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# If I Just Had Two Wings



## Synopsis

In her dreams, Phoebe twirls through rows of sea island cotton as a white dress blows around her knees like a breeze. As she dances, she loses all memory of being born a slave on an Alabama plantation. She lifts up her feet and flies high above the fields, as light as air. Before her a single white star shines. Thirteen-year-old Phoebe has always dreamed of leaving her life as a slave behind. She has heard whispers about a secret path to freedom, and she has seen what can happen to those who take it and fail. But freedom means more to Phoebe than anything, and when she meets Liney, a strong young woman who picks cotton next to her, they form a plan to escape together. One night, Phoebe, Liney, and Liney's two small children flee under cover of darkness. Following clues from the songs and stories they have heard, the runaways elude slave catchers and reach the first stop on the Underground Railroad. It is only one safe house in a chain that leads all the way north to Canada. But between them and freedom, lie miles and miles of unfriendly country and dangers too horrible to imagine. Winner, Silver Birch Award, 2002 Winner, Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction A 2005 New York Public Library selection for Books for the Teen Age

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 6-8-Phoebe, 13, yearns for freedom as she works in the cotton fields as a slave on an Alabama plantation. Despite her parents' objections, she befriends Liney, 19, the courageous, strong "troublemaker" whose staunch determination to flee with her two children is undaunted, despite one failed attempt. Phoebe discovers coded messages about the Underground Railroad through

African-American songs, and Liney, her children, and Phoebe begin their flight north based on these clues. They encounter sympathetic people at different stations and dodge slavecatchers to reach the boat that will take them to Canada, where they will be free. Along the way, they meet up with another escaped slave and an attraction forms between him and Phoebe. Her prophetic dreams and lovely phrases enhance a narrative that strives for a distinctive voice without quite obtaining it. The story line is predictable and the inconsistent vernacular speech of the characters sometimes teeters dangerously close to formulaic exhortations. However, the thematic use of the Underground Railroad code by which the travelers say, "I am lost," and the true friends reply, "You are found" provides a moderate amount of suspense as well as poignancy. An author's note provides an explanation of sources consulted. Farida S. Dowler, formerly at Bellevue Regional Library, WA Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gr. 6-10. Thirteen-year-old Phoebe, born a slave on an Alabama cotton plantation, has a powerful dream that fills her with light--a dream about flying to "the freedom place." Her mother warns that "dreamin' leads to trouble," but Phoebe decides to follow her vision and, joined by another slave, named Liney, and Liney's two children, flees the plantation. A series of harrowing adventures follows as the two young women search for the Underground Railroad and a conductor who will guide them to freedom in Canada. Schwartz does a nice job of integrating historic fact into her deeply felt story, as well as a sensitive appreciation of the role of music in slave culture. Phoebe's problems sometimes seem too easily resolved, and many of the characters are little more than stereotypes. But this story, like Schwartz's first novel, *Send One Angel Down* [BKL Je 1 & 15 00], is a passionate, often stirring account of the human spirit's capacity to endure and triumph. Michael Cart Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is an amazing book. I would recommend this book for all ages, it can touch hearts of young and old. Basically, its about 5 friends trying to get to the free country of Canada, away from slavery in Alabama. They go through rough times, happy times and hard times, but I will let you see what happens in the end by yourselves. It has everything - sad moments, intensifying moments, happy moments and heart warming moments.

This well-researched book is the story of Phoebe, a teenaged woman born in slavery on an

Alabama plantation. A map in the front allows readers to follow the route taken by Phoebe, her friends, Liney & Jake, and Liney's 2 little girls as they use the clues in lyrics of the old slave spirituals to guide them on their way along the Underground Railroad. These characters are wonderful role models for our kids--strong, empowered young women & a young man who protects and sacrifices himself for the safety of the group.

After reading this book I can honestly say that I learned something about history as well as getting the enjoyment of a good adventure by a Canadian author. Although some parts could be offensive the truth sometimes can be that way. It is shocking that someone could be treated like less than an animal over a piece of fluff. I will read more books by Virginia Schwartz now because she writes in a way that people from 10 to 90 can enjoy her books.

I read this book when I was a young child. It's very rare that I find a book that I can really get into like I did with this book. It's good to read for all age groups from young to old.

This is a really good story about a brave girl. I love this book and I read it more than once and I never get tired of it!

This book is the best book i have ever read.it makes me want to read it over and over again

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