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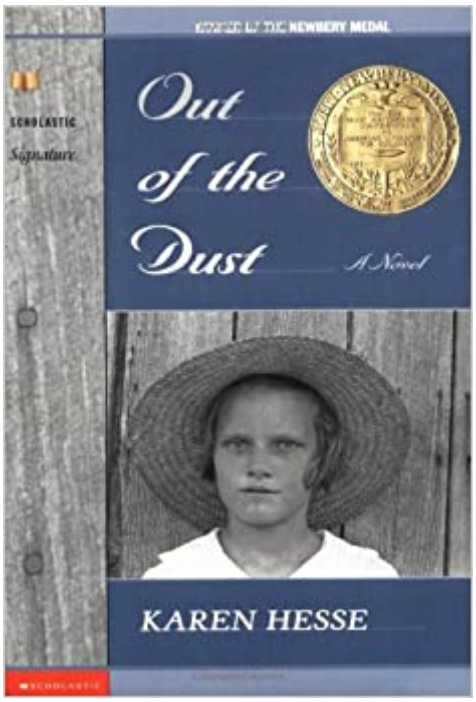
Out Of The Dust



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Synopsis

This gripping story, written in sparse first-person, free-verse poems, is the compelling tale of Billie Jo's struggle to survive during the dust bowl years of the Depression. With stoic courage, she learns to cope with the loss of her mother and her grieving father's slow deterioration. There is hope at the end when Billie Jo's badly burned hands are healed, and she is able to play her beloved piano again. The 1998 Newbery Medal winner.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Like the Oklahoma dust bowl from which she came, 14-year-old narrator Billie Jo writes in sparse, free-floating verse. In this compelling, immediate journal, Billie Jo reveals the grim domestic realities of living during the years of constant dust storms: That hopes--like the crops--blow away in the night like skittering tumbleweeds. That trucks, tractors, even Billie Jo's beloved piano, can suddenly be buried beneath drifts of dust. Perhaps swallowing all that grit is what gives Billie Jo--our strong, endearing, rough-cut heroine--the stoic courage to face the death of her mother after a hideous accident that also leaves her piano-playing hands in pain and permanently scarred. Meanwhile, Billie Jo's silent, windblown father is literally decaying with grief and skin cancer before her very eyes. When she decides to flee the lingering ghosts and dust of her homestead and jump a train west, she discovers a simple but profound truth about herself and her plight. There are no tight, sentimental endings here--just a steady ember of hope that brightens Karen Hesse's exquisitely written and mournful tale. Hesse won the 1998 Newbery Award for this elegantly crafted,

gut-wrenching novel, and her fans won't want to miss The Music of Dolphins or Letters from Rifka. (Ages 9 and older) --Gail Hudson --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

In a starred review of the 1998 Newbery Medal winner, set during the Depression, PW said, "This intimate novel, written in stanza form, poetically conveys the heat, dust and wind of Oklahoma. With each meticulously arranged entry Hesse paints a vivid picture of her heroine's emotions." Ages 11-13. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

My son read this in 6th grade and I thought it was a very unique way to tell a story. My son found the reading very interesting and he asked plenty of questions about the stories and characters. Hesse wrote this novel in a very unique way, she chose to tell the story in sparse first-person, free-verse poems. This novel takes place in Oklahoma around 1934-1935 about the struggles families in Joyce City faced surrounding the dust bowls. The main character, Billie Jo's tells of the personal struggle to survive during the Depression. Billie Jo learns to cope with the loss of her mother and her father's deterioration.

Such a fascinating way of telling the story of a terrible time in our nation's history. The Dust Bowl era is something that wasn't covered in nearly enough depth when I went through school, so this book was a great introduction to the topic as my own children studied it in homeschool. Hesse's story is told in a way that makes it feel that the main character is writing poetry or journal entries. It feels very authentic and brings out all emotions for the reader. Provided a great opening to explore the history around the Dust Bowl and Depression. I highly recommend it.

I'm playing this for my 7th graders after they read a section and the best part is the woman who give a "voice" to Billie Jo sounds like a 14 year-old girl so it helps enhance the story.

I actually read this book once as a fifth grader. My teacher read it to the class every snack time and it was so gripping for me then, that I had to look it up online. I forgot the name of the novel, but I remembered much of the plot, so I was lucky enough to find it again. It's a beautiful period piece that really brings you into the mind of the main character. It's warmly written, as if to a friend, and although it's written by an adult, it empathizes with the developing mind of children or people of any age. I read it twice, and definitely plan on reading it again! It gives you so much information about the dust bowl, but more about the people who lived on, depended on and even loved the suffering

land. Now that I am an adult I recommend it to parents, encouraging them to make the history of the dust bowl interesting and gripping.

Sad but true part of history.Im thankful I didn't live in this time but people that did became strong if they survived.

I started with a highlighter and the whole text turned yellow. Gems throughout the book!

This easy to read novel, written in free verse from a young girl's viewpoint, is equally appropriate for youth and adults. A beautiful and moving story about the dust bowl years that makes you feel like you're there. Educational, moving, and an incredible example of how effectively free verse can be used to tell a story. I first read it on kindle, then decided I just had to have a hard copy so I could savor it in a way that kindle just doesn't achieve.

A story written like a poem of pain , loss, and survival. A tribute to the people who lived through the dust and emerged stronger.

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