

Study Guide



When Libby thinks she can do whatever she sets out to do, she gives away a life-or-death secret. What will happen to Jordan's family and the people who risk their lives in the Underground Railroad?

Hi Friends—Welcome to Minnesota Territory!

Can Libby go beyond failure and earn trust once again?

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

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

navigable

bluff, as in geography

branch, as in a river

tributary

cookhouse

roustabouts

pike

boom

boom site

raft, as for lumbermen

red shirt

log raft

fugitive, as for escaped prisoner

Let's Talk About . . . The scene

See the map at the front of the book. Notice how the St. Croix River branches off from the Mississippi River to reach Stillwater, a short distance above St. Paul. Why were navigable rivers so important in this time?

- **The time** In the Adventures of the Northwoods series men sent logs down the St. Croix River to sawmills in Stillwater. Other logs were floated farther downriver. Why would there be a great need for lumber?
- **The reality . . . What is truth? And what is fiction?** Do you believe that Nate is telling the truth about how many prisoners escaped? Why or why not? Keep your eyes open, and you'll discover the answer!

Let's Talk About . . . The story

To find something in the story, 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.

- In the second week of May, 1857, why would the people of Stillwater give the *Christina* such a warm welcome? (ch. 1)
- If you joined Libby and the others on the road high on the bluff how would you feel? Have you ever been on a really scary road? Describe it for us.
- Whose hand reaches up the rope to the pipe? What clue tells you?
- In what four different ways did Nate, Jordan, Caleb, and Libby react to danger? (ch. 2)
- Why does Jordan have good reason to feel proud? What had his daddy done for him?

How does Jordan plan to use what he calls his value?

- After the accident on the cliff, Libby thought back to her long walk from Reads Landing to Red Wing (*Race for Freedom*). During that time she asked God for His love and forgiveness. Now that commitment to Him is a precious memory to Libby. Why?

- From the reporter Caleb learned more about the escaped prisoner. What was his name? Why had he gone to prison? (ch. 4)
- Be a detective! Give reasons why Libby feels suspicious about the man on the deck (ch. 4) and the man in the general store. (ch. 5)
- Read the description at the beginning of chapter 5 to see how log rafts were put together. What was a string of logs?

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

- Why does Jordan now feel overwhelmed and scared about what he plans to do? (ch. 5)
- Caleb is honest about the dangers Jordan will face, but asks, "What is God telling you?" What three gifts did the Lord give Jordan for leading his people to freedom?
- Caleb shows Jordan a verse about facing something hard. In 2 Corinthians 12:9 the Lord told Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee." What does the word *sufficient* mean?
- Today's English Version reads "My grace is all you need, for my power is greatest when you are weak."
- How can that promise help each one of us?

- Paul believes God's promise and says, "For when I am weak, then I am strong." Why can God's power be strongest when we feel weak?
- How did that verse help Jordan? (See ch. 5, last paragraph in the first section.)
- What did his pastor tell Jordan about the way he was created?
- What does God want you to know about how *you* are created?

Let's Talk About . . . Secrets

- As Libby thinks about how she gave away Jordan's secret, what upsets her most? (ch. 6)
- Earlier in the book Libby thought that becoming a Christian would make her life easier—that she would say and do all the right things. Is that always true? Why or why not?
- Libby is so upset about telling a secret that she talks to Caleb's grandmother. "Some secrets aren't meant for keeping," Gran says. "What if someone does something wrong and says you can't tell on them?" Was Libby's secret that kind? (ch. 7)

- What does Gran say about the kind of secret that needs to be kept?
- What does Gran tell Libby about how the Underground Railroad works? Why did Gran let Caleb be part of the Railroad? What choice did Gran make about what she believed?
- Gran tells Libby, “Sometimes we have to live with what happens because of what we did.” Explain what that means for Libby. But what hope does Gran offer Libby?
- What does Libby now understand about Jordan’s proud look?

Let’s Talk About . . . Making choices

- When Libby asks Jordan, “How can you forgive me?” he says, “I ain’t got no choice” (ch. 8). What does Jordan mean?
- Do any of us have a choice about whether we forgive a person who hurts us? If we *don’t* forgive, what happens to us? If we *do* forgive, what happens to us?
- Jordan’s daddy said, “It ain’t how people treats you on the outside that counts. It’s what you is on the inside. You gots to be sure that be good, ’cause you can’t run away from yourself . . .” When Libby asked what Jordan meant, he said, “Wherever you is, you is the person you is goin’

to be with.” What can we do to make sure we are the person we want to be with?

- When the memory of how she had failed still troubled Libby, she asked Jordan, “What if I do the wrong thing?” What did he tell her?
- On the trip into Missouri Libby blamed herself for not being able to make connections with Caleb and Jordan. (ch. 10) Then Libby remembered Gran’s words. “Being a Christian doesn’t mean that all your problems are gone. It means that you have Jesus to help you in everything you face.” How has Jesus helped you in something you’ve faced? If you can, give examples.
- Why did a slave such as Serena use a blank look that hid her thoughts and feelings? (ch. 11)
- Whose side was Mrs. Weaver on? Why? What did she understand about herself and what she had done over the years?
- Why does Hattie want to wait for Jordan? (ch. 12) Why would it be easy for her to say, “I didn’t really hear God. That was long ago”? Why would it be easy for her to panic and leave before Jordan comes?

- What holds Hattie steady? What does she plan to do that night?
- Before the trip Caleb made a promise about how he would treat his friend Jordan (ch. 8). What was that promise? Why did Jordan know it was necessary?
- As Jordan walks toward the house, what makes him seem weak and helpless? (ch. 13)
- What song did Jordan sing? Why is it a code song?
- Why do Negro spirituals mean so much to all of us? Talk about what is often a double meaning and also a deeper meaning in the words of a song.
- What does it mean for Libby to think, *Facing something hard isn't the same as failing. I succeeded in giving Jordan time!* (ch. 14). Tell about something difficult you've had to face. What happened?
- How can knowing how to do practical things help us follow through on what the Lord wants done?
- Why was this trip the very hardest for Caleb? Why did his words mean so much to Libby? (ch. 19)

Lets Talk About . . . Digging Deeper

To be a Freedom Seeker, it's important to understand and follow God's guidance.

In John 10:14 Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me" (NIV). Earlier in the chapter he explains that the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. The sheep follow him because they know his voice.

If you have a family pet—a dog, for instance—you've seen the same thing happen when you come home. The dog recognizes your step. He's there to welcome you. He knows your voice.

Jordan has an amazing ability for hearing God's guidance. Libby asks Caleb, "How do you know if God is really talking to Jordan?" Caleb answers, "I watch to see what happens. I want to know if it's something good, like God's protection. If Jordan is hearing the Lord, it should help people, not hurt them."

If you'd like to increase your ability to hear God's leading, it helps to ask, "Lord, what do you want me to know about . . . ?" and finish the sentence. Write down the answers you get in a special place where you can keep a record or journal.

Watch to see what happens in a few or many of the following ways:

The Bible: Ask, "What kind of verse is the Lord making real to me?" The answer should fit with the overall teaching of the Bible.

The Holy Spirit's help: The words seem to have a holy spotlight or jump off the page.

Inward assurance: A sense that you know what God wants.

Peace: When praying about what to do, you sense a peace in your mind and spirit.

Uneasiness: The opposite of peace. Pay attention. Stop! Look! Listen! What Jordan calls the jiggles.

Godly counsel from a trustworthy Christian, often an adult.

Practical leading: A plan, if that is needed, and a way to do it.

Confirming circumstances: In spite of obstacles things fall in place. The plan works.

God's provision: Yes! Amazing!

Go back through this novel and find the places where Jordan senses leading from the Lord. Put a marker in those places. Talk or write about the way Jordan follows the Lord's guidance.

Are there ways you recognize God's leading in your own life?

Let's Talk About . . . Digging Deeper for logging

For more about logging in Minnesota and along the Mississippi River, see the Minnesota History Center, St. Paul, www.mnhs.org. See also the St. Louis County Heritage and Arts Center, J. C. Ryan Logging Room, in the Depot, Duluth, Minnesota, www.thehistorypeople.org.

Let's Talk About . . . Digging Deeper to learn about leaders

See the Acknowledgments in this novel for leaders in southeastern Iowa who shaped history.

When Samson needs to rescue a young boy, Libby and Caleb pay attention. How will Peter become part of the *Christina* family?

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