

## Study Guide



I want Peter to be safe,” Libby thinks as she faces a sacrifice she dreads. *Even if he manages to hide from Dexter, my red hair could give Peter away. But do I really have to cut off my hair and dress like a scruffy boy?* Still—what had she told Pa? *I want a never-give-up family that believes in one another, sticks together even when it’s hard.* Already Peter had started to feel like the younger brother she had always wanted. Holding up her hands, Libby made the sign for brother.

**Hi Friends**—What does it mean to stick together as a family, even when it’s hard? And will Peter somehow manage to become a hero?

### Let’s Talk About . . . Words you might need

Find a dictionary and fill in the definitions:

safe house

depot

donnage

rapids

rapids pilot

narrow channels or chutes

slack water

crosscurrents

chine (as on barrel)

### **Let's Talk About . . . The story**

To find something in the story, check the number (ch. 1) at the end of the question. That means chapter 1. Look there until you see another note (ch. 2, or 3, or 4) directing you to a different chapter.

- When Dexter tried to teach Peter how to steal, what choice did Peter make? (ch. 2) How did that choice affect everything else Peter did?
- What sacrifice was especially difficult for Libby to make? Why was it so hard? (ch. 4)
- Why do some boys always think they aren't strong enough and some girls always think they aren't pretty or thin enough?

- In what ways do you value who you really are?
- How did the quilt at Annika's house offer a signal? (ch. 6)
- Why did Jordan quietly start singing?
- Caleb needed to remind Libby about one of the rules of the Underground Railroad. What did people working in the Railroad do to protect each other?
- Why did a fugitive or anyone working in the Underground Railroad need to keep thinking of new, creative ways to do things? Give examples. (ch. 8)
- Write a character description of either Annika or Pa. Whichever person you pick, describe what they did to help people. Include some of the encouraging things they said and did.

### **Let's Talk About . . . Making choices**

- How has Libby learned to take responsibility for helping in whatever way she can? (ch. 8)
- What was Caleb's big news? What had he chosen to do? (ch. 10)
- Annika knew it was hard for Libby to pretend she was a boy in order to protect Peter. "But for now you must," Annika said, "and because you must, you will." If you need to make a choice that is really difficult, but you

know it's right in God's sight, what will you do? (ch. 11)

- Why was Annika's quilt called a Jacob's ladder quilt? See Genesis 28:10–22.
- What was God's promise to Jacob when he was afraid? (v. 15.) How can that promise also help us?
- Why did Annika give Libby the quilt for a remembrance? (ch. 12)
- Contrast Aunt Vi with Libby's mother. What did each of them care about most?
- What made it hard for Libby to believe that her Aunt Vi loved her? If you were Libby, would you feel the same way? Why or why not?
- What did Annika want Libby to know at the end of her terrible day?
- How does Annika help Libby understand how valuable she is, both to God and to others?

### **Let's Talk About . . . Building dreams**

- If you need to do something that is really difficult, yet something that is right in God's sight, what choice will you make?

- How might your difficult choices help you become the person you need to be for the dream God will lead you to build? (From an early age Caleb has wanted to be a newspaper reporter/editor. God called me to be a writer when I was nine and a half.) You don't have to know what God wants you to be when you're nine years old. But it's important to be open to His leading. Is He giving you an interest that might develop into a life-time vocation?
- What happened when Jordan delivered the money from his church to Mr. Jones? (ch. 14)
- Jordan also had the privilege of meeting Mr. Frederick Douglass. A former slave, he spoke out against slavery in the United States and became a highly respected, much-loved speaker in England. Learn more, and write about his life. Give reasons why Jordan would say, "When Mr. Douglass spoke, I saw the power of words. Good words help people. Good words change lives." (ch. 14)
- What can good words do for people? How can good words change lives?
- What do you believe will happen when Jordan learns to speak like Mr. Douglass? What does Jordan want to say?
- Why is a big dream worth having for every one of us?
- When Pa said, "Libby, the choices I make affect you," how did Libby answer? (ch. 15)

- “Sooner or later all of us are put in a place where we have to decide what to do,” Pa said. “We choose what is right or we choose what is wrong.” Libby feels sure that once she chooses to do what is right, she’ll need to stand up for what she believes. Has this happened to you? Tell about it.
- What choice did the historic John Van Doorn need to make because of the location of his sawmill?
- How can the place and time in which we live make a difference in the kind of choices we need to make?
- How have the choices you’ve needed to make affected people you know?
- Libby wants to be safe. But Pa tells her, “Being safe isn’t having everything go right. What counts is knowing God’s peace, even when life is hard.” What has happened that Libby now understands her father’s words?

### **Let’s Talk About . . . Forgiveness**

- What very big honor did Sadie give to Libby? (ch.17)  
What does Sadie plan to tell her child?
- After Sadie’s baby was born, Libby realized that the baby was free, but she herself was not. How did Libby pray, forgiving her Aunt Vi?

- Think of someone for whom you hold anger or hurt in your heart. What can you do to put those feelings behind you?
- How can you choose to pray in the name of Jesus, forgiving that person?
- Why was it important for Libby to also make a list of the good things Aunt Vi had taught her? (ch. 20)
- Guess what? It was a relief for Libby to realize she didn't have to be perfect! Why?
- Do you think that what Libby learned will forever change her attitude toward her aunt? Why or why not?

**Let's Talk About . . . Being a never-give-up family**

- Though she didn't want to do it, why did Libby decide to cut her hair?
- What are some funny things Libby did while pretending she was a boy?
- How does Caleb help Libby when she slips up and acts like a girl?
- When was Jordan's birthday? How was such a birthday gift a fulfillment of Jordan's dream?

- Think about Micah Parker opening his arms, saying, **“Come here, family.”** How was the Parker family truly a never-give-up family?

### **Let’s Write About Freedom . . . What is it?**

- How have these four characters changed from the beginning of this series to this book? What were they like when you first met them? What are they like now?

**Libby:**

**Caleb:**

**Jordan:**

**Peter:**

- If you could be any character in the Freedom Seekers series, who would you like to be?
- Why?
- After reading about the Freedom Seekers, what do these words mean to you? Give examples from the novels or your own experience.

kindness

honesty

forgiveness

integrity

determination

never-give-up family

### **Digging Deeper . . . Wise words from a Freedom Seeker**

- When in Springfield, Illinois, Peter met Abraham Lincoln, one of the greatest Freedom Seekers of all time. (ch. 5) Research Mr. Lincoln's life, his simple beginning, and his road to the White House.
- What qualities made President Lincoln one of our greatest American presidents?
- Search out the speeches of President Lincoln, the quotations for which he is famous. Talk about these words: "My concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right."
- While giving the Gettysburg Address, President Lincoln added the phrase "under God." Why is it important that we view our nation as being under God?

- During the Civil War President Lincoln would not allow the stars representing southern states to be removed from the flag. If he had lived longer, what difference do you think it might have made in the healing of wounds between North and South? Give reasons for your answers.
- Think about starting a collection of helpful thoughts that godly people have spoken or written. Put quotation marks around the words, give the name of the person you're quoting, and where you found those words. Put them on 3 x 5 cards or a backed-up electronic file where you can return to them often. In the same way, organize Bible verses that are especially meaningful to you.
- Choose one of these helpful thoughts, and write about it.

**Will Jordan's family find a place of freedom where they can live in safety and peace?**

**Join the Freedom Seekers a storm threatens their safety. Can the *Christina* make it through the dangerous ice in Lake Pepin? And where is Annika? Is she forever lost to the never-give-up family?**

**Thanks for being my friends through books. I'll meet you in the next Freedom Seekers novel . . . *The Fiddler's Secret!***



# THE MANUAL Alphabet

Courtesy of the Illinois  
School for the Deaf, Jacksonville.