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# Letters From Rifka Characters

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Letters from Rifka

## KRAMER KENDALL

*Phoenix Rising* Penguin

A tender story about a tough-as-nails girl forced to take one small step towards understanding during the summer of 1969. "Muscle Man McGinty is a squirrely runt, a lying snake, and a pitiful excuse for a ten-year old.....the problem is that no one knows it but me. In the entire town of Massapequa Park, only I can see him for what he really is. A phony."

Tamara Ann Simpson is determined to expose Muscle Man McGinty, a foster boy new to her neighborhood, for the liar that she knows he is. Muscle Man tells the other kids his uncle is Neil Armstrong and he even has the audacity to challenge the entire block to a kickball game. So, why is Tamara the only one who can see through this kid? It's the summer of 1969 and things are changing in Tamara's little town of Massapequa, Long Island, and in the world. Perhaps Tamara can take one small step towards a bit of compassion and understanding.

*Kiss the Dust* Citadel Press

An e-original short story that sets the stage for

bestselling author Diane Chamberlain's novel *Necessary Lies* (September 2013). The *First Lie* gives readers an early glimpse into the life of thirteen-year-old Ivy Hart. It's 1958 in rural North Carolina, where Ivy lives with her grandmother and sister on a tobacco farm. As tenant farmers, Ivy and her family don't have much freedom, though she and her best friend, Henry, often sneak away in search of adventure...and their truest selves. But life on the farm takes a turn when Ivy's teenage sister gives birth—all the while maintaining her silence about the baby's father. Soon Ivy finds herself navigating the space between adolescence and adulthood as she tries to unravel a dark web of family secrets and make sense of her ever-evolving life in the segregated South. Advance praise for Diane Chamberlain's *Necessary Lies*: "It will steal your heart."—Katrina Kittle, author of *The Blessings of the Animals* "An emotional powerhouse." —Mary Alice Monroe, New York Times bestselling author of *Beach House Memories* "Enthralling...[it] transfixed me from the

very first pages, and its vivid and sympathetic characters haunted me long after the last."—Christina Schwarz, New York Times bestselling author of *Drowning Ruth Wish on a Unicorn* Macmillan + ORM "Works examined include *Out of the Dust*, *The Music of Dolphins*, *Letters from Rifka*, *A Light in the Storm*, *The Civil War Diary of Amelia Martin*, and *A Time of Angels*. Each book involves issues of family; challenges and decisions; difficulties of life; strong, independent female characters; differences in people; and writing and the use of language. Teachers, librarians and teen readers will find this an intriguing look into the writing of Karen Hesse."--Jacket.

*Thornyhold* Turtleback Books

Tate is overjoyed when a scrawny mutt turns up in the yard one day. She even persuades Mam and Pap to let her keep Sable, named for her dark, silky fur. But before long, the dog begins to cause trouble with the neighbors and Mam and Pap decide the dog must go. But Tate doesn't give up easily . . . and neither does Sable. *Night Job* Bloomsbury Publishing USA

Pura Belpré Award Winner Ruth Behar's inspiring story of a Jewish girl who escapes Poland to make a new life in Cuba, where she works to rescue the rest of her family. The situation is getting dire for Jews in Poland on the eve of World War II. Esther's father has fled to Cuba, and she is the first one to join him. It's heartbreaking to be separated from her beloved sister, so Esther promises to write down everything that happens until they're reunited. And she does, recording both the good--the kindness of the Cuban people and her discovery of a valuable hidden talent--and the bad: the fact that Nazism has found a foothold even in Cuba. Esther's evocative letters are full of her appreciation for life and reveal a resourceful, determined girl with a rare ability to bring people together, all the while striving to get the rest of their family out of Poland before it's too late. Based on Ruth Behar's family history, this compelling story celebrates the resilience of the human spirit in the most challenging times.

**Stand Tall** Candlewick Press  
 Kiss the Dust by Elizabeth Laird is an unforgettable,

award-winning novel of conflict, persecution and the hardships faced by refugees. Tara is an ordinary teenager. Although her country, Kurdistan, is caught up in a war, the fighting seems far away. It hasn't really touched her. Until now. The secret police are closing in. Tara and her family must flee to the mountains with only the few things they can carry. It is a hard and dangerous journey - but their struggles have only just begun. Will anywhere feel like home again?

Neil Armstrong Is My Uncle and Other Lies  
Muscle Man McGinty Told Me Scholastic Inc.

A classic novel with a time-tested model for how to raise a happy, well-educated family "Do you know that being a stranger is the hardest thing that can happen to anyone in all this world?" — Gene Stratton-Porter, *Laddie: A True Blue Story*

*Laddie: A True Blue Story* by Gene Stratton-Porter is a charming fictionalization of the author's own childhood. Featuring a loving family on a small farm, this delightful novel should not be missed. This Xist Classics edition has been professionally formatted for e-readers with a linked table of

contents. This eBook also contains a bonus book club leadership guide and discussion questions. We hope you'll share this book with your friends, neighbors and colleagues and can't wait to hear what you have to say about it.

Miss Buncle's Book Simon and Schuster

Sick with influenza during the 1918 epidemic and separated from her two sisters, a young Jewish girl living in Boston relies on the help of an old German man, and her visions of angels, to get better and to reunite herself with her family.

Just Juice Feiwel & Friends

Charming and pretty Bidy Forrester lives in China with her parents, medical missionaries who bring healing to the bodies and souls of the Chinese. Because of the poor climate condition, Bidy has to leave China and return to England with only one friend, the Lord Jesus, and with a little green frog, her most valuable and cherished possession. Bidy knows the meaning of a surrendered life—and lives it! She wants always to please God, to trust Him, to walk with Him, to give Him her all. She brings warmth and light to a cold, dark England,

witnessing, with her childish simplicity, everywhere she goes. In simple faith she asks God for the money for a hospital which her father needs in China. Then she puts her faith to work, giving her all to the Lord, even her little green frog. Her radiant testimony wins many hearts to Jesus, and brings in all the money needed for the hospital. The Little Green Frog displays the power of prayer, and the price and purpose of true Christianity. A wonderfully wholesome book.

**Laddie: A True Blue Story** Xist Publishing

For every athlete or sports fanatic who knows she's just as good as the guys. This is for fans of *The Running Dream* by Wendelin Van Draanen, *Grace, Gold, and Glory* by Gabrielle Douglass and *Breakaway: Beyond the Goal* by Alex Morgan. The summer before Caleb and Tessa enter high school, friendship has blossomed into a relationship . . . and their playful sports days are coming to an end. Caleb is getting ready to try out for the football team, and Tessa is training for cross-country. But all their structured plans derail in the final flag game when they lose. Tessa doesn't want to end

her career as a loser. She really enjoys playing, and if she's being honest, she likes it even more than running cross-country. So what if she decided to play football instead? What would happen between her and Caleb? Or between her two best friends, who are counting on her to try out for cross-country with them? And will her parents be upset that she's decided to take her hobby to the next level? This summer Caleb and Tessa figure out just what it means to be a boyfriend, girlfriend, teammate, best friend, and someone worth cheering for. "A great next choice for readers who have enjoyed Catherine Gilbert Murdock's *Dairy Queen* and Miranda Kenneally's *Catching Jordan*."—SLJ "Fast-paced football action, realistic family drama, and sweet romance...[will have] readers looking for girl-powered sports stories...find[ing] plenty to like."—Booklist "Tessa's ferocious competitiveness is appealing."—Kirkus Reviews "[The Football Girl] serve[s] to illuminate the appropriately complicated emotions both of a young romance and of pursuing a dream. Heldring writes with

insight and restraint."—The Horn Book

Letters from Rifka Moody Publishers

The National Book Award-winning novel about one remarkable young woman who dares to defy fate, perfect for readers who enjoyed *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park or *Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai. Like many girls her age in India, thirteen-year-old Koly faces her arranged marriage with hope and courage. But Koly's story takes a terrible turn when in the wake of the ceremony, she discovers she's been horribly misled—her life has been sold for a dowry. Can she forge her own future, even in the face of time-worn tradition? Perfect for schools and classrooms, this universally acclaimed, bestselling, and award-winning novel by master of historical fiction Gloria Whelan is a gripping tale of hope that will transport readers of all ages.

Letters from Rifka by Karen Hesse Harper Collins

A 2015 Whitney Award Nominee! A powerful story of loss, second chances, and first love, reminiscent of Sarah Dessen and John Green. When Oakley Nelson loses

her older brother, Lucas, to cancer, she thinks she'll never recover. Between her parents' arguing and the battle she's fighting with depression, she feels nothing inside but a hollow emptiness. When Mom suggests they spend a few months in California with Aunt Jo, Oakley isn't sure a change of scenery will alter anything, but she's willing to give it a try. In California, Oakley discovers a sort of safety and freedom in Aunt Jo's beach house. Once they're settled, Mom hands her a notebook full of letters addressed to her—from Lucas. As Oakley reads one each day, she realizes how much he loved her, and each letter challenges her to be better and to continue to enjoy her life. He wants her to move on. If only it were that easy. But then a surfer named Carson comes into her life, and Oakley is blindsided. He makes her feel again. As she lets him in, she is surprised by how much she cares for him, and that's when things get complicated. How can she fall in love and be happy when Lucas never got the chance to do those very same things? With her brother's dying words as guidance,

Oakley knows she must learn to listen and trust again. But will she have to leave the past behind to find happiness in the future? Sky Pony Press, with our Good Books, Racehorse and Arcade imprints, is proud to publish a broad range of books for young readers—picture books for small children, chapter books, books for middle grade readers, and novels for young adults. Our list includes bestsellers for children who love to play Minecraft; stories told with LEGO bricks; books that teach lessons about tolerance, patience, and the environment, and much more. While not every title we publish becomes a New York Times bestseller or a national bestseller, we are committed to books on subjects that are sometimes overlooked and to authors whose work might not otherwise find a home.

Tulsa Burning Scholastic Inc.

'A comfortable chair and a Mary Stewart: total heaven. I'd rather read her than most other authors.' Harriet Evans The rambling house called Thornyhold is like something out of a fairy tale. Left to Gilly Ramsey by the cousin whose

occasional visits brightened her childhood, the cottage, set deep in a wild wood, has come just in time to save her from a bleak future. With its reputation for magic and its resident black cat, Thornyhold offers Gilly more than just a new home. It offers her a chance to start over. The old house, with its tufts of rosy houseleek and the spreading gilt of the lichens, was beautiful. Even the prisoning hedges were beautiful, protective with their rusty thorns, their bastions of holly and juniper, and at the corners, like towers, their thick columns of yews. 'Mary Stewart is magic' New York Times 'One of the great British storytellers of the 20th century' Independent Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party Square Fish From Newbery media winner Karen Hesse comes an unforgettable story of an immigrant family's journey to America. "America," the girl repeated. "What will you do there?" I was silent for a little time. "I will do everything there," I answered. Rifka knows nothing about America when she flees from Russia with her family in 1919. But she dreams that in the new country

she will at last be safe from the Russian soldiers and their harsh treatment of the Jews. Throughout her journey, Rifka carries with her a cherished volume of poetry by Alexander Pushkin. In it, she records her observations and experiences in the form of letters to Tovah, the beloved cousin she has left behind. Strong-hearted and determined, Rifka must endure a great deal: humiliating examinations by doctors and soldiers, deadly typhus, separation from all she has ever known and loved, murderous storms at sea, detainment on Ellis Island--and if this is not enough, the loss of her glorious golden hair. Based on a true story from the author's family, *Letters from Rifka* presents a real-life heroine with an uncommon courage and unsinkable spirit.

*The First Lie* Delacorte Press

A USA TODAY BESTSELLER! "A powerful debut that proves the threads that interweave our lives can withstand time and any tide, and bind our hearts forever."—Susanna Kearsley, New York Times bestselling author of *Belleweather* and *The*

*Vanished Days* A historical novel inspired by true events, Kelli Estes's brilliant and atmospheric debut is a poignant tale of two women determined to do the right thing, highlighting the power of our own stories. The smallest items can hold centuries of secrets...

While exploring her aunt's island estate, Inara Erickson is captivated by an elaborately stitched piece of fabric hidden in the house. The truth behind the silk sleeve dated back to 1886, when Mei Lien, the lone survivor of a cruel purge of the Chinese in Seattle found refuge on Orcas Island and shared her tragic experience by embroidering it. As Inara peels back layer upon layer of the centuries of secrets the sleeve holds, her life becomes interwoven with that of Mei Lein. Through the stories Mei Lein tells in silk, Inara uncovers a tragic truth that will shake her family to its core—and force her to make an impossible choice. Should she bring shame to her family and risk everything by telling the truth, or tell no one and dishonor Mei Lien's memory? A touching and tender book for fans of Marie Benedict, Susanna Kearsley, and

Duncan Jepson, *The Girl Who Wrote in Silk* is a dual-time period novel that explores how a delicate piece of silk interweaves the past and the present, reminding us that today's actions have far reaching implications. Praise for *The Girl Who Wrote in Silk*: "A beautiful, elegiac novel, as finely and delicately woven as the title suggests. Kelli Estes spins a spellbinding tale that illuminates the past in all its brutality and beauty, and the humanity that binds us all together." —Susan Wiggs, New York Times bestselling author of *The Beekeeper's Ball* "A touching and tender story about discovering the past to bring peace to the present." —Duncan Jepson, author of *All the Flowers in Shanghai* "Vibrant and tragic, *The Girl Who Wrote in Silk* explores a horrific, little-known era in our nation's history. Estes sensitively alternates between Mei Lien, a young Chinese-American girl who lived in the late 1800s, and Inara, a modern recent college grad who sets Mei Lien's story free." —Margaret Dilloway, author of *How to Be an American Housewife* and *Sisters of Heart and Snow*  
**The Football Girl**

Scholastic Inc.  
 The summer of 1972, before I turned nine, danger began knocking on doors all over China. Nine-year-old Ling has a very happy life. Her parents are both dedicated surgeons at the best hospital in Wuhan, and her father teaches her English as they listen to Voice of America every evening on the radio. But when one of Mao's political officers moves into a room in their apartment, Ling begins to witness the gradual disintegration of her world. In an atmosphere of increasing mistrust and hatred, Ling fears for the safety of her neighbors, and soon, for herself and her family. For the next four years, Ling will suffer more horrors than many people face in a lifetime. Will she be able to grow and blossom under the oppressive rule of Chairman Mao? Or will fighting to survive destroy her spirit—and end her life? *Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party* is a 2008 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

*Marilyn: Her Life in Her Own Words* Scarecrow Press

Karen Hesse has achieved many honors for her more than twenty books over

the course of her award-winning career: the Newbery Medal, the Scott O'Dell Historical Fiction Award, the MacArthur Fellowship "Genius" Award, and the Christopher Medal. Her novels burn with intensity, and keenly felt, deeply researched, and are memorable for their imagination and intelligence. So it is with great pride and excitement that we present Karen Hesse's first novel in over five years: *Brooklyn Bridge*. It's the summer of 1903 in Brooklyn and all fourteen-year-old Joseph Michtom wants is to experience the thrill, the grandeur, and the electricity of the new amusement park at Coney Island. But that doesn't seem likely. Ever since his parents—Russian immigrants—invented the stuffed Teddy Bear five months ago, Joseph's life has turned upside down. No longer do the Michtom's gather family and friends around the kitchen table to talk. No longer is Joseph at leisure to play stickball with the guys. Now, Joseph works. And complains. And falls in love. And argues with Mama and Papa. And falls out of love. And hopes. Joseph hopes he'll see Coney Island soon. He

hopes that everything will turn right-side up again. He hopes his luck hasn't run out—because you never know. Through all the warmth, the sadness, the frustration, and the laughter of one big, colorful family, Newbery Medalist Karen Hesse builds a stunning story of the lucky, the unlucky, and those in between, and reminds us that our lives—all our lives—are fragile, precious, and connected. *Brooklyn Bridge* is a 2009 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

**Mieko and the Fifth Treasure** Sourcebooks, Inc.

Now I didn't believe a broken-down old unicorn could make wishes come true . . . not for a minute. But what if it could? Mags has a lot to wish for—a nice house with a mama who isn't tired out from work; a normal little sister; a brother who doesn't mooch for food; and, once in a while, she'd like some new clothes for school. When her sister Hannie finds a stuffed unicorn, Mags's wishes start to come true. She knows the unicorn can't really be magic, but she won't let anything ruin her newfound luck—even if it means telling her own sister to believe

something that can't possibly be true.

*The Man Who Loved*

*Clowns* Henry Holt and Company (BYR)

Newbery Medalist Karen Hesse recreates the body and soul-renewing experience of a summer downpour after a sweltering city heat wave. "Come on, rain!" Tess pleads to the sky as listless vines and parched plants droop in the endless heat. Up and down the block, cats pant while heat wavers off tar patches in the broiling alleyway. More than anything, Tess hopes for rain. And when it comes, she and her friends are ready for a surprising and joyous

celebration....Through exquisite language and acute observation, Newbery medalist Karen Hesse recreates the glorious experience of a quenching rainstorm on a sweltering summer day. Jon J Muth's masterful and lyrical watercolors perfectly reflect the spirit of the text.

**Homeless Bird** Simon and Schuster

The day he buried his pa, Nobe Chase lost everything-his father, his home, and his dog, Rex. Worst of all, he had to move into town to live with Sheriff Leonard-dog killer, wife stealer, and secret law-breaker of all sorts. That day, Nobe found a new purpose for his life-revenge. Hate

takes over his life, burning out of control inside him. Nobe learns how dangerous hate can be when it is unleashed in a fury of fire and gunpowder during a race riot in nearby Tulsa. When the violence spills over into his hometown, Nobe must decide what kind of man he is going to become-one driven by vengeance or one driven by courage. Based on true events in Tulsa, Oklahoma, during May of 1921, Anna Myers has produced a powerful novel about a young man who must wrestle with his past and find the strength to pull free from the poisonous grip of hatred and abuse.