

F is for Freedom By Roni Schotter
Questions by C. Wilhelm

Comprehension questions and answers for book discussion:

1. Who are the characters in the book? Where and when do they live?

Amanda, her mother, her father, and her brother live in Pennsylvania. They live in a peaceful area.

The family of runaway slaves (Williams) (Hannah, her mother, her father, and her brother) stays with Amanda's family and has to hide from the County Constable.

1. Why is the slave family hiding? What could happen if they are found? What is a bounty hunter?

The runaway slaves won't be considered free until they reach Canada, but to a law of 1850. The jail time would be six months for anyone involved in hiding the family, with a monetary fine. A bounty hunter is a person who would find any slaves just to turn them in and collect reward money.

1. Why does Amanda's family take a risk and help the slaves on their way to Canada? What are these type of people called?

Because they feel it is the right thing to do, including allowing Amanda to playact and lie to help protect the slaves. It is estimated that about 1000 slaves per year escaped, and others were caught and returned to their masters by bloodhounds, bounty hunters, slave patrols, and informants.

These people are called abolitionists or sympathizers. Many worked along the "Underground Railroad" to help slaves escape. The Underground Railroad was secret organizing efforts organized by northerners and some southerners. It was especially busy from 1830 to 1865. The abolitionists were both black and white people.

1. Did Pennsylvania allow slaves? No, but the law covered slaves who escaped to Pennsylvania so the slaves still weren't safe.

1. What was the Mason-Dixon Line? The boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland. It used to be the line between free and slave states, and still is used to refer to the difference between the northern and southern states.

1. Why is Amanda awoken in the middle of the night? She heard a wagon outside the window and saw a strange delivery---people in burlap bags!

1. The family who is let out of the bags is a slave family who is going to be hid in Amanda's house. Amanda didn't know this sort of thing had been going on, and suddenly found herself having to playact to protect the slaves. Where do they hide? How does Amanda stop the Constable from using the key to open the door to that part of the closet? In the back part of a closet behind an extra door. Amanda says her Christmas gifts must be in the closet and that stops the Constable from looking behind the secret door.

1. The Williams Family is running to escape what? Slavery.

1. Hannah Williams was not allowed to learn how to read because of what? She was a slave, and reading could help her achieve freedom. There was no school for slaves.

1. Why does Amanda take Hannah outside to play?
 1. to be mean and let Hannah be caught by the Constable
 2. To make Hannah do her chores for her
 3. To let Hannah taste what freedom will feel like in Canada

1. What does the Constable do besides catch runaway slaves? He collects taxes from the farmers.

1. True or False: When Amanda and Hannah are outside playing they hear voices so they run home but can't get home in time, so they climb a tree. FALSE

1. True or False: Hannah and her family are going to stop and visit relatives and have a vacation on their way to Canada. FALSE

1. Hannah and Amanda show they are friends. What does Amanda give to Hannah to help her?

Amanda gives Hannah lessons on the alphabet by drawing letters in the dirt.

1. Hannah tells Amanda about the time she was beaten for doing what?

Reading a book.

1. Hannah's grandmother was what in Africa? West African Queen