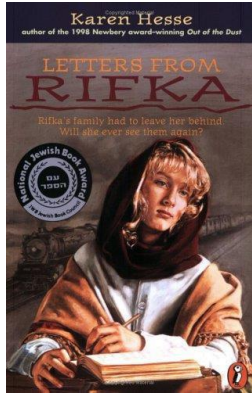


2012 Phoenix Award Winner

Letters from Rifka

by Karen Hesse

(Henry Holt and Company, 1992)



Twelve-year-old Rifka and her family suffer brutal treatment by Russian soldiers, embarrassing medical inspections, and severe case of typhus as they escape from Russia in 1919 to join family in America. Rifka, whose experiences are based on those of Karen Hesse's great-aunt, contracts ringworm and is retained in Europe for a year without her family. After her arrival on Ellis Island, Rifka's love for the seven-year-old Russian peasant, Ilya, further attests to her courage and generosity of spirit.

The novel is structured as a series of unmailed letters to her beloved cousin Tovah in a volume of Alexander Pushkin's poetry, with a Pushkin quotation at the beginning of each letter that deepens our appreciation of Rifka's Jewish and Russian heritage, as well as her desire for a new life in America. Hesse's prose in Rifka's voice captures both the tragic and joyful experiences of an adolescent in a world defined by hatred and uncertainty.

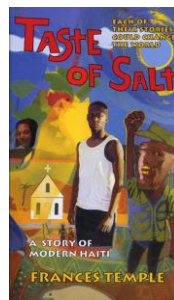
2012 Phoenix Honor Books



Morning Girl

by Michael Dorris

(Hyperion Books, 1992)



Taste of Salt:

A Story of Modern Haiti

by Frances Temple

(Orchard, 1992)