



Chains (Seeds of America Book 1)

By Laurie Halse Anderson

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If an entire nation could seek its freedom, *why not a girl?*

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.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 6–10—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.—*Denise Moore, O'Gorman Junior High School, Sioux Falls, SD*

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From [Booklist](#)

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 doesn't bring the desired rewards. Like the central character in M. T. Anderson's *Octavian Nothing* duet, Isabel finds that both patriots and loyalists support slavery. The specifics of Isabel'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 Isabel's life. The story'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 ("She can do anything. I can do nothing," 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

About the Author

Laurie Halse Anderson is a *New York Times* bestselling author known for tackling tough subjects with humor and sensitivity. Her work has earned numerous ALA and state awards. Two of her books, *Speak* and *Chains*, were National Book Award finalists. *Chains* also received the 2009 Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, and Laurie was chosen for the 2009 Margaret A. Edwards Award. Mother of four and wife of one, Laurie lives in Pennsylvania, where she likes to watch the snow fall as she writes. You can follow her adventures on Twitter @HalseAnderson, or visit her at MadWomanintheForest.com.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Evelina Lewis:

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Jason Allen:

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Francisco Garcia:

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Palmer Schwartz:

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