



Taking Liberty: The Story of Oney Judge, George Washington's Runaway Slave

Ann Rinaldi , C. Michael Dudash (Illustrator)

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

Taking Liberty: The Story of Oney Judge, George Washington's Runaway Slave

Ann Rinaldi , C. Michael Dudash (Illustrator)

Taking Liberty: The Story of Oney Judge, George Washington's Runaway Slave Ann Rinaldi , C. Michael Dudash (Illustrator)
The Story of Oney Judge, George Washington's Runaway Slave

Taking Liberty: The Story of Oney Judge, George Washington's Runaway Slave Details

Date : Published 2004 by Simon Pulse (first published 2002)

ISBN : 9780689851889

Author : Ann Rinaldi , C. Michael Dudash (Illustrator)

Format : Paperback 272 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Young Adult, Fiction

 [Download Taking Liberty: The Story of Oney Judge, George Washing ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Taking Liberty: The Story of Oney Judge, George Washi ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Taking Liberty: The Story of Oney Judge, George Washington's Runaway Slave Ann Rinaldi , C. Michael Dudash (Illustrator)

From Reader Review Taking Liberty: The Story of Oney Judge, George Washington's Runaway Slave for online ebook

Dawn says

Historically well researched, emotionally well told. Interesting to see the struggle between comfort and slavery or struggle and liberty. It is never as clear cut an issue as some would suggest.

Maura says

I am obsessed with this book! Very rarely do books give me such mixed feelings towards the characters. Usually I'm just 'oh, I hate you. oh, i love you.' but I didn't know how I felt about any of these people. Is Martha evil for keeping slaves or is she amazing because of how kind she is to them? This really made me think about the commonness of slavery back in the 1700's and when Oney was scared, I was scared. If she was contempt, I was contempt. Oney is a blank slate that anyone can really project themselves on. Please go read it, just do it!

Debbie Phillips says

This book is excellent. I read it aloud to my son Christopher for school. It gives you a good overview of George Washington and Mt. Vernon as well as the trials of slavery and the problem Washington had with wanting to free them yet having to please both the North and the South to keep the newly founded country together. It also gives you a view of what it was like to be a slave, even to a generous and kind family like the Washington's. This is definitely historical fiction as the characters are true living people and the events of the book really took place. The specific daily events are typical of things that would have happened and things that were taken from the diaries of General Washington. The dialogue and some of the characters were made up.

This book would be good for everyone with children grade 4th and up for read aloud, especially for homeschoolers. If reading on their own then probably a grade or 2 above that.

Elizabeth ?Smart Girls Love Trashy Books? says

-POTENTIAL SPOILERS-

Oh, Ann Rinaldi. I've read almost all of your books and the most I can say is that they're a definite acquired taste.

She has a knack for randomly switching the speed of her pacing-sometimes the story is paced extremely slowly, and other times it's really fast. She doesn't give much time for her characters to develop personalities, even though almost all of her main characters are real historical characters, such as here. And she shows her

characters from very early childhood to early adulthood usually, yet never actually says what age they are until later on.

And this book was no exception. However, I liked it. It shed some light on an unknown historical figure, and while I was a bit mad with how abruptly it ended, I liked watching the main character gradually become more independent and eventually run away, taking her own liberty as the title says.

I know some people would have a problem with a white author depicting slavery, and yes, the book is written in the accent the main characters would've had, but I thought she did a good job portraying her. But then again, I'm white, so maybe there's something here I'm missing.

Overall, I liked this book, despite its fast pace at times. It's a time period I don't often go to, but when I do, I always find myself very pleasantly surprised.

Jennifer Heise says

I'm reserving that last star because, well, I don't know how African-Americans would view this book by a white author about a black slave girl.

However, I enjoyed it, especially because it portrayed how even though a black slave 'servant' might sometimes be allowed relative (servant-style*) luxury due to close association with someone in the owning family, being a slave still grated. I thought Rinaldi did a good job showing how leaving slavery meant leaving behind your home, family, and your past, and how hard leaving forever could be, despite the burden of being a slave and not being able to call your life your own.

Rinaldi made Oney an engaging character, and incorporated a lot of historical detail about both life on the Washington estates and the Washington lifestyle. Conflicted emotions about the Washingtons among their slaves seemed realistic to me. I had a harder time with the character of Oney's mother, especially as we don't have a historical background for her, and she's a very divided character. But overall, I was impressed by this book

*I say servant-style because in the colonial period, it wasn't unusual for any servants to be working 12-16 hours a day for small pay and room and board, so working long hours in a comparative cushy job and being given nice clothes and privileges would be relative luxury for a free servant. However, a free servant could leave if their job didn't suit, and had rights under the law, unlike a slave servant!

Kelli says

I grew up reading Ann Rinaldi books and always appreciate her research and accuracy. This one was slow to get into but the history is definitely rich. I felt I got more out of the end remarks on what happened to each person, than I did in the actual storyline.

Cynthia Egbert says

I have had Ann Rinaldi books recommended to me in the past but this is my first go with this author. I am impressed. I always appreciate when a writer of historical fiction outlines for me what in the book is real and where they took license to help the storyline. She also explains why she took said license. The story drew me in. I love Mount Vernon so much and I could picture all of the places she was referencing in the story. This is an important voice, the story of a well-treated house slave, personal servant to Mrs. Washington who still took that dangerous chance when freedom was within reach. I loved hearing some portion of her voice.

A few special passages:

"When you learn about someone, hear their stories, you tote them around. They flow in your blood and your dreams. They become a part of you."

"And I thought, 'I know now why God made us black. So when we run, we can't be seen'."

"My heart went out to General Washington and I thought 'I don't suppose it matters if you're Negro or white. If your mama doesn't love you, you've got no color. You've got nothing.'"

"Reading was like learning that I could breathe underwater, the same water I'd lived in all my life. There was a power to it that made me tremble. I could do this! Just like white people! The color of my skin did not stop me! And it was not reading recipes, either. It was strings of words that added up and made sense! I felt smarter, quicker, and smug. Oh, so smug! No wonder white people walked around with their noses in the air all the time, acting superior. It was reading that did it. Not being white. No wonder they kept us from doing it. I walked around in a daze, for months, the secret of my reading burning inside me."

Nancy Shaffer says

Young adult book read for the benefit of grandkids. Very good historical fiction.

Dominique says

I finished this book today, just a day before it's due back to the library!

The last Ann Rinaldi book I read was *The Fifth of March A Story of the Boston Massacre*, and while it was an enjoyable read, it disappointed me to learn that half of the stuff in the novel was made up through Laura's review. I was afraid that the it would be the same case for this, but luckily, the author explains herself what was true and made up at the very end, and it's not a lot.

It was interesting to learn how Oney was the Washingtons' favored slave, to the point she considered them family. For her actual parents, well, it's a shame that her father had to become "one of the Gone," while her strict mother constantly berates her.

Other things I learned about George Washington was that he also had a mother who berated him and was good friends with Marquis de Lafayette who was like a son to him. He's always referred to as "the general." As the beginning of the novel suggests, Oney tells her tale of working for the Washingtons from age 4 to 20. This was a very interesting read, and I really liked all the other characters who worked for them. I also like how Oney ends up making her decision to become a runaway, because I felt like I learned something about

Lady Washington's treatment of her, too.
I'd recommend this to be read in English classes at school!

Rachel says

Since the title was "Taking Liberty", I wished the author would have spent more time with the escape and Oney's life in freedom. She developed the main character's decision to run beginning with resistance, her desire for loyalty to the Washingtons and finally her realization that her life of luxury was a facade. A change of ownership or attitude would plunge her into hard labor as it did her mother. But instead of drawing out the tension of the escape, and attempts to find and return her to slavery, the author summarizes the rest of Oney's life in a chapter.

Sarah Crawford says

This is another of Ann Rinaldi's really good historical novels. This one is based on the life of Oney Judge, a half-white slave girl living on the Mount Vernon estate of George Washington. The book starts with her at the age of three and goes on to tell how she ended up working in the house, learning how to sew and do other things, and how she eventually become Martha Washington's personal slave.

Oney had a much better life working in the house than did the slaves who had to work on the outside. The story covers the ending of the Revolutionary War and both of George Washington's term as President of the new country.

Oney is content with her life, but gradually talks to other slaves and learns of slaves running off and groups that help slaves escape from their masters. Although her life at Mount Vernon is relatively comfortable, she is still a slave and will always remain one, so she has to decide if she will prefer that life, or try to run away and live what with little doubt will be a harsher type of life.

The characters are well done, although Oney's mother comes across as little short of extremely nasty and quite unsympathetic.

Kayna Olsen says

Oney Judge grew up serving the Washington's at Mt. Vernon. As a half black half white servant, Oney is privileged to serve inside the house and eventually is trained to be Martha Washington's personal servant. She is treated very well! All of the Washington's servant are well treated and live a good life. Despite this it seems everywhere Oney goes someone wants her to runaway. This is the true story of a girl struggling with her identity as a servant who is treated like a daughter but is still owned property.

Ann Rinaldi is an amazing historical fiction novelist! I love her books and this may be one of my favorites that I have read. It was neat to hear about what was happening to Oney while notable historical events were taking place. And just a side note, my ancestor Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence was talked about as well, so that made me enjoy it even more! Rinaldi is skilled at adding story line and plot to historical happenings and findings. It is also really beneficial that she includes some of her research at the conclusion of the story, that way you learn the true events of history and find where her inspiration for the

particular story comes from!

Jeni Enjaian says

This book was a welcome change after several slightly weird Donna Jo Napoli books. That being said, on its own, this is a pretty decent book. My overall opinion is that it is average, thus the three star review. (I really wish we could give half star ratings. There's a big difference, to me at least, between a truly average book like this one and a book that is slightly better than average but not deserving of a four star rating. Moving on...)

Here are some of the things that off-set the decent, well put together narrative, and thus influenced me towards giving the book a mediocre review. First, Oney's voice did not really mature throughout the book even though her character aged from approximately 4 years old to approximately 20 years old. This is also an issue for me. Oney's approximate age is never given so the lack of maturity in the voice leads to confusion about a basic fact about the main character. Second, Rinaldi's approach to the events of the Revolutionary War and Early National Era felt cliché. Even though Oney Judge was a real person, the pampered, high-yellow, naive house slave has been done too much.

That being said, it's a decent book and I while I wouldn't recommend it, I wouldn't recommend against it.

Julia says

The Review of Oney Judge, George Washington's Runaway Slave

Have you ever heard of a slave that was treated well and had nice clothes almost like a rich white person? In the story Oney Judge, George Washington's Runaway Slave by Ann Rinaldi Oney gets to experience this wonderful life of luxury. The story first takes place with Oney Judge as a young slave with her mother going to Washington's Manor. Oney and her mother work as servants inside the house; they do household chores, help Lady Washington and run errands to the market. However, one day Lady Washington appoints Oney as her personal slave/servant. Thus, Oney begins learning about high class whites by getting nicer clothes, better food and less punishment. While Oney lives the life of the "high class", her mother Betty Judge gets jealous of her and begins doing irrational things like saying Oney is not her daughter and by ignoring her. When Oney gets older, she begins realizing that she will always stay a slave and will never be seen as an equal to white people. On the whole Oney has a choice either to stay a slave and never be free for the rest of her life or escape to Canada when she visits to New York with Ms. Washington. Consequently, Oney has a tough decision whether stay a slave or run to be free.

This story has many great things about it, but there are some minor details that could have been fixed. The parts I like was how the story gives a new perspective to slaves by showing that some slaves had a less severe life than those slaves working hard in the fields and getting punished a lot. Another part I like was how it gave many historic facts and interesting things about George Washington and how he treated his slaves. For example, George Washington never called his slaves "slaves"; instead, he called them servants. Also, I loved Oney and how she was presented as a character in the story. What I love about Oney is she is very ingenuous, curious and very bright. This is revealed in the text when Oney says, " ...what you put in the book, ma'am, is two dozen. I counted twenty-eight lambs replied Oney to Ms. Washington" (51). Out of the whole book the only thing I did not like was how the book had too many unnecessary details. It does not go straight to the point and moves from story to story as when Oney talks with Ms. Washington about Mr. Washington but then jumps to Oneys' mother being upset about a white person. Otherwise, I give this book a high praise.

I would recommend this book to teachers because it shows a great deal of facts written into one storyline. Furthermore, I would recommend this book to people who love learning about slavery because it shows a different perspective on how the slaves lived. Another group I would recommend the book to are people who are interested in George Washington and how he treated the slaves. However, I would not recommend this to little kids because there are some curse words in the story and some horrifying parts. Overall this book is very good and I suggest readers to read this because it paints a picture of the 1800's that we normally do not see.

VJ says

Oney Judge existed! I misunderstood this when I started the book. There is much to be said for starting from what Western readers think of as the back of the book. If I had started there, with the Author's Note, I would not have been so surprised to discover Oney really lived, as did Washington's personal attendant and slave, Billie Lee.

Not wanting to give anything away in this informative historical novel, I will say that from the beginning of the story, we are told, by Oney herself, that she ran away. She ran away from comfort, security of a sort, light duty, no responsibilities beyond those assigned to her by her masters. She left all she had ever known, her family, friends, her cozy room with a fireplace, her better quality clothing, left it all for freedom.

Rinaldi continues to hold my attention during this Black History Month!
