



Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom

Carole Boston Weatherford , Kadir Nelson (Illustrator)

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This poetic book is a resounding tribute to Tubman's strength, humility, and devotion. With proper reverence, Weatherford and Nelson do justice to the woman who, long ago, earned over and over the name Moses.

Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom Details

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Author : Carole Boston Weatherford , Kadir Nelson (Illustrator)

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Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Biography, History, Nonfiction



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Violeta Tistova says

What a beautiful book! I love Harriet Tubman's story and I think of her as an absolute hero. I haven't heard her story in a long time and reading through this from the perspective of a children's book was amazing. The illustrations are stunning and the message even more. I would recommend this book to everyone to read.

Mary says

A stunningly beautiful picture book about Harriet Tubman focusing on her faith to guide her to freedom. Nelson's striking illustrations and Weatherford's narrative of Harriet's journey -- which include her conversations with God -- make this story an inspiring and deeply personal retelling of how Harriet became known as Moses.

Lauren Waters says

This was an interesting telling of Harriet Tubman's spiritual journey through the underground railroad. I appreciated how the text sometimes appeared within the illustrations.

Marie says

Review was completed with the hardcover 2006 edition.

Even the title, Moses; When Harriet Tubman Led her People to Freedom causes the reader to pause and think of an extraordinary person empowered by his or her belief in God. This historic fictional picture book, written by Carole Boston Weatherford and illustrated by Kadir Nelson conveys Harriet Tubman's struggle to free as many African American slaves as possible. We have read many stories about Harriet Tubman before but this one has a new twist. The author brings to life the incredible faith and trust Harriet had in God to guide her to safety and this story doesn't disappoint.

The text is lyrical and poetic in third person narrative and dialogue between Harriet and God (in different typeset).

“Lord, I’m going to hold steady on to You.”

And God whispers back in the breeze,

“I’m going to see you through, child.”

It has her conversation with God that brings her to freedom and greatness. She is free but misses her family so she returns to guide them even though she risks once again becoming enslaved. She returns nineteen more times to the south to free more than 300 slaves. The simple text works well with the beautiful illustrations. The reader can see how Nelson would win the Coretta Scott Award. With muted earthy blues and browns

Nelson's illustrations becomes an additional character all on its own.

The age range for this text is 5-8 years (determined on the front flap) and the Lexile level is 660 (according to Novelist Plus). The foreword blurb and author's note at the end give needed background information for the young reader. This would be an excellent read aloud for K-3. Older children 5th grade and up might be able to write a poem from the point of the view of one of the slaves traveling with Harriet as she brings them to freedom.

Jill says

As the author writes in an afterward, this fictional story, illustrated by the inimitable Kadir Nelson, is based on the *spiritual* journey of Harriet Tubman, an escaped slave who went on to lead many more to freedom.

Harriet was born into slavery around 1820 on a plantation in Maryland. She decided to escape in 1849 when she was in her late twenties. Her master had died and she feared being sold farther south where she heard it was even worse. Harriet had been beaten often. In addition, she was once hit in the head with a two-pound weight by an overseer (who was aiming for a different slave but hit her instead). For the rest of her life, Harriet suffered disabling seizures, headaches, and powerful visionary and dream experiences. She believed these visions to be revelations from God. (The author incorporates into her lyrical text Harriet's messages and signs she attributed to God, without mentioning Harriet's head injury.)

Harriet's escape was aided by the network of sympathizers known as the Underground Railroad. She journeyed ninety miles to Philadelphia, but soon after returned to Maryland to bring back her family members. And she *kept* going back to rescue others, in spite of the dangers. The famous abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison began to call her Moses, after the Biblical prophet who led the slaves out of Egypt. She claimed it wasn't her; it was the Lord, guiding her through her visions.

But Frederick Douglass insisted on her *own* role when he wrote to her in a letter in 1868:

The midnight sky and the silent stars have been the witnesses of your devotion to freedom and of your heroism. Excepting John Brown—of sacred memory—I know of no one who has willingly encountered more perils and hardships to serve our enslaved people than you have."

Harriet was never captured. When the Civil War erupted, she became a common fixture in Union camps, assisting fugitive slaves seeking refuge with the northern army. She also provided intelligence to the military based on her knowledge of the terrain of the Underground Railroad.

In her later years, she was frequently ill and penniless, but still worked for black rights and women's suffrage. She died of pneumonia in 1913 at age 93.

Moses is a lovely book, even if it only deals with a narrow slice of Harriet's life. It puts events into a very positive light, focusing on Harriet's bravery, compassion, and deep religious beliefs.

What really makes this book exceptional however are the amazing paintings by Kadir Nelson. He portrays

such a wide range of emotion in the faces he depicts, and there is so much power in his work. I can't rave enough about his illustrations!

Evaluation: This take on the story of Harriet Tubman will appeal to those who would like the emphasis on faith. If that is not your thing, however, the prose is still quite lovely, and the illustrations are spectacular.

Madison Cosby says

Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom was a book that would be classified under Historical Fiction. This book could be used for any grades between 3 and 5. I think the level that you dive into the book could change based on grade level though.

One way I would use this book in my future classroom would be to talk about slavery. Whether this was an introduction to the topic or it was a concluding part, both would be really good. This book is written in such a way that it can both ease into the topic of slavery, or conclude it by saying that despite what their circumstances were, she was still able to be a Hero. This book could also be used to more specifically about the underground railroads and how those worked, or as a discussion about taking action despite the hard circumstances, and looking at the students own lives to see what they can do to better the people around them. Students could also analyze the texts and the character traits that Harriet Tubman showed throughout her journey.

I really liked the way this book expressed Harriet Tubman's Journey. It was obviously an intense topic, but it was written so poetically that it almost brought a calming presence to a hard situation. This is what made this book a WOW book for me.

This book was my e-book.

Ij says

This book is a fictional story about Harriet Tubman, which is based on some historical facts. The foreword and author's notes have some additional history. I would have preferred the story to have more history and less of a religious theme.

Kadir Nelson had great illustrations in this picture book.

Kathryn says

In the beginning, I wasn't sure how much I would like this book. The narrative just didn't grab me right away and seemed a bit disjointed. Yet, at the end, I was deeply moved by the story so I guess something worked right ;-) The illustrations by the talented Kadir Nelson are also stunning.

Prospective audiences should know that this book focuses on the spiritual side of Harriet Tubman's original escape from slavery. She is led by the voice of God on her way to Canada. I personally loved the approach the author chose to take in showing Harriet's spiritual journey. Since Tubman was deeply religious, I think it makes sense that there is a book out there highlighting her spiritual side, the inward journey and inspiration that led her to do so many remarkable things outwardly. But, it's in the Author's Note at the end of the book that one will find the details about Harriet Tubman that most of us are familiar with (leading slaves on the underground railroad) so the story itself may not be the best introduction to Harriet Tubman--it is probably better appreciated in conjunction with a story that explains more about her underground railroad days.

However, I've read about Tubman before so I liked this different perspective. In any event, I am always so inspired and impressed by her courage in returning to the South so many times; while it is understandable that she would want to save her family, the fact she returned again and again to help other slaves is truly great. I appreciated that the author's note showed how Harriet had been so brave, intelligent and firm in her sense of what was right, even from a young age such as when she helped another slave or when she hid in order to escape a whipping.

Traci says

Deep love of her people and strong faith in her Lord gave Harriet Tubman a purpose, a calling. She followed the path the Lord set out for her, freeing many slaves until her dying days.

This picture book written by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Kadir Nelson and published by Jump At the Sun Hyperion Books, shows us her heart with all of its emotions.

Poignant, and beautiful this book needs to be read to every child.

#biography #love

#PB

Lisa Vegan says

So, I loved the foreword at the beginning and the author's note at the end. I liked the illustrations. The historical fiction story didn't do it for me. Part of it was in the incessant religion, with which I couldn't relate. (I could say something about her head injury here but I'm not going to go there.) But the religion wasn't really my problem with the story. This woman was extremely religious and so telling her story in this manner makes sense. It was that the words didn't flow in a pleasant way, I wanted more about her leading slaves to freedom along the Underground Railroad, which is how I learned about her growing up, and there was just something lacking for me; I'm not sure what. The ancillary material does give me all the "missing" information. I did learn quite a bit. I didn't know she'd never lost someone she was helping escape from slavery, I didn't know (or remember) how she saved her own family members, or how she got her name, or much about her life when she was a slave. I'm having a very hard time rating this. I didn't personally enjoy it

all that much; I'd rather have read another book about this woman. But, I think it's a worthy book: fine illustrations, good information about slavery and the Underground Railroad and its helpers, and Tubman herself. I do think most readers will appreciate this book more than I did. Most people will not be turned off by the religion and many will like it better because of the religion. She was a remarkable woman and I'm glad that a book about her was chosen for this month's (theme of Black History Month) Picture Books Club at the Children's Books group.

So, foreword and author's note: 5 stars, illustrations: 3-1/2 to 4-1/2 stars, story: 2 to 2-1/2 stars.

Lauren Johnson says

This picture book is a beautiful account of Harriet Tubman's escape of slavery. Carole Boston Weatherford's fictionalized story included many historical facts. The reader is shown her journey to freedom through her conversation with God. The author does an amazing job of spotlighting the feelings and struggles Harriet Tubman had along the journey. This is definitely a wow book for me because it not only tells of how Harriet Tubman led hundreds of slaves to freedom but it also gives insight to the trials she was able to overcome. This text would be appropriate for elementary students of all ages. The author chooses to focus on Harriet Tubman's accomplishments, how she was able to help so many slaves, and how other men and women helped her and others get to freedom. This text can be used in multiple ways a classroom. Teachers can use this text to show the life of Harriet Tubman, and the history of how she and others escaped slavery. The picture book could also be used when teaching writing techniques. The teacher could show students through this text how to incorporate dialogue in their writing. This could inspire students not only to write using dialogue, but also shows them how with faith and persistence they can also accomplish great and mighty things!

J-Lynn says

This fictionalized story of Harriet Tubman and her journey toward freedom takes place mostly as a conversation between Tubman and God. The book has a forward that explains slavery and an afterward with biographical information about Tubman.

Kadir Nelson's detailed, elaborate drawings are a study in shading, use of light, and perspective.

Sara Patterson says

Great illustrations and color. Also a reminder that God is always near.

Aly Gutierrez says

- Summary

-Harriet Tubman was a religious woman that did not understand why she deserved to be in chains. The North Star was her sign that she was meant to be free. She tells no one of her plans the next day. That night, she

chants “When that old chariot comes, I’m going to leave you...”. It finally came time, and she began running to the swamp. She sleeps in the dark woods and arrives at one of the few homes that will help her, instead of turning her in. She continued, with even more help from strangers. She was grateful, but regretted leaving her family as slaves in that awful place. Risking her life, she decided to return to free her friends. After that success, she began helping other slaves in the area.

- Caldecott Honor book

- Grade level, interest level, Lexile

- Kindergarten- 4th

- Appropriate classroom use (subject area)

- Read while teaching about slavery and Harriet Tubman.

- Individual students who might benefit from reading

- Students that are interested in history or are directly connected to American slavery.

- Small group use (literature circles)

- After reading, have students analyze how she escaped, and why she returned. Reflect on what you would do in her situation. Would you return to help your friends, risking your own life?

- Whole class use (read aloud)

- After reading, analyze the steps she took to escape.

- Related books in genre/subject or content area

- There are countless books about Harriet Tubman and the escape of slaves during that time. “Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans

- Multimedia connections

- Available as a hardcover copy and paperback. As well as, available in audio.

Dolly says

This is a wonderful tale about Harriet Tubman. With its amazing illustrations by Kadir Nelson and sparse poetic narrative by Carole Boston Weatherford, this book presents a moving and spiritual picture of Harriet leaning on her faith to save herself and hundreds of slaves during numerous trips along the underground railroad.

Her tale is compared to Moses leading the Jews away from slavery in Egypt (hence the title) and the foreword speaks to the inspiration and hope that slaves drew from this story in the bible.

The author's note at the end provides more biographical information about Harriet Tubman, nicely rounding out this book. I must say that I learned as much as our girls did about this famous historical figure and we really enjoyed reading this book together.

I am very thankful that this book was one of the selections for February 2011: Black History Month with the

Picture-Book Club in the Children's Books group here on Goodreads. It's another great example of a book that I might not have discovered on my own.

This book was also selected as one of the books for the May 2017- Caldecott Honors 2003-2007 discussion at the Picture-Book Club in the Children's Books Group here at Goodreads.

Meredith Dickens says

“Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom,” written by Carole Boston Weatherford and beautifully illustrated by Kadir Nelson is a wonderful book. This book is classified under historical fiction as it tells the journey of Harriet Tubman through a spiritual lens. It takes the reader along on Harriet Tubman's journey as a slave, escapee, and pioneer of the underground railroad. This book would be great for any 3-5 classroom. I would use this book during social studies lessons about racial inequity to provide students with some background knowledge about what the African American people have endured in our country. I also would use this book to demonstrate to students the use of various text features sense the book uses a lot of imagery, similes, and other text features which develop the reader's understanding and presence in the book. The illustrations truly made this book for me along with the old south feel I got from the language used in the book. I think this book would be incredibly beneficial in the classroom when discussing remarkable women and role models such as Harriet Tubman because it is so well written.

Laura Rumohr says

Summary-

Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom was written primarily for children in grades 2-5. This is a fictional story about Harriet Tubman's journey to freedom and how she was able to help others to freedom. The entire story is a conversation between Harriet Tubman and God.

Harriet begins her journey without telling anyone (even her family) that she is leaving. When she leaves she prays for safety and guidance, and God stays with her the whole time. She finds safe places to go and hide. At one point along the way she hides in a potato hole for days until it is safe for her to come out. When Harriet Tubman finally reaches freedom she realizes that she wants to go back and help other slaves flee. She ends up saving hundreds of slaves by showing them the way to freedom through the underground railroad.

Response-

This powerful story shows the bravery that Harriet Tubman had. The conversational nature of the book seems natural and effective. To make it clear who is speaking the author chose to have Harriet's voice in one font, God's voice in another font, and the narrator's in yet another font. This helps children from confusing the character's voices.

The illustrator, Kadir Nelson does a wonderful job creating images in great detail. He uses light, shadow, and perspective to draw attention to Harriet Tubman's features and facial expressions. All of the pictures cover two pages so they are large enough to draw in the reader and to show students during a read aloud.

At the beginning of the book the author included a forward about slavery and an author's note at the end about Harriet Tubman. Both are helpful in building background knowledge of the historical time.

This book is inspiring and filled with great information about Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad.

Christine Jensen says

Approximate Interest Level/Reading Level: Upper Elementary

Format: Picture book

Awards: ALA Notable Books for Children (2007), Caldecott Honor (2007), Coretta Scott King Award (2007) Horn Book Fanfare (2006), Notable Social Studies Trade Books (2007)

Accompanied by her faith in God, Harriet Tubman risks her life, braving a terrifying escape from slavery. With a deep sense of determination and purpose, she courageously returns several more times to lead hundreds of other slaves to freedom.

The author, outwardly inspired by Harriet Tubman's religious convictions, creates both a physical and spiritual journey to freedom shared between Harriet and God. The dark illustrations of the night, the trepidatious illustrations of dawn and twilight, and the sunlit skies of freedom dramatically convey the emotional intensity of the story.

This fictionalized account of Harriet Tubman's journey is accompanied by historical information on slavery and Harriet Tubman on the opening and closing pages. This book would make a great addition to classroom's libraries during social studies units covering this period.

Winter Sophia Rose says

Empowering, Emotionally Engaging & Moving! A Beautiful Read! We Loved It!

Luann says

Amazing illustrations! Kadir Nelson's use of lights and darks is inspired. When Harriet Tubman reaches freedom, the entire page lights up. I wasn't as thrilled with the text. It was very poetic, but I would have preferred a little more information about Harriet Tubman and her experiences. Although I guess that was a conscious choice by the author since she says in her note at the end that it is a "fictional story based on the spiritual journey of Harriet Tubman." For teaching about Harriet Tubman, this would need to be paired with other books.
