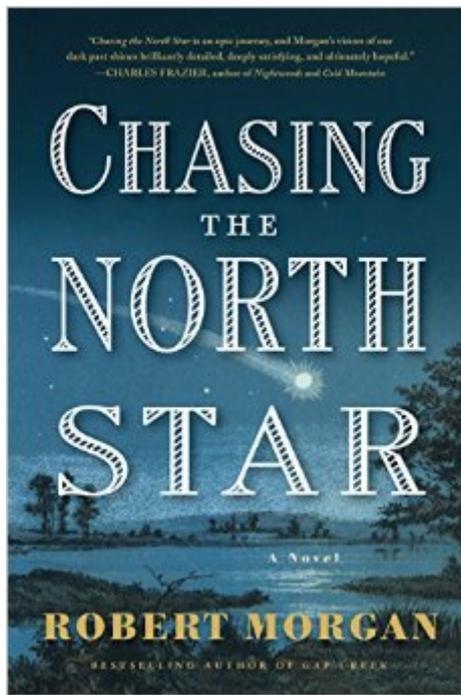


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Chasing The North Star: A Novel



Synopsis

In his latest historical novel, bestselling author Robert Morgan brings to full and vivid life the story of Jonah Williams, who, in 1850, on his eighteenth birthday, flees the South Carolina plantation on which he was born a slave. He takes with him only a few stolen coins, a knife, and the clothes on his back--no shoes, no map, no clear idea of where to head, except north, following a star that he prays will be his guide. Hiding during the day and running through the night, Jonah must elude the men sent to capture him and the bounty hunters out to claim the reward on his head. There is one person, however, who, once on his trail, never lets him fully out of sight: Angel, herself a slave, yet with a remarkably free spirit. In Jonah, she sees her own way to freedom, and so sets out to follow him. Bristling with breathtaking adventure, *Chasing the North Star* is deftly grounded in historical fact yet always gripping and poignant as the story follows Jonah and Angel through the close calls and narrow escapes of a fearsome world. It is a celebration of the power of the human spirit to persevere in the face of great adversity. And it is Robert Morgan at his considerable best.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jonah Williams is a slave on a plantation in South Carolina. It's 1850; well before the Civil War and Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. He's Mrs. Williams's house slave serving her two children. When the children are taught their lessons, Jonah listens. From those lessons, he teaches himself to read - it was illegal for a slave to read. Mrs. Williams catches him with a book he'd borrowed from their massive library. He thought he'd be beaten. Instead, she arranged for Jonah to read to her from the Bible every day. It was their secret. She even gave him a Bible of

his own. This Bible had letters the size of gnats and hairs. But it was the prettiest book he'd ever seen. While Mrs. Williams was away visiting her sister, Jonah was reading in the barn loft. Mr. Williams caught him, accused him of stealing the books, and beat him. It was then that Jonah decided he would seek freedom. That night, he took the jar of coins his mama had collected; a knife from the kitchen; and a hat and headed northward. When he could, he'd travel by night. When men with guns and dogs were after him, he'd seek water to throw off his scent. After a few nights, he happened onto a Jubilee. He saw a fire blazing and other Negroes dancing and chanting. There he met Angel. She was also a house slave. The master was using her as his bed warmer. She decided if Jonah could run away, she could run, too. He tried a few times to leave her behind, but she always managed to reappear back in his life. The character of Jonah was so well-crafted that I could believe he was real as opposed to fictional. He literally traveled by foot, boat, wagon, and train on his journey seeking freedom.

Though I have read many books about the Underground Railroad and runaway slaves who have tried to find freedom, this book is something special. I think Mr. Morgan's great skill as a storyteller is his ability to enable the reader to fully visualize the characters in all of their actions and thoughts. The main character in this story is Jonah, an 18 year old slave in 1850 who decides to run from the plantation where he was born when he is whipped severely for a crime he didn't commit. He has been taught to read by his mistress and this helps him greatly in his flight for freedom. He leaves with only a few coins, a knife and the clothes on his back. He knows only that he needs to keep traveling north to escape capture. There are many close calls and adventures along the way. The character of Angel is a young black woman who is being kept on a plantation as a kitchen helper but also a sex slave for her master. When she has endured years and years of this she decides to flee North. She comes upon Jonah and decides that she has a better chance of finding her way to freedom if she latches on to Jonah whom she perceives to be intelligent, able to care for himself and, very importantly, knows how to read and has studied maps. Though Jonah continues to abandon her she never gives up her decision that Jonah is the man for her and through many perils she continues to find him and together they journey to freedom. Though Angel is uneducated she has a keen understanding of people and is very clever in devising ways to remain invisible. I thoroughly enjoyed this historical novel and all of the elements of surprise, twists and turns on the way to freedom. Mr.

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