

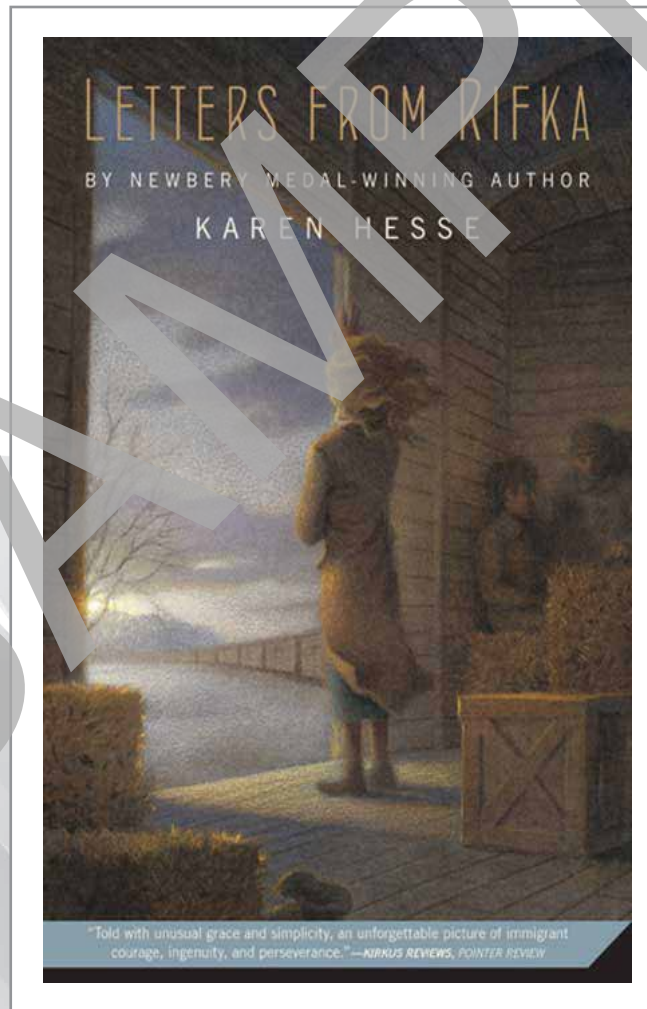


STUDENT PACKET

GRADES 6-8

Letters from Rifka

Karen Hesse



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Letters from Rifka

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NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Study Questions

Directions: Write a brief answer to each study question as you read the book at home or in class. Use the questions for review before group discussions and before your final test.

Letters 1-7, pages 1-50

1. Why does Nathan desert from the Russian Army?
2. What are the consequences of Nathan's desertion if he is found by soldiers in the Russian Army?
3. Why are the Nebrots leaving Russia at this time?
4. What does Mrs. Nebrot want Rifka to pack in her rucksack for the family?
5. What does Rifka overhear the guards talking about at the train station?
What is your opinion of the guards?
6. Why is Rifka chosen to be the member of the family to divert the Russian soldiers away from the boxcars where the others are hiding?
7. For whom are the guards looking?
8. What gift does her Uncle Avrum tell Rifka that she possesses?
9. How does Uncle Avrum get the guards away from the train?
10. Why do the guards go with Uncle Avrum?
11. Why is Rifka writing letters about her journey to her cousin Tovah?
12. What happens when the train reaches the Polish border?
13. What does Rifka think of as she and her mother wait outside the boxcar?
14. How does Rifka feel when the Polish doctor looks at her?
15. What does Rifka discover when the rucksack is returned to her?
16. How does Mrs. Nebrot react to Rifka's discovery?
17. What do you think Mrs. Nebrot means by her comment to Rifka?
18. Has Rifka ever been in a country other than Russia?
19. What might be some of the reasons behind the Russian travel restriction?
20. Has Tovah's family been treated by the Russians in the same manner as the Nebrot family?
21. What is Rifka's impression of Poland as the train heads toward Warsaw?
22. Why do the Nebrots get off the train at Motziv, Poland?

Name _____

Puzzlement Which Vocabulary Word Is It?

exile 1	flickering 2	distract 2	emerged 3
deserts 4	regiment 4	riddance 4	precaution 5
clutched 7	pivoted 10	involve 13	influence 14
shalom 15	stricken 16	fortunate 16	fierceness 17
waning 17	justified 17	fumigation 19	casual 21
mortality 21	tormented 21	lapsed 24	fretted 24

Directions: The object of this activity is to discover the vocabulary words from whose letters other words are made. Read the clue words given. Decide which of the vocabulary words listed above furnished the letters of the clue words. The first one is done for you.

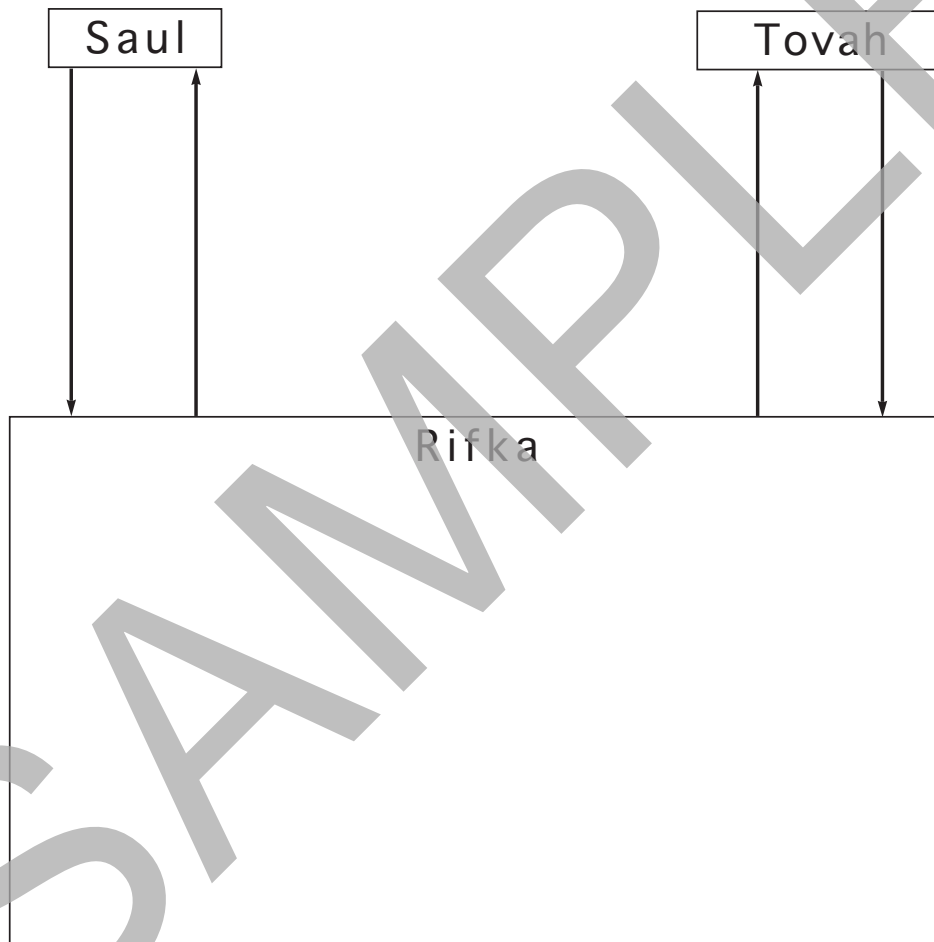
Clue Words	Number of Letters in Word	Vocabulary Word
1. just, fed, tied, sit, die	9	justified
2. royal, trail, ram, lit, oral	9	_____
3. nice, reef, sense, fire, cress	10	_____
4. cat, run, pine, tore, note	10	_____
5. lick, ring, fig, elf, neck	10	_____
6. goat, nut, fig, tag, mat	10	_____
7. dent, more, note, ten, rot	9	_____
8. tune, rote, fun, ant, nut	9	_____
9. nine, fin, elf, lice, cue	9	_____
10. mint, rig, meet, net, time	8	_____

Directions: Create three puzzlements of your own from different vocabulary words. Trade with a partner.

Name _____

Written Response

Directions: Think of words and phrases that describe Rifka and put them under her name. Then think of words and phrases that tell how Rifka feels about Tovah and about Saul, and about how they feel about her. Label the arrows with these words and phrases.



Directions: Use the notes you have written on the chart above and write a character sketch of Rifka. (A character sketch is a brief, vivid description of a person. It includes physical characteristics and personality characteristics.)

Would you like to have someone like Rifka as a friend? Why or why not?