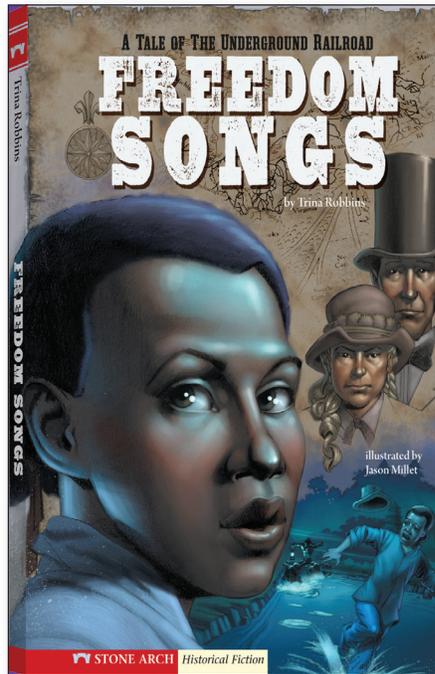




READER'S THEATER (Teacher's Version)



Freedom Songs by Trina Robbins

PAPERBACK ISBN: 978-1-4342-0495-0
HARDCOVER ISBN: 978-1-4342-0445-5

Characters: **Sarah, a young slave – reads slightly above grade level**
Mr. Marlow, a slave owner – struggling reader
Mrs. Marlow, his wife – reads below grade level
Mr. Levy, a traveling peddler – reads at grade level
Mrs. Bennett, a Quaker lady – reads slightly below grade level
Narrator – reads above grade level

Genre: **Historical Fiction**

Ages: **8-12**

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Freedom Songs page 1

- Narrator:** Sarah was in the middle of a wonderful dream about her mother's pancakes. When all of the sudden, smack!
- Mrs. Marlow:** You lazy girl! You are supposed to be fanning flies off of my baby. Look at her! She has fly bites all over her face!
- Sarah's Thoughts:** I could not talk back to Mrs. Marlow because she was my mistress. I had to obey her because she owned me. I was a slave, and had to do whatever she wanted. Mrs. Marlow was so mad at me for falling asleep she made me go downstairs and start a fire. Then I had to serve cakes and lemonade to her guest.
- Narrator:** Mrs. Marlow's guest was Mr. Levy, a traveling peddler. Mr. Levy sold beautiful silks and laces for dresses.
- Mr. Levy:** I just came from Philadelphia. People there don't agree with slavery, but the women sure do like pretty silks.
- Narrator:** As Sarah filled Mr. Levy's glass with more lemonade he glanced at her.
- Sarah's Thoughts:** Mr. Levy was staring at me, aiming his words at me. But what was he trying to say to me?
- Mr. Levy:** This is my finest cloth. I just sold some to a Quaker lady. The Quaker lady lives 15 miles north, down the road, next to the creek.
- Sarah's Thoughts:** I only had a moment to think about what Mr. Levy had said before Mrs. Marlow began yelling at me again.
- Mrs. Marlow:** These cakes are burned! Take them back to the kitchen, and throw them away.
- Sarah's Thoughts:** The cakes didn't look burned to me, and they smelled awfully good. I hadn't eaten all day, and I was starving. As I put the tray on the kitchen table, I thought about taking a small bite. I knew I would get yelled at, but it sure was a waste to throw away good food.
- Narrator:** Sarah looked around to make sure no one was watching. Then she took a small bite.

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- Sarah's Thoughts:** The cakes were delicious! Slaves never got to eat anything as fine as cakes.
- Narrator:** Just as Sarah was about to swallow her bite, she heard footsteps behind her.
- Mrs. Marlow:** Thief! How dare you steal my food!
- Narrator:** Sarah ran away.
- Mrs. Marlow:** Get back here, or I'll give you a whooping!
- Sarah's Thoughts:** Mrs. Marlow was sure made at me! I tried to stay away from the house the rest of the day.
- Narrator:** Later that day, Sarah heard Mrs. Marlow complaining about her to Mr. Marlow through an open window.
- Mrs. Marlow:** We should never have bought that girl. She's lazy and a thief.
- Mr. Marlow:** I've been thinking about selling her to someone farther south. But first we'll give her the whipping she deserves.
- Sarah's Thoughts:** Oh no! I had never been whipped. But I remembered when Mr. Marlow whipped a field hand just for being slow. It was horrible! The poor man's back was covered with blood afterward. I was not going to let them whip me or sell me further south, where slaves were treated even worse than here. I had to run away.
- Narrator:** Sarah waited until nighttime so she wouldn't be missed until the next morning. Before Sarah could run away she needed to say good-bye to her mother. Her mother lived a mile down the road and was owned by another family.
- Sarah's Thoughts:** It was hard to leave my mother behind, but I promised to come back for her once we were all free. I didn't know much about the Quakers, but Mr. Levy said they were against slavery. I knew the way North by looking at the stars. I have heard the songs about the Drinking Gourd.

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Narrator:

Slaves used to sing songs about the Big Dipper, also called the Drinking Gourd. Its stars pointed north, and in the Northern states slaves were free. The slave owners didn't know that the songs the slaves sang taught them how to escape.

Sarah's Thoughts:

As I traveled along the moonlit trail I had to be careful. When my master found out I was gone he would send slave hunters after me.

Narrator:

Sarah came across a scarecrow and took its hat. Since the slave hunters would be looking for a girl, she decided to dress like a boy. As the moon started to disappear, Sarah came to the Quaker lady's house.

Sarah's Thoughts:

Should I knock on the door? What if this is the wrong house? Maybe I should wait until the morning when it is safer. Maybe then I could see if the house really belongs to a Quaker lady.

Narrator:

Sarah saw a barn next to the house. She went in and found an empty horse stable with a stack of hay. Sarah decided to lie down and soon fell asleep.

Mrs. Bennett:

Good morning, young lady. I hope you slept well.

Sarah's Thoughts:

Where was I? Was I dead? Is this lady going to turn me in?

Mrs. Bennett:

Come inside and rest some more. When you are feeling better come downstairs, I have breakfast for you.

Narrator:

Is the Quaker lady really going to help Sarah? Or is she going to turn Sarah over to the slave hunters? To find out if Sarah makes it safely to the North and freedom, read *Freedom Songs* by Trina Robbins.

THE END