

## Cultural Elements

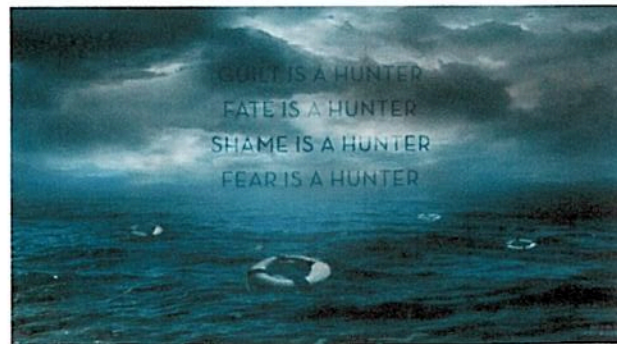
The story takes place in East Prussia during World War II. With the reader being able to follow characters right from their point of view, we get to see many different countries being mentioned. Within the first 20 pages, we see at least 5 countries being named. Lithuania, East Prussia, Russia, Germany, and Poland.



Through the story we see how important the character's home country is to them and the pride they take from being from there

## Book Review

We start off by following the lives of four characters, Joana, Alfred, Florian, and Emilia. Each one of them has a secret that is following them throughout the war. They all have a common goal of making it onto the *Wilhelm Gustloff* where they are promised freedom. Obviously, not all promises can be kept. We follow each character through their relationships, hardships, and more. We hope for them to reach freedom just as much as they do.

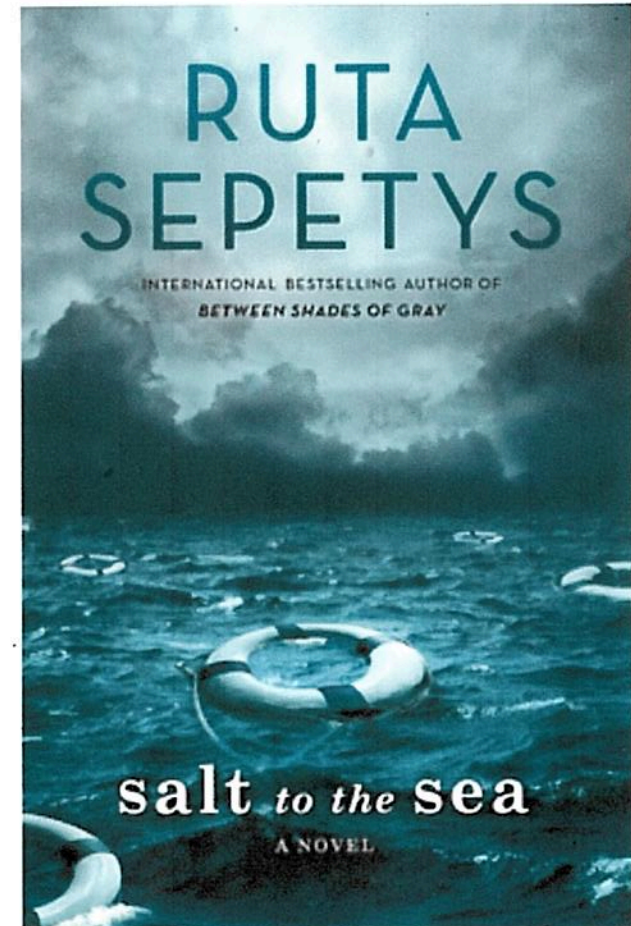


Sources: Salt to the Sea, Ruta Sepetys

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/14/books/review/salt-to-the-sea-by-ruta-sepetys.html>

# Salt to the Sea

Ruta Sepetys



Paige Gibb

Hour 4

## Relevant Quotes

“My throat tightened. I swallowed, reminding myself she wasn’t really gone. I felt Mama among the trees. I could feel her touch and hear her laughter in the leaves. So I talked to the trees as I walked, hoping their branches would carry messages up to Mama and let her know what I had done, and most of all, that I would try to be brave” (59).

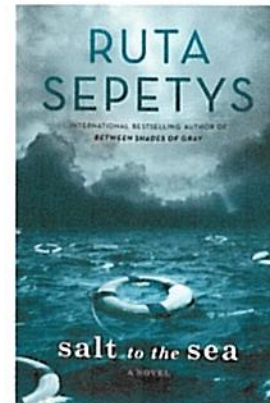
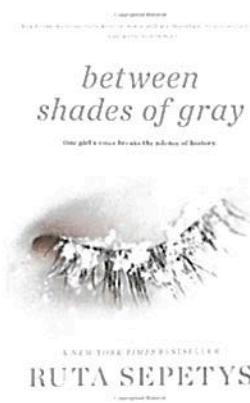


“Poet didn’t know the truth. I had already preserved myself. I had left Lithuania and those I loved behind. To die” (111).

“The *Wilhelm Gustloff* was pregnant with lost souls conceived of war. They would crowd into her belly and she would give birth to their freedom. But did anyone realize? The ship was christened for a man, Wilhelm Gustloff. My father had told me about him. He had been the leader of the Nazi Party in Switzerland. He was murdered. The ship was born of death” (218).

## If you read *Between Shades of Gray*, you will like *Salt to the Sea*

Both written by Ruta Sepetys, *Salt to the Sea* and *Between Shades of Gray* are similar to each other. In *Between Shades of Gray*, we follow 15 year old Lina Vilkas when she was deported from her home in Lithuania. Throughout *Between Shades of Gray* we get mention of Lina’s cousin, Joana. In *Salt to the Sea*, Joana shares a secret about Lina that could ruin her life. It is interesting to read about the both of them and how they similarly get through the tragedy of war.



## Historical Significance

Although the story is fiction, there are some parts of it that are an actual part of our history. If you look up “January, 30th, 1945” you will find the very real history of what happened to the *Wilhelm Gustloff*. Ruta Sepetys’ father was a refugee in war and was hoping to return to Lithuania. *Salt to the Sea* feels very real because Sepetys has personal stories of this tragedy. Sepetys writes stories about history so that people will learn about it and she hopes that people won’t forget.

