

Study Guide



A suspicious man boards the *Christina*. Jordan risks capture by his cruel owner . . . or something worse. Then Elsa, an immigrant friend, becomes ill. As steamboats race toward St. Paul, what becomes more important than winning?

Hi Friends—How can Libby, Caleb, and Jordan go beyond fear to act in courage?

Let's Talk About . . . Words you might need

Find a dictionary and fill in the meanings you would use when talking about a steamboat:

hull

hatch

hold, as for ship

bulkhead

runner, as along a levee

carpetbag

decker

first-class passenger

starboard

port

By now you know another way to travel. How would you define these words when used for the Underground Railroad?

station

agent

conductor

code words

black book

fugitive, as for runaway slave

Let's Talk About . . . The story

Use the blank space between questions to write your answers or create sections in your loose-leaf notebook when you want to write more. To find something in the novel, check the number (ch.1) at the end of the first question. That means chapter 1.

Look there until you see another note (ch. 2, or 3, or 4) directing you to a different chapter.

As the *Christina* put out in the Mississippi River, Jordan Parker crept forward without a sound. A moment later he moaned. “It’s Riggs!”

- Who is Riggs? What does Jordan know about him? What does Riggs know about Jordan? (ch. 1)
- What is the penalty for someone who helps runaway slaves? To learn more about the laws of the time see **Fugitive slave laws** in an encyclopedia such as *World Book*.
- Knowing that her father is in danger, Libby asks, “What would be worse than Pa going to jail?” How do you think Caleb will answer Libby’s question? (Take a guess now and come back to this question when you find Caleb’s answer.)
- Why does Jordan feel concerned about Captain Norstad?
- What agreement do Caleb and Jordan reach? How did they seal their agreement?
- What is a search warrant? Why was it necessary for Riggs to get one? (ch. 3)

- Captain Norstad spoke directly to Libby and also used code words to warn her. What were these “code” words?
- What could have happened if Libby hadn’t obeyed Caleb and Pa?

Let’s Talk About . . . Freedom . . . What is it?

As Libby enters Captain Norstad’s cabin for school, Pa exclaims, “How could the Supreme Court of the United States make such a decision?” (ch. 2)

- What did the Supreme Court rule in the Dred Scott decision?
- Describe how Captain Norstad felt about that decision.

Why did he believe the decision could lead America to war?

- In chapter 5 Libby realizes something: *Caleb isn’t afraid to think things through*. What does that mean? Why is that discovery important to Libby?
- Why do both Caleb and Captain Norstad care so much about what happens to slaves? (ch. 6)
- Who is the one who really takes care of Libby’s pa? How does that person take care of you?

- How does Jordan show how much he wants to be able to read? What reasons does he give for wanting to read? (ch. 9)
- What did Jordan's father say when he told Jordan how to escape?
- What did Jordan mean when he thinks *Jordan, your leg-irons keep your feets from running. But your eyes is free.* What did Jordan manage to do because he had free eyes?
- Give examples of Jordan's quick thinking and valor. What is valor? (ch. 10)
- A cold chisel is made out of specially hardened steel. How do both Caleb and Jordan use a cold chisel?

Let's Talk About . . . Making choices

- In the secret hideaway Libby needs courage. When she asks God for help, what words does she seem to hear? (ch. 7)
- What is the difference between being courageous and being foolhardy? When Jordan went into Keokuk, which was he being? Give reasons for your answer. (ch. 8)

- Pa told Libby that her mother always found a way to have fun. What was the secret code Libby's ma chose to use? (ch. 11)
- What does it mean to head upstream, even if it's hard?
- What did Captain Norstad mean when he said, "True courage is given by God"? How? Look for a clue in Pa's next sentence.
- What does Libby want to be? Do you have a dream about something you'd like to be? If so, what?

To read about how Lois knew she wanted to be a writer see www.LWJbooks.com/Writingtips/Tips for students.

- How did Libby talk herself into taking Elsa into the main cabin? Was Libby's decision something that helped Elsa or hurt her? Why?
- Libby tried to take a shortcut with an established rule on steamboats. Have you ever tried to take a shortcut in how you handled a rule? What happened?
- Look at the map of the Upper Mississippi at the front of the book. Find Read's Landing, and then Red Wing farther up the Mississippi. Between the two, Lake Pepin looks like a slender body of water, but it's actually wide and looks like a lake. Why would that body of water

freeze in winter? Why would the river be open above Lake Pepin, even though it's farther north? (ch. 12) Why did captains need to make good choices?

- Pa said that men with the Norstad name had stood for something for generations. Why? How did Captain Norstad describe his ancestors? (ch. 13)
- When Libby decides she'll never have the courage she needs, what does Pa tell her?
- How do good choices build on one another?
- In a day when not all captains stopped to pick up someone who fell off a steamboat, what was unusual about Captain Norstad and the historic real-life captain of the *War Eagle*? (ch. 20, 21, and Acknowledgments)

Let's Talk About . . . Your safety skills

Caleb couldn't give Jordan a swimming lesson in water, so let's practice doing this—

- Hold your arms wide with your palms facing out. Bring your hands together in a big clap. Always keep your fingers together.
- Practice taking deep breaths. With someone else's help lean back as if you're lying down in water. Tip back your

head. Breathe deep so your chest fills with air. Practice so you could do this, even if you were scared. (ch.19)

If you don't know how to swim, learn. Find a place where you can take lessons. Practice Caleb's lesson in water. If some time when you're swimming, you become tired, and can't reach safety, tip back your head so your mouth and nose are above water. Lie back in the water. Breathe deep. Let your chest fill with air. Kick your feet.

Live.

Even if you're a good swimmer, always have someone, such as a parent or lifeguard, watching out for you. Use a buddy system. When you're in water watch out for someone else and have that person watch out for you.

Let's Talk About . . . God's leading

- When Libby admits to Jordan that she doesn't know how to pray, what does he tell her? (ch. 13)

- In places where food and water are contaminated and living conditions unsanitary, cholera can still be a problem. Doctor Sweney is an historic doctor who lived in Red Wing, Minnesota, and saved many lives in that area. (ch. 14) What did Captain Norstad plan to do to protect his deck passengers? How did Caleb show respect for the captain's decision?

- Why did the glass base of Pa's lamp have a strip of red flannel floating in the oil? (ch.15)
- What did Libby's mother do when she needed courage? What Bible verse did she especially like?
- Look up Isaiah 41:10. Why is this a good verse to memorize?
- If you don't know the tunes for the words Jordan sings in this and other Freedom Seeker novels, find a book of Negro spirituals. Why were Jordan and other slaves such good singers? Why do you think Jordan sings now? (ch. 16)
- Libby asks Jordan, "How do you stand it? Knowing that at any moment a slave catcher might find you?" Jordan says, "If I was by myself, I couldn't stand it. I has been free for a long time." (ch. 18) It puzzles Libby, and Jordan says, "It's Jesus that makes me free. You gots to let Jesus git you."

"How do I let Jesus get me?" Libby asks. And Caleb explains that Jesus has already done everything for her. "He wants to give you His love and forgiveness. Just ask for it." What are some words Libby can use?

Let's Talk About . . . Digging deeper

- See www.citizensunitedfoundation.org for an in-depth, well-documented DVD that tells how America's founding fathers built safeguards into our democracy to pro-

tect our freedom of religion. Look for the DVD *Rediscovering God in America* by Newt and Callista Gingrich.

- Find *Dred Scott* in an encyclopedia. Look for newspapers written in 1857, often available on microfilm in a library. See online information at www.mnhc.org about Mr. Scott living in Minnesota.
- What does it mean to make one legal appeal and then another? Find the process at your library by which someone goes from one level of our court system to the next in an attempt to improve a legal decision.
- How did the Dred Scott decision deny a group of people their basic American rights?
- Look up the *Declaration of Independence*. In an encyclopedia such as *World Book*, the text of the document is written in boldface and the explanation in a lighter type. The part called *A Declaration of Rights* tells us what our forefathers believed about the equality of all people. Write down that paragraph in bold type. Memorize those words.

- In chapter 7 Captain Norstad gave an assignment to Libby and Caleb: “Think about the kind of courage that offers life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to every person. Think about ways you can put courage into practice.” *That assignment is now yours!*

Let’s Talk About . . . Field trips

- To find books and museums that will give you more information about steamboats see resources listed in the acknowledgments of Freedom Seekers novels. See also the **Let’s Talk About . . . Possible Field trips** at the end of the study guide for *Escape Into the Night*.
- As you travel up and down the Mississippi River you may want to cross a bridge to see what’s on the other side. Why do you think the development on one side of the river can be quite different from what has grown up on the other side?
- If you like to tent or use an RV when traveling: Look for Corps of Engineers parks along the Mississippi River, as well as city and state parks in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois.

Libby thinks she can do whatever she sets out to do. But then she gives away a life-or-death secret. Can Jordan possibly rescue his family?

Thanks for being my friends through books. I’ll meet you in the next Freedom Seekers novel . . . *Midnight Rescue!*