CHAINS
By Laurie Halse Anderson

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."
The Declaration of Independence
July 4, 1776

ABOUT THE BOOK

Set in 1776 at the beginning of the American Revolution, Isabel and her younger sister, Ruth, are robbed of the freedom granted them in Miss Mary Finch's will. The girls are forced to leave Rhode Island when they are sold to a cruel and ruthless Loyalist family from New York. As the war between the Tories and the Patriots escalates in a city divided in its loyalties, Isabel's personal battles grow. Madam Lockton, the wife of the new owner, is spooked by Ruth's fits and sends her away. Isabel is abused and branded for disobedience. And Curzon, the boy who convinces Isabel that the only way to freedom is to become a spy for the rebels, is captured and thrown in prison. Feeling lonely and desperate, Isabel is faced with a difficult question: Should she work for or against the British? When Isabel searches deep within her soul for the answer, she makes a life-changing discovery — she is loyal only to herself. Thus begins her real journey in the pursuit of freedom and happiness.

PRE-READING

The Declaration of Independence was adopted on July 4, 1776. What did our forefathers mean by the phrase "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness?" Think about these words as Isabel's story unfolds.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Describe the life of slaves in the American colonies in the 1700s. Discuss the difference between a servant and a slave. How did Miss Mary Finch's view of slavery differ from that of most slave owners? Why does Mr. Robert accuse Isabel of lying when she tells him that she read Miss Mary's will? Explain why Pastor Weeks thinks that teaching a slave to read only "leads to trouble."
- Mr. Robert collects Isabel and Ruth on the day of Miss Mary's funeral. Why aren't the girls allowed to take personal items with them? Explain the symbolism of the seeds that Isabel hides in the hem of her dress. She plants the seeds, and one day finds that the plants have died. What do the dead plants represent? There is another plant metaphor in the novel. Explain what the mayor of New York means when he compares the rebels to vines.
- Role models may be found in real life and in stories. How are Isabel's momma and Queen Esther, from the Bible, her role models for bravery? Discuss the connection between bravery, courage, and fear. What is Isabel's first act of bravery? Discuss her most fearful moments. How is her bravery and courage fueled by her fears? How does she become bolder and braver as the novel develops?
- The American Revolution was about freedom and liberty. Mr. Lockton, a Loyalist, thinks that

freedom and liberty has many meanings. Define freedom from his point of view. How might the Patriots define freedom and liberty? Isabel has lived her entire life in bondage, but dreams of freedom. What does freedom look like in Isabel's mind?

- Discuss why Curzon thinks that Isabel will be a good spy. At what point does she accept his offer? Isabel feels betrayed by Curzon. How is Curzon betrayed by Colonel Regan? At what point does Isabel understand that Curzon's dream of freedom is the same as hers? How does this realization help her forgive him? At the beginning of the novel, Isabel needs Curzon. How does he need her at the end of the novel?

- Isabel encounters a woman in the street singing "Yankee Doodle," and realizes that the woman is a messenger. What is the message? Colonel Regan gives Isabel the code word *ad astra* to use when entering the rebel camp. The word means "to the stars" in Latin. Why is this an appropriate code word for the rebels? How does this word foreshadow Isabel and Curzon's ultimate escape to freedom at the end of the novel?

- The mayor of New York, a Loyalist, says, "The beast has grown too large. If it breaks free of its chains, we are all in danger. We need to cut off its head." Who is the beast? Who is the head? Why is Lockton so adamantly opposed to the mayor's proposal?

- Isabel says, "Madam looked down without seeing me; she looked at me face, my kerchief, my shirt neatly tucked into my skirt, looked at my shoes pinching my feet, looked at my hands that were stronger than hers. She did not look into my eyes, did not see the lion inside. She did not see the me of me, the Isabel."

- What is the lion inside of Isabel? What does Lady Seymour see in Isabel that Madam Lockton doesn't see? How does the "lamb" in Lady Seymour help the "lion" inside of Isabel escape?

- Explain the following metaphor: "Melancholy held me hostage, and the bees built a hive of sadness in my soul." What precipitates such sadness in Isabel? How does the hive grow bigger before Isabel learns to destroy it?

- The old man that Isabel calls Grandfather says, "Everything that stands between you and freedom is the river Jordan." He assures her that she will find it if she looks hard enough. What is the figurative River Jordan in the novel? Discuss all of the tributaries that feed into Isabel's River Jordan.

- The bookseller gives Isabel a copy of *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine. He advises her that the words are dangerous, and that she should commit them to memory. At what point does she understand Paine's words? How does the book give her courage?

- What does Isabel mean when she says, "I was chained between two nations"? There are several references to chains throughout the novel. How is the word "chain" used as an antonym to the word "freedom"?

The quotes about books you'll see below are not the most famous ones. All of them, however, are highly motivating to rediscover the pleasure of reading. You may ask, what book quotes have to do with the ebook site. Ebook sites are still mostly focused on the issues related to technology rather than pleasures of reading. See also About the book. Accessible to all, this book teaches the essentials to anyone who wants to become an effective and independent Debian GNU/Linux administrator. It covers all the topics that a competent Linux administrator should master, from the installation and the update of the system, up to the creation of As a physical object, a book is a stack of usually rectangular pages (made of papyrus, parchment, vellum, or paper) oriented with one edge tied, sewn, or otherwise fixed together and then bound to the flexible spine of a protective cover of heavier, relatively inflexible material. The technical term for this physical arrangement is codex (in the plural, codices). In the history of hand-held physical supports for extended written compositions or records, the codex replaces its immediate predecessor

About the book. Accessible to all, this book teaches the essentials to anyone who wants to become an effective and independent Debian GNU/Linux administrator. It covers all the topics that a competent Linux administrator should master, from the installation and the update of the system, up to the creation of As a physical object, a book is a stack of usually rectangular pages (made of papyrus, parchment, vellum, or paper) oriented with one edge tied, sewn, or otherwise fixed together and then bound to the flexible spine of a protective cover of heavier, relatively inflexible material. The technical term for this physical arrangement is codex (in the plural, codices). In the history of hand-held physical supports for extended written compositions or records, the codex replaces its immediate predecessor The book ends with a chapter on where humanityâ€"and the universeâ€"is headed. David is more pessimistic about the future than I am. He gets a little stuck on the current economic and political malaise happening in the West, and I wish he talked more about the role innovation will play in preventing the worst effects of climate change. But he nails the importance of this moment in history: â€œThings are happening so fast that, like the slow-motion time of a near accident, the details of what we do in the