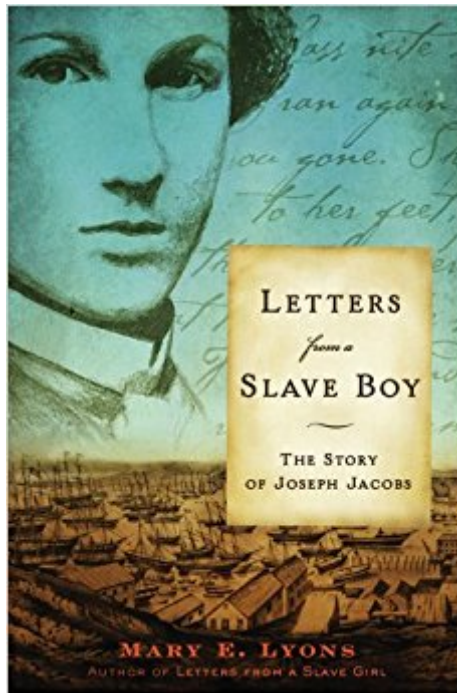


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Letters From A Slave Boy: The Story Of Joseph Jacobs



Synopsis

Like his mother and grandmother before him, Joseph Jacobs was born into slavery. Joseph lives with his grandmother and sister in North Carolina, but he has not seen his mother for more than seven years. Unbeknownst to Joseph, his mother, Harriet, has been hiding from her owner in the attic of the house that Joseph lives in. But when Harriet's hiding place is in danger of being revealed, she is forced to flee north to safety only moments after being reunited with her family. Devastated by losing his mother for the second time, Joseph begins to ponder the nature of the world he lives in. Soon Joseph, seeking freedom and a place where he can be himself, follows his mother north. As he searches for answers, Joseph experiences life in Massachusetts, California, Australia, and aboard a whaling ship -- but there's no place where Joseph feels that he can truly be free. In this companion novel to *Letters from a Slave Girl*, Joseph's stirring quest for freedom and identity is told through letters imagined by the author. Based on the real-life stories of Harriet and Joseph Jacobs, *Letters from a Slave Boy* is set against the backdrop of some of the most exciting and turbulent times in American history.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 710 (What's this?)

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Publisher: Simon Pulse; Reissue edition (January 6, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0689878680

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Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #781,516 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #57 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Historical Fiction > Biographical > United States](#) #271 in [Books > Teens > Historical Fiction >](#)

[United States > 19th Century](#) #293 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > United States](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 4 Joseph, son of Harriet Jacobs from *Letters from a Slave Girl* (S & S, 1992), writes to various relatives and acquaintances, sharing thoughts and events of his life as a

slave from 1839 to 1860. The "letters" are written primarily as a journal. They begin when Joseph is nine years old, and a plantation owner's son is "teaching" him how to "rite." Although his life in his free great-grandmother's house is better than that of most slaves, he is always aware of his status. Escaping North Carolina, Joseph makes his way first to Boston and then to New Bedford, MA, where he boards a whaling ship. Later he travels to the gold fields of California. He is willing to do anything to earn freedom money for his family-even "pass" for white. However, Joseph's lack of financial acuity, his gambling, and, of course, his color make him easy prey, and he fails to save the needed funds. Despite this, he remains optimistic in his final letter as he sets sail for a better life in Australia. The "letters" are short and the pace is quick. The dialect and spelling give authenticity without making the text difficult to read and understand. Notes by the author explain that most events are fictionalized because little information is known about the real Joseph. Historical data supports the fiction. A reproduction of Joseph's protection paper issued in July 1846, photographs, and drawings from the time period are included. This title stands on its own, but children who appreciated the forthright perspective of the first book will want to read this one as well.

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This companion book to Lyons' *Letters from a Slave Girl: The Story of Harriet Jacobs* (1992) tells what happened to Harriet's son, Joseph. After a very effective introduction brings readers up to speed, the story begins in 1839. Nine-year-old Joseph, living in North Carolina, begins a series of letters, addressed initially to his mother but later to others as well; his writings serve as a reflective first-person narrative. Over the next 14 years, he escapes to Boston, works on a whaling ship, and travels to New York and, later, California. There are inevitably loose ends that might have been tied more neatly in a work of pure imagination, but if close ties to a historical record limit the shape of this, they also bolster its emotional truth as when Harriet expresses her fear that her half-white children will not be accepted in their community of freed slaves or when Joseph hears that the Fugitive Slave Act has been passed in California, where he expected to find freedom. In an illustrated note, Lyons reflects on her research and writing, as well as providing a glossary of period racial slurs and lists of suggested books.

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This is an excellent book! It's well written and an easy read. It's also a great, soft introduction to

slavery for children grades 6 and higher. I bought six copies to gift to friends and family.

A book that hooks you with its story. Joseph's life is so interesting it makes you want to know more. I highly recommend it..

good seller. I will recommend it to my friend. If you have only one product, this is the one to have my family all need it , just fine.

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