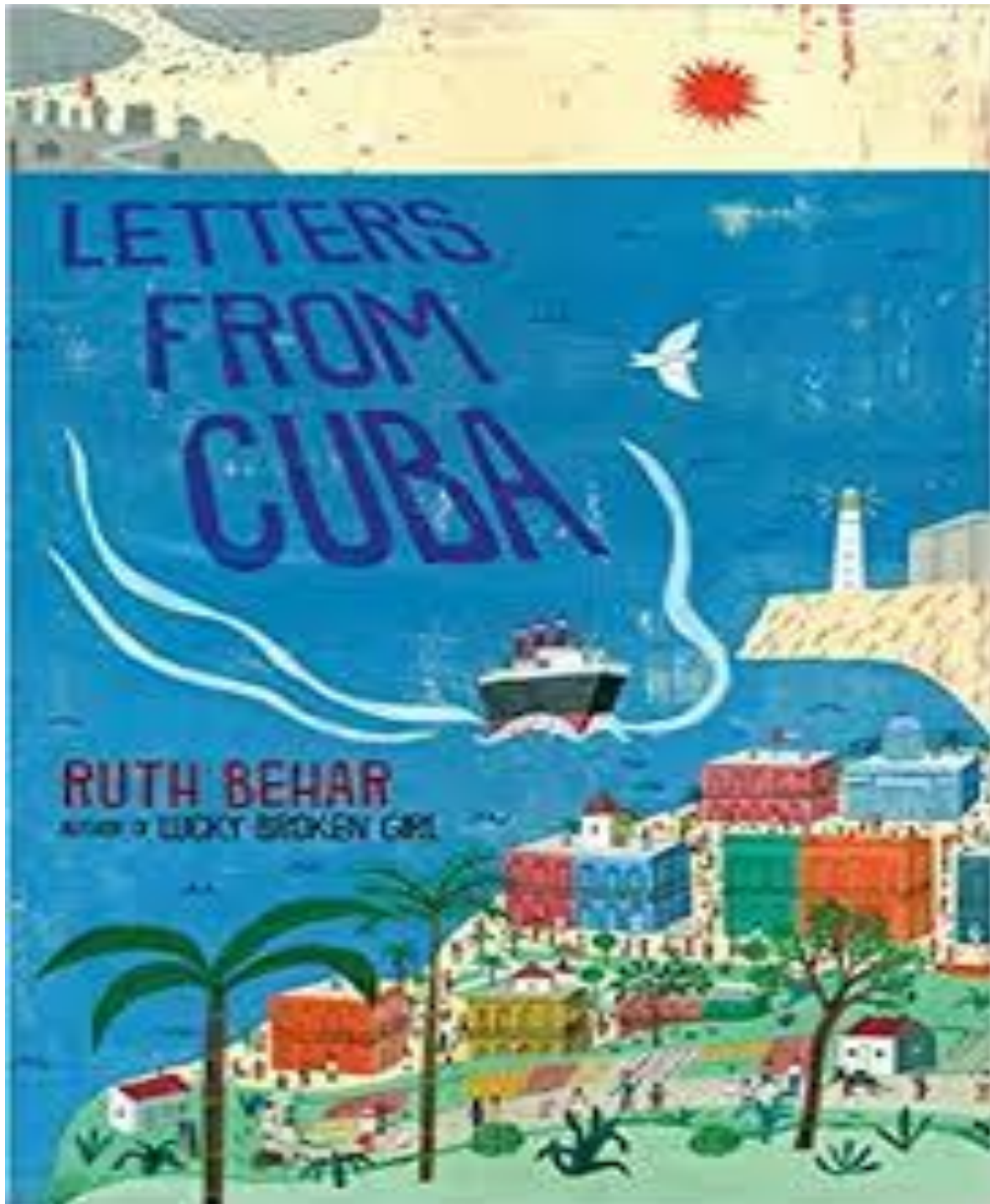


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Letter From Cuba by Ruth Behar



About the Author



Ruth Behar was born in Havana, Cuba and she grew up in New York city. She is now a professor at the University of Michigan and she is teaching Anthropology. She loves writing and her work includes academic studies, as well as poetry and memoir and literary fiction. Ruth Behar got her B.A in Literature from the University of Wesleyan and her M.A and Phd from Princeton University on Cultural Anthropology. Ruth Behar was born on August 12, 1956.

Book Summary

Letters from Cuba is a book by Ruth Behar and it is a historical novel about a Jewish girl named Esther who was traveling from Poland all the way to Cuba because of World War II. Esther, the main character of the book, is the first one of her family to go with her father who is already in Cuba waiting for her. Esther left Poland leaving her mother, also her grandmother and her siblings behind. Esther the main character of the book writes letters to her sister Malka who is one of her younger sisters and Esther writes about her experiences in Cuba like how friendly the people are in Cuba also how

much talent people have, and also the presence of the Nazism in Cuba. Esther also works in Cuba to help rescue her family in Poland.

Quote #1

“ Meals are terrible too. There’s rye bread, but it’s not soft and chewy like bread in Govorovo. Its hard as a brick and must be soaked in tea or it will break your teeth. We also get watery pea soap and old potatoes. (page 7)

For Context this event happens when Esther gets on the ship from Poland to Cuba and this is a Meal she eats in the Ship. This happens at the very beginning of the book its the third chapter and it is called On Board The Ship to Cuba. Esther is writing everything down that’s happening in the ship and she is writing everything down to her sister Malka.

Quote #2

“ I awoke and it was still dark out. I looked in on the animals. They were sleeping peacefully, except the lamp who looked up at me and seemed to say, we’re almost there.”

This was Esthers first morning in Havana cuba, she had arrived safe to her father, and they were getting ready because they were going to go a little town to Havana close to home. Esther was surprised in this part of the book because its when she arrives to Cuba and she is surprised with how beautiful cuba looks the skies, and the mansions she sees, and also the rising sun she says and the tall buildings.

Quote #3

“Even from this great distance, I want to wish you a happy Rosh Hashanah and good health in the New Year. Singing “Avinu Malkeiunu” with Papa, I thought of you and Mama and Bubbe, Moshe, Eliezer, and Chaim and realized almost eight months have passed since I arrived here, so far from my family.

This is towards the end of the book and Esther is writing to her sister Malka and she tells her how unfair it is that they are not together has a family, but Esther also focuses on the positive side and she says that Malka is really lucky because she is with her mom and also her younger brothers and Esther is with his Papa. After Esther was sad for a little moment Papa came and supported her and told her that they should not be sad on the first day of New Years because if not the whole year they will be sad, and then they started to eat and his uncle came and brought a pastry called hebreos from a bakery of nearby because it is a food tradition to eat that on New Years. Those pastries made Esthers day and she was happy after because they were of apples and she says that apples dont grow in Cuba and they are really hard to get and they finished all the food because it was so delicious.

Application to a Classroom

This book is very historical and also sad for everything that she goes through at the time, it can be I think for most readers very heartbreaking and sad thats why I do not see many teachers including this book in their classrooms to teaching it. Letters of Cuba

would be a very useful novel to teach to children in the theme of running away from a World War, and it can be used has a World Literature Novel theme to present to children. Teaching this novel to children in my classroom I would focus on the themes of the format of how the letters are written and its format, I would also focus on the subject of the family and how it is separated and also the immigration status and how they live in two different parts, I would also focus on the cultural identity of Esther letters and her writing like the historical context of Cuba during World War II. I would also teach the emotions that they were conveyed throughout the text, and the letters from different opinions and perspective. If I would be teaching this book in my classroom I would have students opinions about the book and what they taught about about it, and for like homework assignments I would have my students focus on the letters that Esther and Melka wrote to each other and what they mean to them.

Why Should Kids read it

Although this book is Aimed for children ages from ten to twelve year old, also older audiences will be drawn to this book and it can teach the themes such as resilience, friendship and also what is called overcoming friendship. You will also learn how much Esther a twelve year old character in this book shows a lot of strength and she faces a lot of hard barriers as she tries to bring her whole family to reunite in Cuba. Esther is very friendly in Cuba that she tends to do a lot of friendships even some who are devout Christians. Children or kids around the

age of ten should read this book because Esthers story teaches children how to change of lives from one day to another, and also how to adapt to a new life away from her mother. This book also teaches how to adapt to the new struggles of a new life and how Esther passed through those struggles.

Quantitative

- Word count: 50,715
- Page count: about 288 words per page
- Interest Grade level: 5-6th graders, and the reading age level is ten to like twelve years old its pretty accurate for kids to read this book.
- Lexile measure: 850L
- Book can be read in one seating it took me about four hours to read all of it.