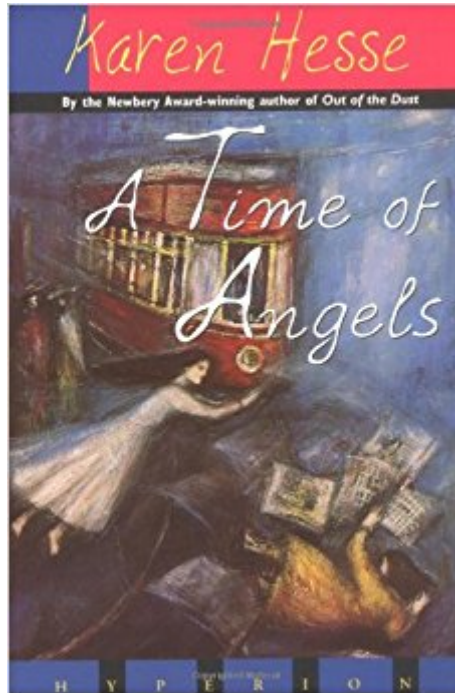




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A Time Of Angels



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 6-9?A warm, personal novel set in Boston during 1918. Hannah Gold, 14, and her two sisters live with their Tanta Rose while their parents are trapped in Russia because of the war. Although life is not easy, Tanta Rose provides for the girls as best she can. Rose's companion Vashti, however, feels that the girls are an intrusion. When the deadly influenza epidemic ravishes the city, Hannah's world is turned upside-down. Driven away by Vashti after Rose's death, the feverish young woman is guided to safety by a beautiful, ethereal girl (actually, an angel) who saved her life once before. She is nursed back to health on a Vermont farm by an old man whose strength and wisdom give her the courage to go back to Boston and to make peace with Vashti. Aspects of Jewish culture are nicely incorporated into the story, as are period details. However, some plot elements may cause confusion. The angel, portrayed as a guiding force instead of a fully developed character, interacts with Hannah on an almost subconscious level. Also, some of Hannah's actions do not seem realistic. Shortcomings aside, Hesse offers readers much to enjoy, analyze, and consider in this piece of historical fiction with a mystical bent.?Tracey Kroll, Brookland Middle School, Richmond, VA
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edition of this title.

Gr. 5[^]-8. Hannah and her sisters live in Boston with Tanta Rose and stern Vashti, awaiting their parents' return from a Europe embroiled in World War I. An influenza epidemic sweeps through the city, killing thousands including Tanta Rose. As Hannah is leaving town, she comes down with the flu and is helped by a mysterious girl with violet eyes. Hannah makes a slow recovery in Brattleboro, Vermont, cared for by an old farmer named Klaus, whose German heritage has made him suspect in the town. Hesse's meticulous re-creation of time and place (substantiated by an author's note) gets the novel off to a very slow start but lends an authentic feel to the story, despite some incidents that seem added merely for historical flavor. Her characters are also richly drawn, especially Klaus and Vashti, and there's a ring of truth to Hannah's being torn between her life in Vermont and her life in the city. Susan Dove Lempke --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I was frankly shocked to read reviews that found this book boring. I've read all of Karen Hesse's works, and find this to be far and away the best. I am a fifth grade teacher, and can usually count on my 14-year-old daughter to let me take her cast-off books to supply my classroom; this was one that she won't part with, even after several years. "A Time of Angels" is high on my list of books to recommend for my higher-level readers. The story line, taking place during the influenza pandemic of 1917-18, is grippingly realistic -- entire neighborhoods are nearly wiped out by the dreaded disease, and panic-stricken residents don't really know how to deal with the enormous problem. Meanwhile, Hannah and her two younger sisters are left in Boston with an aunt, since her mother is trapped in WWI Russia caring for relatives and her father is off fighting in the war -- and neither have been heard from. When influenza tears Hannah's family apart, circumstances take her far away where she ends up in the care of a gruff old farmer who has been isolated from other townsfolk because of his German heritage. The relationship that forms between the two of them is sweet and tender, and Hesse crafts it beautifully. Truly, Hesse's characterizations and descriptions make this book nearly magical to read. She weaves in bits and pieces of Jewish culture, American history, and wonderful mystical interludes with an angel who saves Hannah's life more than once. Boring? Don't believe it. This is a book you shouldn't miss!

Good story but not my favorite.

Loved this book when I was young and now my child does too!

One of my daughter's favorite book.

The book *A Time of Angels* was definitely one of the best books I have ever read. It was a beautifully written story about a girl with influenza in World War I. The characters were very realistic. They all had very intriguing personalities. I enjoyed the book's brilliant style and detail. I would recommend this book to anyone with a love for detail and excellent literature. You will fall in love with this book.

It is 1918, and Hannah Gold, a fourteen-year-old Jewish girl, lives in Boston, MA, with her two sisters, Libbie and Eve, their aunt, Tanta Rose, and Rose's roommate, the healer Vashti. Hannah's parents are in Europe, her mother having gone to care for sick relatives in Russia and been detained by the Great War, and her then father fighting in the war. To make matters worse, Boston, as well as the whole nation and even the entire world for that matter, is hit with an influenza epidemic. A neighbor, Mr. Weitz who is the father of her friend Harry, dies. Tanta Rose also dies, and both Libbie and Eve come down sick too, so Vashti drives Hannah away to go to a relative in New York. However, the girl takes the wrong train and ends up in Brattleboro, VT. Hannah herself becomes ill with influenza but gradually recovers with the help of an elderly farmer of German heritage named Klaus Gerhard, and her visions of angels. Hannah wants to go home to see what's left of her family more than anything else but at first is too sick to make it and doesn't have the money anyway. She is afraid that Libbie and Eve may have died as well. Will she ever make it back to Boston? And if she does, what will she find? There is not much good children's historical fiction set in the time of World War I, so I was hoping that this would be a welcome addition. I liked Karen Hesse's Newbery Medal winner *Out of the Dust* set in the Great Depression. However, while *A Time of Angels* is all right, it really didn't impress me all that much. It does have an interesting story line, and I am sure that the tale realistically captures the feelings of despair during that time. The ending is both happy and hopeful, but given its background the book is understandably permeated with a sense of sadness at all the sickness and dying so that it might be somewhat heavy for a lot of younger readers. I would recommend it more for thirteen and up. Also, the plot moves along rather slowly at times and might prove to be a little confusing to some children. A few common euphemisms (blast, dang) occur, but no actual cursing or profanity. Some boy-girl activity takes place as Hannah is developing a relationship with the neighbor lad Harry Weitz and they kiss on a couple of occasions. When Tanta Rose takes a bath, there is a rather

vivid, though not necessarily lewd, description of her naked body. Klaus makes Æsumac smokes Æ for his friends. And the suicide of one of his neighbors in Brattleboro is recorded. All of these things are probably true to the historical setting, but some parents might wonder if they really need to be included in a children's book. As to religion, several Jewish customs are mentioned, but when Eve says something about God, Libbie says, ÆOh, pooh. You and your God. And Hannah notes, ÆVashti spoke this way of God, too. Then, the reader will have to deal with the mystical element of Hannah's interaction with the violet-eyed girl angel who guides and protects her. Is it real or just in her imagination? As I said before, this is not a bad book, but there is nothing here which makes me say, ÆWow! This is great. Æ

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