

SHOW WAY

Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2008 Grades 3-5

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Show Way by Jacqueline Woodson. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2005. 38 pages.

Summary

Jacqueline Woodson's evocative first-person account traces her family's history back to her great-great-great-great grandmother, who was a slave. The story begins with Soonie's great-grandma, who was sold as a slave at the age of seven. She learns to sew quilts that tell a story and literally provide a map to freedom. Each generation of daughters carries on the rich tradition of strength and sewing, providing hope to other slaves. The first free woman in the family was born in 1863 when slavery was abolished. The story of the family continues to the birth of Woodson's daughter, providing a rich lesson about the importance of perseverance and of family. The illustrations are vibrant and powerful with bright patches of thread and quilt-work that serve as a metaphor for the hope that the "show ways" provided on the road to freedom.

Awards

John Newbery Honor Book 2006
Mitten Award Finalist 2005
SIBA Book Award Nominee 2006

Author's Biography

Jacqueline Woodson was born on February 12, 1963 in Columbus, Ohio. However, she was raised in Greenville, South Carolina and in Brooklyn, New York where she now resides. In Greenville, Woodson developed her strong sense of family, feeling very connected to the land where her great-great-great-great grandmother had been since the age of seven. In Brooklyn, she developed a sense of community and diversity. She graduated with a B.A. in English and has written numerous highly acclaimed books for young children and young adults. She has one daughter, Toshi Georgiana. She lives in Brooklyn, New York and has no plans to ever stop writing. She has won the Caldecott Medal for *Coming on Home Soon* and the Coretta Scott King Award for *Miracle's Boys*.

Other Titles By Jacqueline Woodson

Coming on Home Soon
Locomotion
Hush
The Other Side
Miracle's Boys

Websites Dedicated to Jacqueline Woodson

Jacqueline Woodson: Books for Children and Adults

www.jacquelinewoodson.com/

Woodson's personal website gives information on the author's life, writing habits, influences, etc.

Meet the Author: Jacqueline Woodson

<http://www.eduplace.com/kids/tnc/mtai/woodson.html>

Houghton Mifflin's website dedicated to Woodson.

Author Profile: Jacqueline Woodson on teenreads.com

<http://www.teenreads.com/authors/au-woodson-jacqueline.asp>

Provides biographical information and links to several of Woodson's books.

Jacqueline Woodson: Teacher Resource File

<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/woodson.htm>

Provides links to other sites in addition to lesson plans.

Illustrator's Biography

Hudson Talbott was born in Louisville, Kentucky. As the youngest of four siblings, Talbott always showed an interest in drawing. Supported by family, friends and teachers, his artistic ability flourished. After graduating from art school in Rome, Talbott traveled the world for several years, finally settling in New York City in 1974, where he works as an artist.

<http://www.hudsonalbott.com/>

<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/talbott.htm>

http://us.penguin.com/nf/Author/AuthorPage/0,,0_1000040582,00.html?sym=BIO

Other Titles Illustrated by Hudson Talbott

Forging Freedom edited by Nancy Paulsen.

Leonardo's Horse by Jean Fritz.

Related Titles

Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth by Anne L. Rockwell.

Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky by Faith Ringgold.

The Keeping Quilt by Patricia Polacco.

Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt by Deborah Hopkinson.

Under the Quilt by Night by Deborah Hopkinson.

Classroom Connections**Science**

- Using the website <http://www.pioneerthinking.com/naturaldyes.html>, have students dye thread and cloth as dyed by Woodson's great-great-great-great grandmother. Discuss different pigments and experiment with colors, dilution, etc.

Social Studies

- Using a map of the United States, locate Virginia and South Carolina, the homes of Woodson's ancestors.
- Using the website <http://education.ucdavis.edu/NEW/STC/lesson/socstud/railroad/Map.htm> trace the route of the Underground Railroad. On a large piece of paper (uncut newsprint paper works well), draw the route taken.
- Have the students construct their own family tree. Discuss how the traditional family has changed over the years.
- Since there are quotes in the book from many famous African-American leaders, use these quotes to introduce these pioneers of equality to the students.

Math

- Research the amount of average amount of time the Underground Railroad took to travel. Have students figure the average distance traveled per day.
- For further extension, have students walk ¼ mile, counting the number of steps taken. Average the class's steps per mile. Figure how many steps a slave might have taken on the road to freedom. Have the students add the miles traveled to their Social Studies Activity (above).

Autobiography/Art

- Have students interview parents, grandparents, etc. about their family history. Give each child a square of felt and miscellaneous scraps of fabric, yarn, notions, etc. Each student then creates a "quilt" square describing something important about his or her family. Then each student will write a paragraph describing the event on the square. Stitch or glue all squares together to create a class quilt to display.

Language Arts

- Have the students pretend that they are escaped slaves. Write a daily journal of what you might encounter along the way to freedom.
- Have the students bring a piece of fabric from home that means something to them, such as an old shirt or blanket. Have the students write a short essay about what the fabric means to them.

Art

- Many slaves escaped without shoes on their feet. Cut and laminate "footprints" from each child's bare foot. Map out a portion of the journey around the school, down hallways, in cafeteria, etc. using the children's footprints.

Yale-New Haven Teachers' Institute

<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/2006/3/06.03.08.x.html>

The Road to Equality by Luica Rafala introduces literary concepts in the context of Black History Month and Civil Rights' Movement

Web Sites

National Geographic Online Presents The Underground Railroad

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/>

An interactive look at the journey taken by untold numbers of slaves seeking freedom.

Reading Rainbow: Show Way VHS

http://gpn.unl.edu/rainbow/video_product_template.asp?catalog%5Fname=GPN&category%5Fname=Reading+Rainbow&product%5Fid=126%2E0155V

This episode features host LeVar Burton and his family tracing their past.

World Wide Quilting Page

<http://www.quilt.com/>

Lots of information of quilting: includes quilting terms, history, patterns, etc.

Civil Right Leaders

http://library.thinkquest.org/J0112391/civil_rights_leaders.htm

Includes information on civil rights leaders that are quoted in the illustrations of the story.

Quilts in the Classroom

<http://www.aghines.com/Quilt/Lessonplans/lessonplans.htm> - Includes directions and ideas of how to make quilts in the classroom.

UF Tree, Family Tree Resources

http://www.uftree.com/family_tree_template.asp Print templates for creating a family tree on this website.

Underground Railroad

<http://www.madison.k12.wi.us/tnl/detectives/kids/KIDS-991207.html>

Issue of KIDS dated 12/07/99 written and produced by a class in Akron, Ohio. Issue includes information about the Underground Railroad, excerpts from slave narratives, information about Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass.