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# Oh, Freedom!

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

This exciting adventure follows a family of slaves in 1850 as they escape from a cotton plantation via the legendary Underground Railway. An enthralling story of courage and resilience it will fascinate children, who might not know much about the secret escape route into Canada that was used by as many as 100,000 people. Sadly, it is more than a thrilling piece of historical fiction and there's much to the story that is relevant to the world today.

Central character Tommy is a bright young man with lots of questions. He's immediately intrigued by Peg Leg Joe, the man who appears out of a storm, gourd slung across his back. 'Who's in charge here?' Joe asks Tommy, the first of a series of questions and answers that make Tommy see things as they really are. Joe teaches Tommy the songs that give slaves hope and secretly reveal the route of the Underground Railway, and more besides: he teaches him to read and write, and tells Tommy stories of Harriet Trubman, whose courage, determination and vision inspire them all. And he reveals what freedom really is: 'To be able to look another man in the eye without being afraid, because every one is the same. They are equal.'

Two families dare to leave with Joe, risking the certain cruel treatment they'd face if they were caught and the other dangers of the journey. On their way they face hardship, hunger, fear but also receive unexpected help from different people, black and white alike. Not only does the book remind us of the almost unimaginable wickedness of slavery, of treating others as less than human, but it highlights too the courage Tommy and his family needed to risk that journey to freedom and a better life, even as many thousands of people today are daring to make similar journeys. A powerful and important story that won't fail to affect readers and set them thinking.

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