charge the prisoners of counterrevolutionary activities against the USSR. Do Lina’s family and the others who refuse to “confess” make the right decision? Why or why not?
9. Though Lina believes that Andrius and his mother are supplying information to the NKVD officers in exchange for food and shelter, she eventually learns that the arrangement comes at a far greater cost to his family. How does this knowledge of the lengths Andrius’ mother goes to in order to keep him safe ultimately affect him? How does Lina’s understanding of these sacrifices reshape her perception of him? His mother? Her mother? The circumstances of the camps and the prisoners?

RESEARCH TO BUILD AND PRESENT KNOWLEDGE

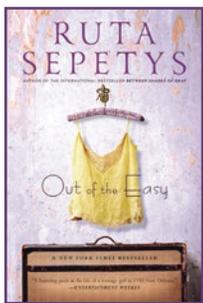
Correlates to Common Core Standard Literacy in History/Social Studies: Key Ideas and Details R.H. 6-8.1., 6-8.2., 6-8.3., R.H. 9-10.1., 9-10.2., 9-10.3. Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 7.7., W. 8.7., W. 9-10.7.

Communist regimes by design rely very heavily on scientific approaches and statistical analysis in economic, demographic, and state administration. In mathematics and science classes, investigate and utilize some of the data from the Soviet era for concept and skills application. Examples might include data related to changes in literacy rates, economic outputs (particularly in heavy industry, consumer goods, and agriculture), demographics and population shifts, technology development, transportation and communications development, climate/meteorology/geology in Siberia, and data related to the USSR in World War II. As much as possible, encourage students to relate these applications to events in the novel.

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

Investigate the style and works of Edvard Munch. The Norwegian symbolist/expressionist was the creative inspiration for Lina's future aspirations before deportation, and is her touchstone to intellectual sanity after it. Encourage students to not only explore why Munch's work was distinctive within the movements he is associated with, but why his work might have served as inspiration for Lina in both freedom and captivity.

OUT OF THE EASY



It's 1950, and as the French Quarter of New Orleans simmers with secrets, seventeen-year-old Josie Moraine is silently stirring a pot of her own. Known among locals as the daughter of a brothel prostitute, Josie wants more out of life than the Big Easy has to offer. She devises a plan get out, but a mysterious death in the Quarter leaves Josie tangled in an investigation that will challenge her allegiance to her mother, her conscience, and Willie Woodley, the brusque madam on Conti Street.

Josie is caught between the dream of an elite college and a clandestine underworld. New Orleans lures her in her quest for truth, dangling temptation at every turn, until events escalate to the ultimate test.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

***Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 7.1., S.L. 8.1., S.L. 9-10.1., S.L. 7.2., S.L. 8.2., S.L. 9-10.2., S.L. 7.3., S.L. 8.3., S.L. 9-10.3. Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 7.1., W. 8.1., W. 9-10.1., W. 7.2. W. 8.2., W. 9-10.2., W. 7.3, W. 8.3, W. 9-10.3.*

1. Unlike many of the people in her life, Josie is an avid reader. How does her love of reading bring her closer to certain characters and further separate her from others? Cite specific examples from the book.
2. Early in the book, Josie remembers a line written by Keats: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever" (pg. 41). Josie's life and her surroundings are filled with ugliness, but there are also things of beauty that bring her joy. How do you see those things fulfilling Keats' sentiment for her?
3. Throughout the novel's development, Josie tries desperately to avoid developing the darker, meaner characteristics of some of the characters closest to her. How well do you think she achieves this? Was this inevitable, or should she have allowed more (or less) of that in herself?
4. Josie says about herself, "No matter how I parted my hair, I couldn't part from the crack I had crawled out of" (pg. 258). To what degree do you think this defines Josie's character? Is she being too hard on herself, or is she inevitably and forever a product and reflection of the world she came from?

5. Josie and Jesse are both characters with very difficult pasts who could have easily chosen a lifestyle of “hustle and blow” like other people in their lives. What about that life do you think compelled them to choose a different path?
6. Secrets are an integral part of the story and of how events unfold. Consider Patrick’s secret—one that is never revealed explicitly in the text. What are we to make of the role of that secret in how Patrick deals with Josie, with his father and the bookstore, and with his own perception of himself? What are we to make of the fact that Josie never expresses that she knows Patrick’s secret?
7. Josie recalls the following quote from Keats: “I love you the more in that I believe you have liked me for my own sake and for nothing else” (pg. 284). How does that quotation apply to Josie’s relationship with Patrick? With her mother? With Willie? With Cokie? With Jesse? With Charlotte?
8. Why does Josie choose to change her name? What is the significance of the name she chooses?
9. The author chose to write this story solely from Josie’s point of view. How did that choice affect you as a reader? Select another character from the story and describe how your reading experience would have been different if the story had been told from her/his perspective.
10. Josie muses about how John Lockwell displays his history publicly in family photographs, how Willie keeps hers hidden in a drawer, and how she keeps her own history and dreams “on a list in my desk and, now, buried in the back garden” (pg. 237). Where do you keep your history and dreams? How does the “where” and “how” that characterize our keeping of history affect its role in our lives?

RESEARCH TO BUILD AND PRESENT KNOWLEDGE

Correlates to Common Core Standard Literacy in History/Social Studies: Key Ideas and Details R.H. 6-8.1., 6-8.2., 6-8.3., R.H. 9-10.1., 9-10.2., 9-10.3. Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 7.7., W. 8.7., W. 9-10.7.

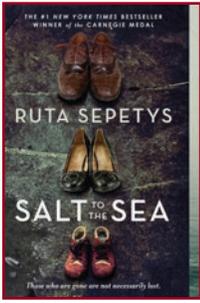
Josie’s story takes place in one of the iconic cities of America: New Orleans. The city has a reputation as an epicenter for culture and counterculture; celebration and tragedy; creativity and corruption; and being a place steeped in the history of America and a place to which many run to in order to escape their own history. Research some of the more famous (and infamous) elements of the history of New Orleans, and have students extend their investigations into how Josie’s story might have been similar or different if it had been set in another city at the turn of the 1950s, such as New York, San Francisco, Kansas City, Chicago, Seattle, or Washington, DC.

CREATIVE CONNECTION

***Correlates to Common Core Standard Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 7.4., W. 8.4., W. 9-10.4.*

Two icons of classic nineteenth century British literature—the Romantic poet John Keats, and Charles Dickens, who gave voice and imagery to the trials of life for those living through the Industrial Revolution—are referenced frequently in *Out of the Easy*. Read some excerpts from Keats’ poetry and Dickens’ novels and research some of the features of their own lives and times. Have students present “time machine” projects in which they describe how some of the characters in *Out of the Easy* might have lived or fared if they had been characters in the world of Keats and Dickens. These could be done as posterboards, using presentation software, or by producing web pages or video.

SALT TO THE SEA



Winter 1945. WWII. Four refugees. Four stories.

Each one born of a different homeland; each one hunted, and haunted, by tragedy, lies, war. As thousands desperately flock to the coast in the midst of a Soviet advance, four paths converge, vying for passage aboard the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, a ship that promises safety and freedom. But not all promises can be kept . . .

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

***Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 7.1., S.L. 8.1., S.L. 9-10.1., S.L. 7.2., S.L. 8.2., S.L. 9-10.2., S.L. 7.3., S.L. 8.3., S.L. 9-10.3. Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 7.1., W. 8.1., W. 9-10.1., W. 7.2., W. 8.2., W. 9-10.2., W. 7.3, W. 8.3, W. 9-10.3.*

1. Sepetys opens the novel by introducing each of the four protagonists with an association to a personal emotion—guilt, sense of fate, shame, and fear—that is correlated to a “hunter” motif. How does this help to link these characters to one another and to the events surrounding them in the story?
2. Shortly after Florian saves Emilia, she thinks that he will not want anything to do with her because she is a Pole—a lesser people in the eyes of the Germans. In what ways do the other characters perceive themselves as “lesser,” or marginalized? How does this perception of being less than they should be come into play during the course of the story?
3. Several of the characters work hard to conceal things about their experience during the war: Emilia hides her pregnancy, Florian hides his mission, Joana hides what happened to her family, Ingrid tries to hide her blindness, and so forth. How does hiding these things both help and hinder the characters as they proceed through the story? Do the extreme events of the evacuation affect the perception of trust for these characters?
4. Florian observes the poet shoemaker dancing and thinks, “He seemed like a wise man, a kind man” (pg. 88). In your opinion, is the shoemaker both of these things? Are there any other words you would offer as a description of him? In evaluating his actions throughout the course of the novel, what role does he serve for the group?
5. Florian’s father warns him not to become a traitor to his soul, and to make his own decisions. Dr. Lange calls him “the Reich’s best kept secret” (pg. 88). How do these words, from his father and from a father figure, affect Florian’s view of himself and the events of the story?
6. Describe the “Alfred” in the imaginary letters written to Hannelore. How is he different than the “Frick” observed by those with whom he works and interacts on the *Wilhelm Gustloff*? What does this dual perspective allow readers to understand about his character?
7. How are children affected by wars? Can you provide some examples, whether from war in general or *Salt to the Sea* specifically? What roles do young Klaus and Emilia’s baby play in the story? While they each suffer great loss, in what ways do these two children serve as symbols of hope for the people in their lives?
8. While discussing the inequality of Hitler’s position on Poles like Emilia while Joana is welcomed into Germany as she is “Germanizable,” Eva tells her, “Life’s not fair. You’re lucky. Do you think you have time to be moral?” (pg. 175). Consider Eva’s statement: do you agree? In times of moral crisis, in what ways do the actions and reactions of an individual define them? In extreme circumstances such as war, why may moral ambiguity be considered acceptable? To what consequences?

9. World War II was the first war in which civilians were more affected than soldiers. Considering what you learned from *Salt to the Sea*, what were some of the ways in which civilians were most greatly affected?

RESEARCH TO BUILD AND PRESENT KNOWLEDGE

Correlates to Common Core Standard Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 7.4., W. 8.4., W. 9-10.4.

Throughout World War II, the Nazis looted and plundered art from throughout Europe, including the Amber Room of the Catherine Palace in Leningrad, Soviet Union. Have students learn more about this dark time in history by watching the award-winning documentary *The Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe's Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War*. This film tells the epic story of the systematic theft, deliberate destruction, and miraculous survival of Europe's art treasures during the Third Reich and World War II. Considering the information learned from the film, have students discuss the following:

- Were the efforts of the Louvre to protect its art insufficient, sufficient, or excessive in the light of the impending fall of France?
- Why does art have that kind of hold on us? What does it say about mankind that we make that kind of effort to preserve and protect it, as well as keep it as part of our world?

Next, have students read the *Time* magazine article. "The Spoils of War: Looted Art" <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1719935,00.html>. Considering the role of art as a national treasure:

- Have students participate in a Socratic seminar and debate the claims of institutions that own art versus the claims of the countries of origin.

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

Sepetys uses a unique narrative style to tell the story of *Salt to the Sea*: a first-person narrative told by multiple characters. Discuss with students how this approach affects the reader's understanding of the story and its events as opposed to a more typical approach of using first-person narration with one character, or using third-person narration. Of course, this is a powerful way to compel the reader to consider how vastly different perspectives on the very same event or experience can be for each individual.

- Assign to student groups characters from a short story or another work using more traditional narration that they have previously read. Each group will then rewrite portions of the story from that character's first-person perspective. Then have groups come together to "retell" the story and to compare how manipulating the narration altered the story.
- Alternatively, students could do the same thing by providing a first-person narrative of a day in one of their classes, or the lunch period, or going to see a movie or an entertainment event.



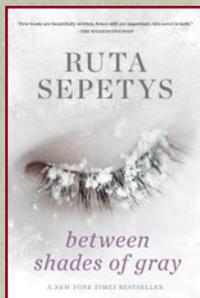
“RUTA SEPETYS ACTS AS CHAMPION OF THE INTERSTITIAL PEOPLE SO OFTEN IGNORED—WHOLE POPULATIONS LOST IN THE CRACKS OF HISTORY.”

—THE NEW YORK TIMES



RUTA SEPETYS was born and raised in Michigan in a family of artists, readers, and music lovers. She is the award-winning, internationally bestselling author of *Between Shades of Gray*, *Out of the Easy*, and #1 *New York Times* bestseller, Carnegie Medal winner *Salt to the Sea*. Her novels have been published in over fifty countries and thirty-six languages. Ruta lives with her family in Nashville, Tennessee. Follow her on Twitter at @RutaSepetys or visit her at www.rutasepetys.com.

PRAISE FOR RUTA SEPETYS

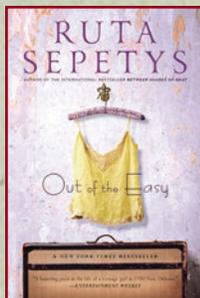


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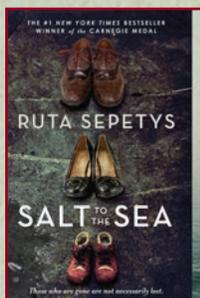


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