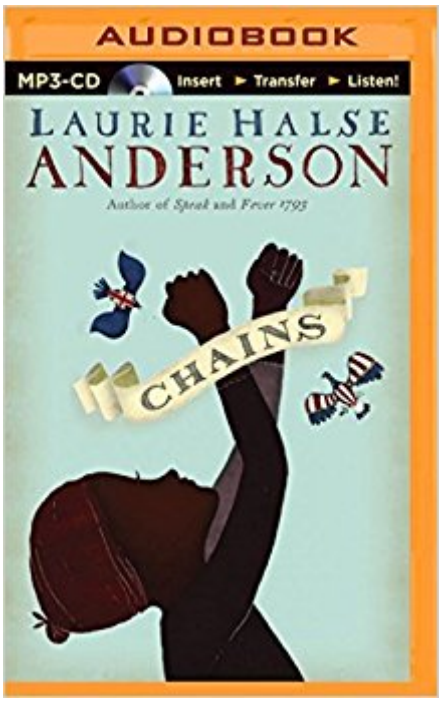
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Chains (Chains Series)



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Synopsis

As the Revolutionary War begins, thirteen-year-old Isabel wages her own fight...for freedom. Promised freedom upon the death of their owner, she and her sister, Ruth, in a cruel twist of fate become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who have no sympathy for the American Revolution and even less for Ruth and Isabel. When Isabel meets Curzon, a slave with ties to the Patriots, he encourages her to spy on her owners, who know details of British plans for invasion. She is reluctant at first, but when the unthinkable happens to Ruth, Isabel realizes her loyalty is available to the bidder who can provide her with freedom.From acclaimed author Laurie Halse Anderson comes this compelling, impeccably researched novel that shows the lengths we can go to cast off our chains, both physical and spiritual.Winner of the Margaret A. Edwards Award 2009

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 6Ã¢â ¬â œ10Ã¢â ¬â •Set in New York City at the beginning of the American Revolution, Chains addresses the price of freedom both for a nation and for individuals. Isabel tells the story of her life as a slave. She was sold with her five-year-old sister to a cruel Loyalist family even though the girls were to be free upon the death of their former owner. She has hopes of finding a way to freedom and becomes a spy for the rebels, but soon realizes that it is difficult to trust anyone. She chooses to find someone to help her no matter which side he or she is on. With short chapters, each beginning with a historical quote, this fast-paced novel reveals the heartache and struggles of a

country and slave fighting for freedom. The characters are well developed, and the situations are realistic. An author's note gives insight into issues surrounding the Revolutionary War and the fight for the nation's freedom even though 20 percent of its people were in chains. Well researched and affecting in its presentation, the story offers readers a fresh look at the conflict and struggle of a developing nation.Ã¢â ¬â •Denise Moore, O'Gorman Junior High School, Sioux Falls, SD Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Starred Review In the spring of 1776, Isabel, a teenage slave, and her sister, Ruth, are sold to ruthless, wealthy loyalists in Manhattan. While running errands, Isabel is approached by rebels, who promise her freedom (and help finding Ruth, who has been sent away) if she agrees to spy. Using the invisibility her slave status brings, Isabel lurks and listens as Master Lockton and his fellow Tories plot to crush the rebel uprisings, but the incendiary proof that she carries to the rebel camp doesnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t bring the desired rewards. Like the central character in M. T. AndersonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Octavian Nothing duet, Isabel finds that both patriots and loyalists support slavery. The specifics of IsabelÃ¢â ¬â„¢s daily drudgery may slow some readers, but the catalogue of chores communicates the brutal rhythms of unrelenting toil, helping readers to imagine vividly the realities of IsabelÃ¢â ¬â„¢s life. The storyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s perspective creates effective contrasts. Overwhelmed with domestic concerns, Isabel and indeed all the women in the household learn about the war from their marginalized position: they listen at doors to rooms where they are excluded, and they collect gossip from the streets. Anderson explores elemental themes of power (Ã¢â ¬Å“She can do anything. I can do nothing,Ã¢â ¬Â• Isabel realizes about her sadistic owner), freedom, and the sources of human strength in this searing, fascinating story. The extensive back matter includes a documented section that addresses many questions about history that readers will want to discuss. Grades 7-10. --Gillian Engberg --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Some books just blow you away. Laurie Halse Anderson did that in her trilogy beginning with Chains. A National Book Award finalist this book deserves all its awards.In a time like today when we face the possible repression of our people, it behooves us to examine history. So many of us believe our founding fathers were good people. We believe what they said and did was sacrosanct. We've honor them and set them up as near dieties. But, in reality they were people. Full of flaws, just like us. Had they lost the Revolutionary War, they would have been shunned and called traitors. Having won, we herald them as heroes.In Chains we examine what it might have been like during

that turbulent, uncertain time to have been a slave. The main character, Isabel, is a Negro child, trying to protect her younger sister. Alone, enslaved, abused, she struggles to achieve her rightful freedoms. The author did an amazing job of telling Isabel’s story without overdramatizing the hardships. Made it easier for me to read.The times are tempestuous at best. Finding herself in New York City at the time of the British invasion, Isabel sways from the rebel side to the British side. Her goal is not a country’s freedom, which she recognizes as not pertaining to her, but the freedom of herself and her sister. She’ll risk her life to achieve that goal.Each chapter begins with a clip from a primary source, a newspaper article, a letter from a patriot or a British soldier, an excerpt from our historical documents. Those headings ground the chapter in history. The author strives to tell Isabel’s story as accurately as she can all these years later.Book 2 and 3 are finished. Thank goodness for those of us just finding this trilogy. Because when you finish Chains, you’ll not want to wait to keep reading.Here are some examples of the beautiful writing:...Being loyal to the one who owned me gave me prickly thoughts, like burrs trapped in my shift, pressing into my skin with every step....There was truth in his words, hard truth, a hammer sticking a stone..."Gossip is the foul smell of the Devil’s backside," that’s what Momma always said....Her voice sounded raw, like it had been run against a grater.The absolute essence of this first book is written in these words from Isabel’s mouth: I was chained between two nations.Enjoy this wonderful series. If it doesn’t win the National Book Award, it certainly should have!!i

Quite possibly Chains is one of the best, most difficult, mesmerizing, lilting pieces of American historical fiction I’ve ever read.Isabel and her 5 year old, "slow" sister Ruth are slaves. They were supposed to get their freedom upon the death of their mistress, but in a cruel twist of fairly common fate, the son of their mistress sells them to a well-to-do Tory couple on their way back to New York.Only it’s 1776 and New York is caught in the grip of rebellion and political upheaval. The first person Isabel meets is the slave of a rebel patriot, Curzon, who makes it known to Isabel that any information she can pass on about her Tory master will be rewarded.But despite risking herself for the patriots and the implied promise of freedom, Isabel will contend with broken promises and refusal to acknowledge her humanity from the very men fomenting war to protest their own lack of voice and freedom.What side can a slave choose?From the first chapter Anderson sets you down in Isabel’s work-a-day world and immerses you in 1776 New York. There are primary source quotations at the beginning of each chapter that only drive home the terrible irony of a time people waxed eloquent on freedom and still kept slaves. Anderson slowly strips away any naivete a reader might have as she imprisons Isabel in cruel situations where she can not care for the only precious

thing she as left-- her sister, Ruth.You can learn more about famous patriots and the Revolutionary war reading this book then many a textbook-- and the lessons will sink deep in your brain because of how Isabel experiences them and the meaning it has for her own life as a slave.And Isabel's voice. A perfect balance of gritty reality, a touch of African spirituality, and that stream of consciousness sensibility that Anderson brings to her main characters that let you inside a world so utterly different from your own in a way that makes it familiar and terrifyingly real.I wouldn't necessarily hand this book to a younger YA reader without being sure they could handle some very cruel (but realistic) portrayals of slapping, beating, and at one point branding of a slave.Highly recommended.

This book is a great one for a middle schooler. It has kept my son, who hates to read, interested enough. He does not argue when it is reading time. I read the chapters before him and then we talk about them. They history in the book really brings about some great questions from him. It has engaged his mind and he is enjoying it. This is huge as we have struggled for years to get him to enjoy books

This book is historical fiction covering the time period of just under a year. The author wove real people and events from New York in the early part of the Revolutionary War into the story of a fictional slave girl. The story really drew me in. I highly recommend reading Chains to anyone interested in or studying that time period.

Arrived in time stated. For a used book this was still in good condition. My daughter needed for school summer reading. Purchased used because the teacher wanted the students to annotate directly in the book. My daughter enjoyed the story. She stated slow plot at first but got better as she read more.

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