



Discussion Guide

1. In the prologue, Sophie's father considers her differing opinion on slavery as a personal betrayal. When have you seen a difference of opinion cause a family rift? Was there a way to avoid it?
2. For years, Sophie set aside her own goals to keep the peace with her father and care for her mother. What is an appropriate balance of taking care of family and pursuing one's goals today?
3. Mr. Kent asks, "What's more important than family?" How would you answer that question?
4. For months, Sophie kept the manner of her mother's death secret from her father in order to protect him. Is this type of deception justified? Why or why not?
5. Dr. Caleb Lansing tells Sophie, "We must work as hard as we can at what we've been called to do, and leave the outcome up to God." When have you found this to be true in your own life?
6. Before his capture, Abraham Jamison fought for the Union army without pay, rather than accept half pay as a black soldier. He

fought to prove black people were equal to whites and deserved citizenship, at great hardship to both himself and his hungry wife. Can you think of a cause for which you would sacrifice great personal comfort?

7. After Sophie met with Dr. Lansing in the morgue, she felt so drastically altered by her actions she wondered if others could tell that she had changed. When have your actions changed you?
8. Harrison Caldwell's plans for a quick sojourn in Richmond are drastically altered upon his arrest. Share a time when your plans were dramatically changed. How did you handle it?
9. While in Libby Prison, Harrison muses that his own ambition caused his capture. When do you think a person's ambition can cause him or her harm? Can ambition hold us captive? How?
10. Sophie uses Captain Lawrence Russell first for protection, then as a source of intelligence. In what ways do we use people for our own benefit today?
11. Even though Sophie's parents and half sister are not physically present in the first two acts of the book, memories of all three of them influence Sophie. How does your family affect you, even when they aren't around?
12. Throughout Harrison's time in Richmond, he refers to Psalm 31:15, which says, "My times are in thy hand." Read all of Psalm 31. Which parts resonate most with you?
13. When Harrison is thrown into Libby Prison, he recalls the proverb, "Beware of what you wish for." When have you received something you thought you wanted, only to realize it wasn't what you expected?
14. Sophie cherishes old drafts of her articles full of Harrison's corrections. What corrections or advice do you cherish now that was difficult to hear at first?

15. When Harrison crawls through a tomb-like tunnel in order to emerge in freedom, he tells himself, “This is not a grave. It is rebirth.” How does this parallel to a spiritual journey?
16. Sophie’s fear of following her mother toward insanity haunted her. How do you keep your fears from controlling you?
17. In Richmond, Bella reminds herself, “I am not a slave.” When Abraham is about to be sold away, she tells him, “You’re free. You’re free.” How does what we believe about ourselves affect us?
18. Sophie’s father orders laudanum to be given to her to help heal her, without understanding that the overdose would harm her mind and body. How do we sometimes try to help ourselves and others with something that could actually harm us?
19. Abraham hates helping the Confederacy by working for Tredgar Iron Works but doing so gives him information valuable to the Union. When has God used a trial in your own life in a surprising way?
20. Harrison encourages Sophie, and ultimately other war survivors, to tell their stories. Why is it important both for those sharing, and for those of us who hear?