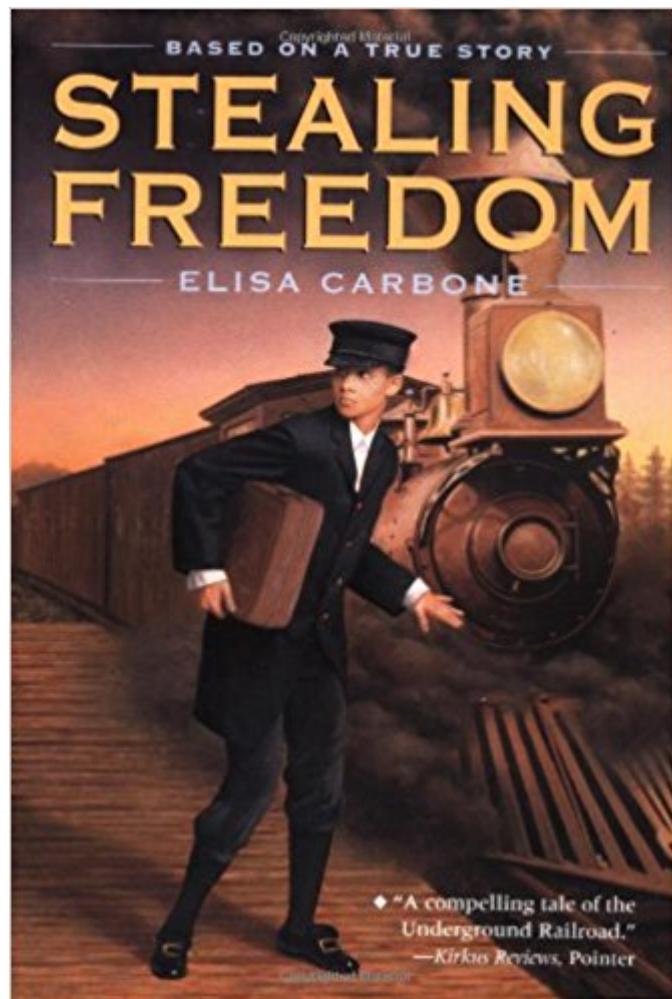


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# Stealing Freedom



## **Synopsis**

Inspired by a true story, the riveting novel of a young slave girl's harrowing escape to freedom on the Underground Railroad. The moment Ann Maria Weems was born, her freedom was stolen from her. Like her family and the other slaves on the farm, Ann works from sunup to sundown and obeys the orders of her master. Then one day, Ann's family -- the only joy she knows -- is gone. Just 12 years old, Ann is overcome by grief, struggling to get through each day. And her only hope of stealing back her freedom and finding her family lies in a perilous journey: the Underground Railroad. Ann Maria Weems was an actual slave who lived in the mid-1800s near the author's home in Maryland.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 272 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 41 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #169,000 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #15 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > Civil War Period #74 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > 19th Century #156 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Prejudice & Racism

## **Customer Reviews**

"Papa, is that bad, what Uncle Abram tried to do--steal his freedom like that?" Ann asked. Her father stopped and stared at her. 'He wasn't stealing anything that wasn't rightfully his,' he said very softly. 'Anyone born a slave gets their freedom stolen the day they're born.'" Ann Maria Weems was a slave who lived in Maryland in the mid-1800s, and in the engaging, suspenseful novel *Stealing Freedom*, Elisa Carbone tells her story. As she wrote, Carbone painstakingly pieced Ann's experiences together with old newspaper articles; letters found in boxes in Philadelphia and Ohio; and material culled from rare books, census and land records, wills, and graveyards. She read thousands of pages of slave narratives, and recorded the emotion she heard in these men and women's voices in her own work. The resulting novel--powerful, vivid, and a tale well told--is,

according to the author, a combination of what really happened and what could have happened. Every character in her book is based on someone who lived during the 19th century. The story begins in 1853 at the Price farm in Unity, Maryland, where the Weems family lives and works. Though 10-year-old Ann works from sunup to sundown in often harsh conditions, her life is not an unhappy one, as she is surrounded by a loving family. But the reality of slavery is ever present. When the Prices begin to sell Ann's family off, person by person, her father (a free slave) vows that if the family can't be together in slavery, they will be together in freedom. Finally, only 12-year-old Ann is left on the farm, and young readers will be moved by her courageous journey--from her dramatic escape with a white abolitionist, to her travels on the Underground Railroad, to her heart-wrenching reunion with her family in Canada. (Ages 11 and older) --Karin Snelson --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

In a starred review, PW called this novel, based on the life of a slave who disguised herself as a boy and escaped at age 13, "dramatic, often poignant." Ages 10-up. (Jan.) Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This tale of Ann Maria Weems's life as a slave in mid-1800s Maryland, and her subsequent escape to freedom on the Underground Rail Road is an enthralling blend of history, the true story of a young girl fighting her way North to freedom, and the love (and hatred) that man heaps on man. Ms. Carbone brings the 1850s, slavery, and the Railroad to life with precise, well-researched, taut writing that's never maudlin or preachy. Ann Maria is unforgettable. Ms. Carbone is a masterful writer. Please check out her other books, including *Blood on the River: James Town, 1607*. My son, a 7th grader, is reading it right now, and can't put it down. I'm next in line for that one! I purchased the Random House Yearling Paperback version in November, 2013. Trade paperback size, color photo cover on slick white paper, card stock. One photo inside of Ann Maria Weems "Wanted" poster. Regular off-white school library book paper, bound with glue. Typeface appears to be a regular serif, easy to read. Prices on back: US \$6.99/\$7.99 CAN. English version. Suggested RL: 5.3 ages 10-13. ISBN: 0-440-41707-4. No typos found. Looks like educators who want to order in quantity can contact the publisher directly.

I am a fourth grade teacher and chose this book to read aloud to my class after having read *Blood on the River*. Ms. Carbone does a wonderful job of presenting the history of this time in a way that keeps the reader engaged and guessing. Her portrayal of the trials of the main character, Ann, is

captivating and emotional. I thoroughly enjoyed using this book to show my class how wonderful writing can be when done properly. The only caution I have is that there are a few spots in the book that have physical violence and where the "N" word is used which may merit some discussion with younger readers. My class thoroughly enjoyed this wonderful novel.

This is the 2nd book I have read by Elisa Carbone (the first one was the story about the founding of Jamestown in 1607, recommended to me by a 10 year-old student who read it in school). I am a senior citizen and I could not stop reading this book! The author does an incredible job of her research and then surrounds her story with plausible fiction. I plan to order her other books, as she makes Human History --- and all the heartfelt emotions -- come alive!

I have long been interested in the history of the Underground Railroad and of the ordinary people caught up in the Civil war. This book captures both elements - the desperation felt by families enslaved by white landowners as they face the selling off one by one of their children and loved ones and their attempts over many decades to reunite the family in the free world. The other side of the story focuses on ordinary families - slave owners and non slave owners as they face the slow but inevitable destruction of their way of life by war, disease and poverty. I loved the characters and was totally immersed in the story from page one.

I love the book, and the story hits close to home for me and my family. As an educator, this book covers subjects that don't typically get enough attention.

"Stealing Freedom" gives a look at the treatment of slaves with an eyes wide open truth. I loved the story line and the glimpse of the Underground Railroad. The risk and chances that regular men and women took to help a fellow human!

My daughter first read this book in 3rd or 4th grade, and has re-read it every year since then (she's now in 8th grade). It has ignited in her a passion to learn more about the treatment of African-Americans and their struggle for civil rights. I'm sure it was the gateway for her reading "The Help", as well as seeing the movie made from the book. Isn't that what you want a story to do: encourage further investigation and thought on the subject?

Had to get this book for a summer assigned reading project...it was a nice story with important

messages...we all enjoyed it!

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