



Ruta Sepetys

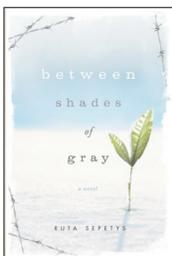
If you were to pick up one of Ruta Sepetys' two novels, *Between Shades of Gray* or *Out of the Easy*, be prepared to become engrossed. Her love of history and stories, along with her own past, come together to captivate you.

Sepetys grew up in Michigan, traveled the world, moved to California, and settled in Tennessee. After living in Paris and working in International finance, Sepetys made a major life change and moved to Los Angeles to work in the music industry. Fifteen years later, she was ready for another adventure and moved to Tennessee. It was here that she found the time to “slow down, take a breath, and read.” It was here that she found the time to write.

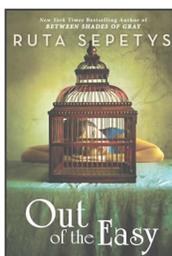
Inspired by her grandfather's escape from Stalin's regime in Lithuania, Sepetys began her research for *Between Shades of Gray*. Reading letters, interviewing survivors and family members, and traveling to Lithuania, the story of one girl's survival began to unfold.

In an interview with Huffington Post, Sepetys describes why she writes historical fiction: “Through historical fiction we find hidden histories and hidden heroes. We find stories that help us evaluate past tragedies and create hope for a more just future. And sometimes, like this time, we find the most important story. Our own.” Sepetys' novels do just that – they ask readers to evaluate the past and hope for a more just future.

Bibliography



Between Shades of Gray (2011). At 15, Lina's life changes. Soviet soldiers raid her home in middle of a summer night, sentencing her father to death in a prison camp and deporting Lina, along with her mother and brother. In this emotional historical fiction novel, Sepetys masterfully tells of Lina's long fight for her life, struggle to honor her family, and deep love for her father. Readers experience empathy for Lina as she digs in the frozen ground for potatoes, watches people she loves disappear, and struggles to honor her family in the midst of such adversity. Throughout it all, there is a sense of hope that Lina will survive.



Out of the Easy (2013). Life in New Orleans in the 1950's was a grand adventure for many, with parties and live music. For Josie, the daughter of a prostitute, however, it was far from it. Josie works for the famous madam, Willie, by running errands and cleaning the brothel. She works hard in school and dreams of a better life, one far from her world in New Orleans. All of these dreams have to be kept a secret, as Josie is “needed” in New Orleans, and many people would try to stop her from leaving. In the midst of these major life decisions, a man is found dead in the brothel. Investigating his murder leads to more questions about Josie's past and her future.

Awards

- ALA Notable Book (*Between the Shades of Gray*)
- IRA Children's and Young Adult's Book Award (*Between the Shades of Gray*)
- YALSA's Top 10 Best Fiction For Young Adults (*Between the Shades of Gray* and *Out of the Easy*)
- Notable Books For a Global Society Award (*Between the Shades of Gray*)
- New York Times Best Seller (*Between the Shades of Gray* and *Out of the Easy*)
- A Carnegie Medal Nominee (*Between the Shades of Gray* and *Out of the Easy*)
- Finalist for the Carnegie Medal in the UK
- Lithuanian Awards (*Between the Shades of Gray*)
 - Awarded Cross of the Knight of the Order
 - Winner of the National Patriot Award
 - Winner of the Global Lithuanian Leader Award

Links of Interest

- <http://rutasepetys.com>
Ruta Sepetys' Website
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ruta-sepetys/post_4027_b_2191826.html
Interview with Ruta Sepetys in Huffington Post
- <http://www.betweenshadesofgray.com/index.php>
Official Website for *Between the Shades of Gray*

Ruta Sepetys is a member of USBBY. Why not join her?



This featured author profile was prepared by Bettie Parsons Barger, June 2015.