

# HARRIET AND THE PROMISED LAND BY JACOB LAWRENCE



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From Publishers Weekly

This powerful tribute to the courage of Harriet Tubman provides an ideal introduction to the work of African American artist Lawrence. Tubman's life is dramatically portrayed in stunning artwork, bold with bright blocks of color and informed by a keen sense of symmetry. As Tubman leads slaves to freedom, their cloaks of red, yellow and vivid blue are illuminated against the landscape. Lawrence's paintings honor their subjects; they are alive with a movement and complexity that contrast well with the sparse simplicity of the text. Brief verse pares Tubman's experiences to their essence. The text seems simple ("Harriet, Harriet, / Born a slave, / Work for your master, / From your cradle / To your grave"), yet it resonates with a wealth of emotions--anger, fear, jubilation. The rhythmic pulse of the verse conveys constant danger, the howl of a bloodhound pack closing in. This moving and beautiful book will stimulate interest in the artist as well as in his subject. All ages.

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From School Library Journal

Gr all levels-Jacob Lawrence, one of America's most prominent African-American artists, presents the story of Harriet Tubman.

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From Booklist

Ages 6 and up. This book was first published 25 years ago but has been reissued with a new introduction by Lawrence. Combining a spare, rhythmic text with a stunning series of narrative paintings, it tells the story of Harriet Tubman, who escaped from slavery but returned to the South 19 times to lead more than 300 people to freedom in the North. "Some were afraid, / But none turned back, / For close at their heels / Howled the bloodhound pack." Like the words, the pictures are full of urgency and directed movement; the figures--stark, strong, and simplified--blend in shape and color with the forest world that hides them and helps them escape to the North. Harriet is like a great protective angel; her brown hand, huge and powerful, is like the spreading roots and branches of the trees. And always the North Star shines at the top edge of the painting to

light the runaways' flight to freedom. In word and image, Lawrence shows and tells how story can inspire you: Harriet as a child heard the story of Moses; Lawrence as a child heard about Harriet; now his book tells children about this strong brave woman who led her people on the "perilous journey" to the Promised Land.  
Hazel Rochman

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Renowned African-American artist Jacob Lawrence explores the historic tale of Harriet Tubman. With spectacular artwork and rhythmic verse, Lawrence captures the urgency of Tubman's struggles as she courageously leads slaves to freedom on the Underground Railroad. A New York Times Best Illustrated Children's Book. 1993 Parents' Choice Award. Full color.

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Hazel Rochman

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By Nadine L. Robinson

The story line and art work were great. A book that one can keep forever.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

African American Artists

By Barbara Frasier

Purchased this for my grand daughter age 7 and I loved it, thought it was a great way to introduce her to Jacob Lawrence's work and start a foundation for her art book/history library. No feed back from she or her parents as yet.

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Two heroes

By Alyssa A. Lappen

First published in 1968, this artistic book tells the awe-inspiring story of Harriet Tubman. It ought to be on the list of children's bestsellers, for it gives children the stories of two American heroes for the price of one. The first is the title figure, Harriet Tubman (1820-1913), who escaped from slavery but courageously returned south 19 times to lead more than 300 others to freedom. The second is Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000), who made this magnificent series of illustrations in 1939 and 1940.

The text is poetic. Early in the story, on a hot summer day in about 1820, "a group of slave children were tumbling in the sandy soil in the state of Maryland," Harriet Tubman among them. She dreamed of freedom and escaped, but returned to help others. The story builds as the selfless African-American leader risked her life many times to help others reach freedom. "Some were afraid, / But none turned back, / For close at their heels / Howled the bloodhound pack."

As the story closes, young readers find an enthralling figure of Harriet Tubman building support for the anti-slavery movement. At every convention within 500 miles, she could be found speaking in words and tones that brought tears to the eyes and sorrow to the hearts of all listeners.

Lawrence's paintings, made in tempera colors and poster paints, are poetic, too. Trained in the art workshops of Harlem in the 1930s, including the Utopia Children's House and the Harlem Art Workshop (sponsored by the New Deal), Lawrence became one of the finest African-American artists in U.S. history. His extraordinary talent was recognized when he was still relatively young.

Born in Atlantic City, New Jersey, he moved to Easton, Pennsylvania and then at seven to Philadelphia. At 13, Jacob moved again, to Harlem. Drawing on Bible stories and the powerful Christian sermons, often given on street corners, Lawrence remembered orators who spoke with reverence of Harriet Tubman and determined to show the African-American struggle for freedom in his art.

The Tubman series was one of Lawrence's earliest. It predated by only a couple of years the 60-panel migration series that made Lawrence's career in 1941-42. Half that series was bought by the Philips Gallery in Washington D.C. and the other half by the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

But Lawrence's Tubman work is among his best. This book's only shortcoming is that it does not reproduce all of the Tubman paintings. Several were excluded and can be seen only in an art museum, or the pages of

an art catalogue. But don't let that stop you. Children will find themselves doubly enriched. Alyssa A. Lappen

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