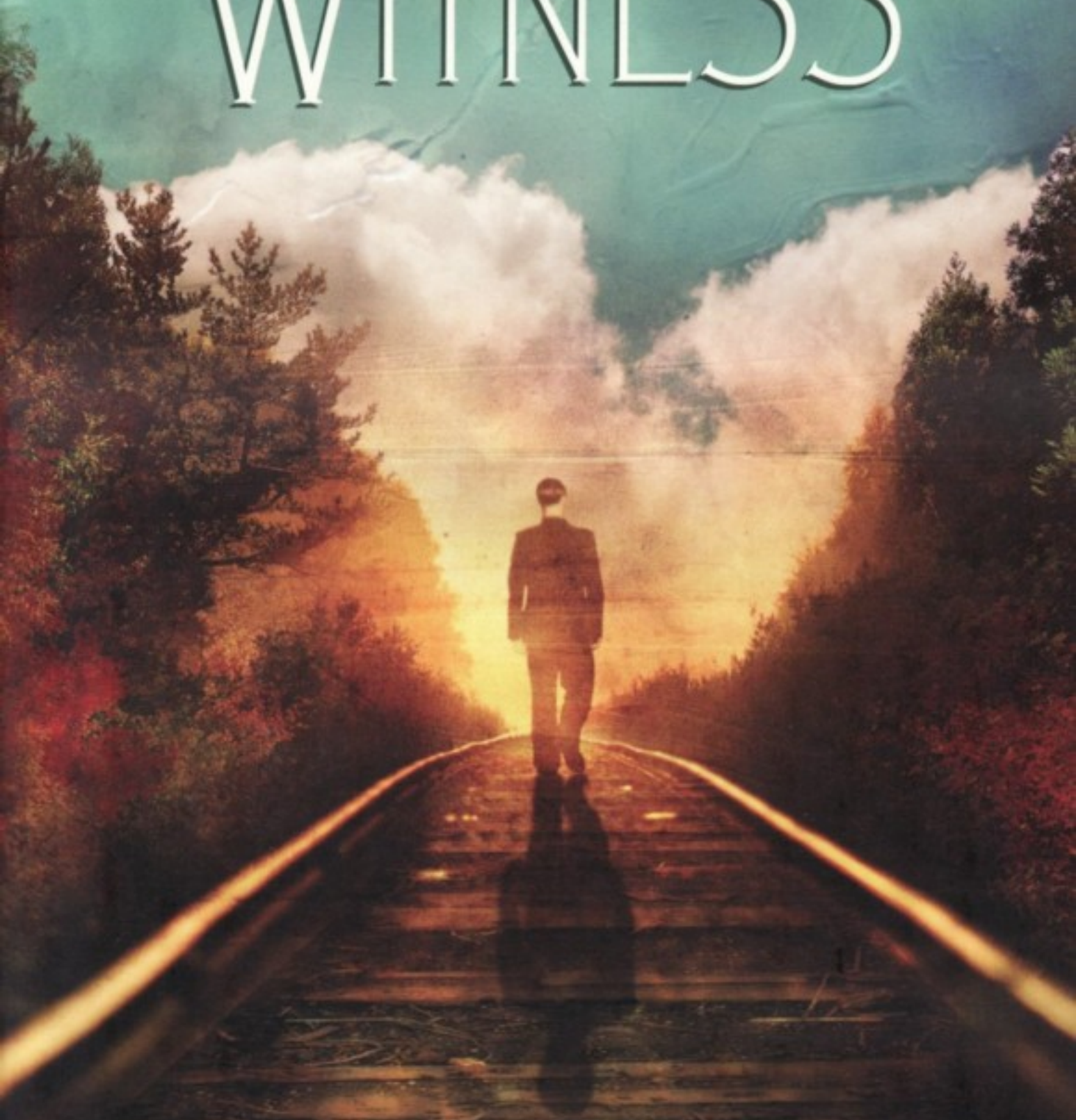


A NOVEL BY NEWBERY MEDALIST

KAREN HESSE

# WITNESS



 SCHOLASTIC

leanora sutter

i don't know how miss harvey  
talked me into dancing in *the fountain of youth*.  
i don't know how she knew i danced at all.  
unless once, a long time ago, my mamma told her so.

but she did talk me into dancing.  
i leaped and swept my way through *the fountain of youth*  
separated on the stage from all those limb-tight white girls.

the ones who wouldn't dance with a negro,  
they went home in a huff that first day,  
but some came back.  
they told miss harvey they'd dance,  
but they wouldn't  
touch any brown skin girl.

only the little girl from new york,  
esther,  
that funny talking kid,  
only esther didn't mind about me being colored.

merlin van tornhout

i pushed the window up in school  
to get the stink of leanora sutter out of the classroom  
where miss harvey brought her to show off  
a dance from last week's  
recital.

mr. caldwell  
chuffed his arms,  
faked a shiver,  
ramped the sash back down  
saying the day was too cold to leave a window open.

leanora sutter  
turned and stared through me  
    that witchy girl  
    with those fuming eyes  
she meant to put a curse on me.  
she meant to.

i left school right then.  
no amount of air will get the smell of her  
out of my nose,  
the soot of her out of my eyes.

esther hirsh

i did first meet sara chickering  
when i had comings here last year  
to be a fresh air girl in vermont.

vermont is a nice place.  
they have wiggle fish.  
that is what i did tell daddy in new york  
when i had comings back to him.  
i did ask daddy  
to have our livings in vermont with sara chickering  
for keeps.

but daddy did say no.

so i made a long walk all by myself.  
i did follow the train tracks and  
pretty quick daddy did have comings after me.

sara chickering made two rooms to be for us  
in her big farmhouse  
with her dog jerry.  
we have sitting every night at the round table, next to the hot stove.  
and i do catch the wiggle fish through  
a hole sara chickering does make in the ice.

# MANY VOICES, ONE TOWN.

LEANORA SUTTER, ESTHER HIRSH, MERLIN VAN TORNHOUT, JOHNNY REEVES . . . These characters are among the unforgettable cast inhabiting a small Vermont town in 1924—a town that turns against its own when the Ku Klux Klan moves in. No one is safe, especially not the two youngest: twelve-year-old Leanora, an African-American girl, and six-year-old Esther, who is Jewish.

In this story of a community on the brink of disaster, told through the haunting and impassioned voices of its inhabitants, Newbery Medalist Karen Hesse takes readers into the hearts and minds of those who bear witness.

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