

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Mary Klein

School: OLMS

Book Title: Salt to the Sea

Genre: historical fiction

Author: Ruta Sepetys

Pages: 448

Publisher: Penguin Books

Copyright: 2017

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and Summary Citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.) *Salt to the Sea* is a 2016 **historical** fiction young adult novel by Ruta Sepetys. It tells the story of four individuals in World War II who make their way to the ill-fated MV **Wilhelm Gustloff**. The story also touches on the disappearance of *The Amber Room*, a work of art stolen by the Nazis that has never been recovered.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum blueprints and/or State standards. RL 7.10, 7.1, 7.2, 7.6

Include two professional review of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form). Reviews should suggest an appropriate grade-level or grade-band.

Review #1

Kirkus Reviews (November 15, 2015)

January 1945: as Russians advance through East Prussia, four teens' lives converge in hopes of escape. Returning to the successful formula of her highly lauded debut, *Between Shades of Gray* (2011), Sepetys combines research (described in extensive backmatter) with well-crafted fiction to bring to life another little-known story: the sinking (from Soviet torpedoes) of the German ship *Wilhelm Gustloff*. Told in four alternating voices--Lithuanian nurse Joana, Polish Emilia, Prussian forger Florian, and German soldier Alfred--with often contemporary cadences, this stints on neither history nor fiction. The three sympathetic refugees and their motley companions (especially an orphaned boy and an elderly shoemaker) make it clear that while the *Gustloff* was a German ship full of German civilians and soldiers during World War II, its sinking was still a tragedy. Only Alfred, stationed on the *Gustloff*, lacks sympathy; almost a caricature, he is self-delusional, unlikable, a Hitler worshiper. As a vehicle for exposition, however, and a reminder of Germany's role in the war, he serves an invaluable purpose that almost makes up for the mustache-twirling quality of his petty villainy. The inevitability of the ending (including the loss of several characters) doesn't change its poignancy, and the short chapters and slowly revealed back stories for each character guarantee the pages keep turning. Heartbreaking, historical, and a little bit hopeful. (author's note, research and sources, maps) (Historical fiction. 12-16)

Review #2

KIRKUS REVIEW

January 1945: as Russians advance through East Prussia, four teens' lives converge in hopes of escape.

Returning to the successful formula of her highly lauded debut, *Between Shades of Gray* (2011), Sepetys combines research (described in extensive backmatter) with well-crafted fiction to bring to life another little-known story: the sinking (from Soviet torpedoes) of the German ship *Wilhelm Gustloff*. Told in four alternating voices—Lithuanian nurse Joana, Polish Emilia, Prussian forger Florian, and German soldier Alfred—with often contemporary cadences, this stints on neither history nor fiction. The three sympathetic refugees and their motley companions (especially an orphaned boy and an elderly shoemaker) make it clear that while the *Gustloff* was a German ship full of German civilians and soldiers during World War II, its sinking was still a tragedy. Only Alfred, stationed on the *Gustloff*, lacks sympathy; almost a caricature, he is self-delusional, unlikable, a Hitler worshiper. As a vehicle for exposition, however, and a reminder of Germany's role in the war, he serves an invaluable purpose that almost makes up for the mustache-twirling quality of his petty villainy. The inevitability of the ending (including the loss of several characters) doesn't change its poignancy, and the short chapters and slowly revealed back stories for each character guarantee the pages keep turning.

Heartbreaking, historical, and a little bit hopeful. (author's note, research and sources, maps) (*Historical fiction. 12-16*)

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: Fever

Author: Laurie Halse Anderson

Title: Stones in Water

Author: Donna Napoli

Title:

Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

War, refugees

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading Level of this Title (if applicable):

Suggested Professional Literacy Review Sources:

- School Library Journal
- Horn Book
- Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books
- VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)
- Library Journal
- Book Links
- Publisher's Weekly
- Booklist
- Kirkus Review
- Wilson Library Catalog
- English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)
- The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)
- Literature for Today's Young Adults

Signatures:

Teacher:	<u>Mary Klein</u>	Date:	<u>12/20/16</u>
Department Head:	<u>[Signature]</u>	Date:	<u>12/20/16</u>
Building Administrator:	<u>[Signature]</u>	Date:	<u>12/20/16</u>
Curriculum Supervisor:	<u>[Signature]</u>	Date:	<u>3/22/24</u>