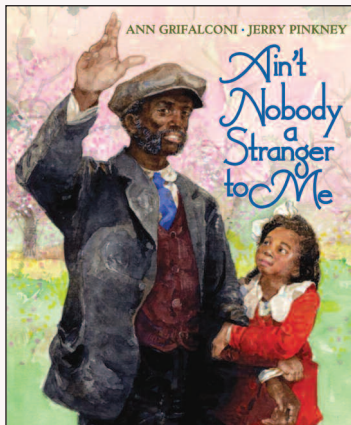


This guide was created by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, a reading specialist and author of *Reaching for Sun* from Bloomsbury. Visit her Web site at www.tracievaughnzimmer.com to find hundreds of guides to children's literature.

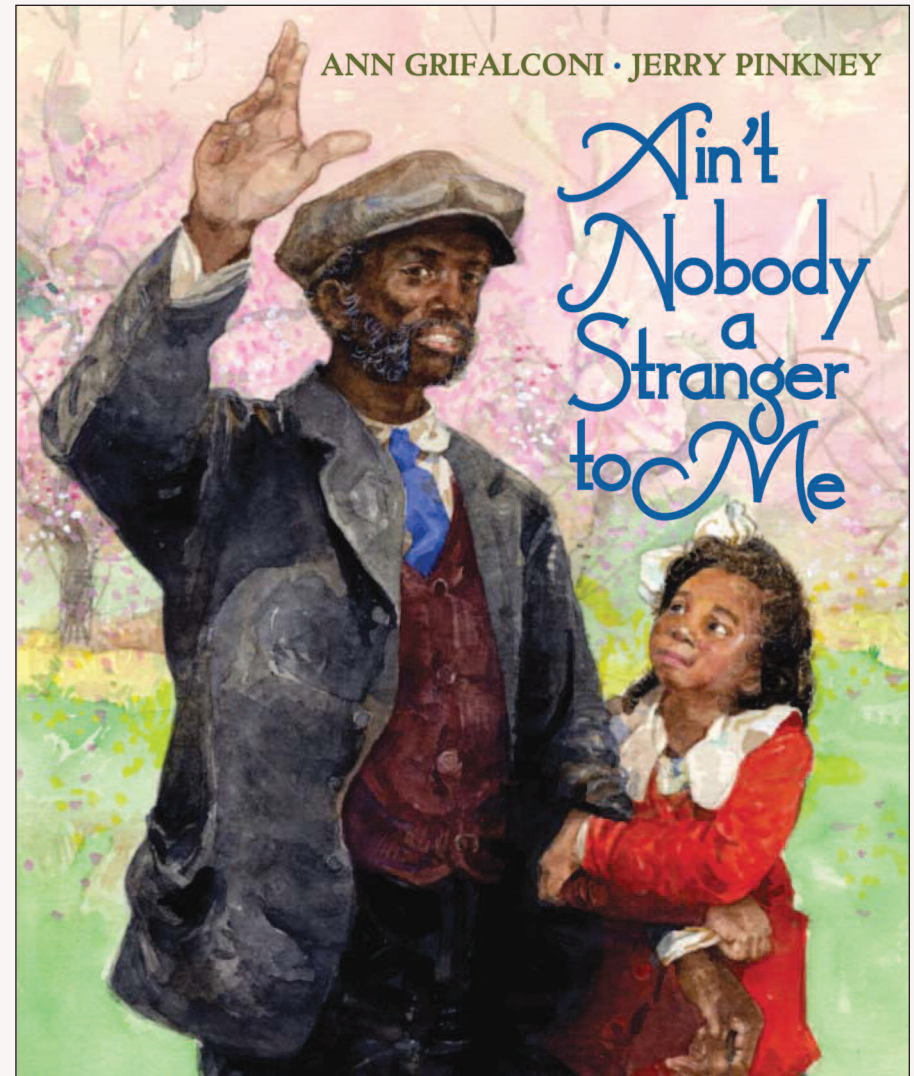


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TEACHER'S GUIDE
JUMP AT THE SUN

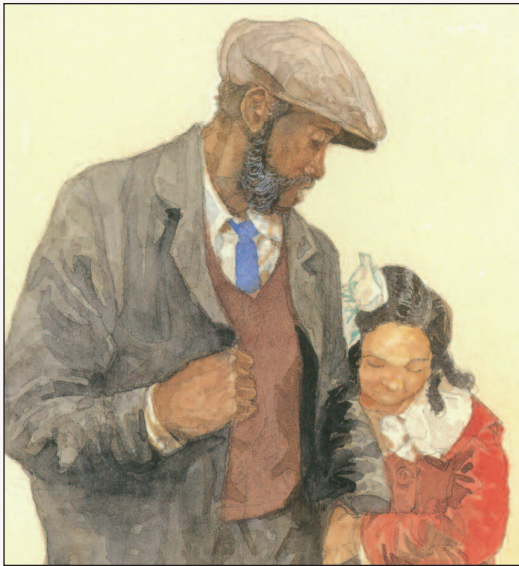
About the Book

In this touching and inspiring tale, a grandfather passes lessons of love and friendship on to his granddaughter. Inspired by the life of a former slave who really did utter (and believe) the words “Ain’t nobody a stranger to me!”, this is the remarkable account of one family’s experience on the Underground Railroad.

Ann Grifalconi’s story is at once timeless and timely, weaving tales from the past with hopes for the future. With his stunning illustrations, Jerry Pinkney transports the reader back to the days when slavery was the law of the land and freedom was a whisper that pointed north.

About This Guide

This guide includes discussion questions intended to provoke thought and insight into the themes of the book, which include freedom, faith, family, fear, slavery, and hope.



Prereading

What do you think the title of the story means? How can it be true? What is the difference between a stranger and someone you just don’t know yet?

Discussion Guide

- 1 Who is the narrator of this story? How do you know?
- 2 Where are the grandfather and granddaughter going? Why?
- 3 Is this story from the present or the past? What clues do you have? Why is that important to know when you’re reading?
- 4 What things does Gran’pa keep in his pockets? Why do they give him such hope?
- 5 Describe the journey that Gran’pa and his family make. Who is the baby they carry?
- 6 Who is James Stanton? What does he do for Gran’pa?
- 7 Why do Gran’pa and his family have to cross the river? What state is on the other side? Why is it important to get there?
- 8 What does Gran’pa mean when he says, “I been on both sides. When somebody falls down, what kind of man gonna stop ’n’say: ‘I don’t pick up no stranger! Let ’em lie there?’ Leastways, not me!”
- 9 How do Gran’pa and Polly earn their way in the North? What do they save their money for?
- 10 What does Gran’pa remember each time he planted a seed? What does the little girl do with her seed?

Activities

Language Arts

Gran'pa's story is an oral history of the way life used to be. Find a grandparent (or an older, trusted, family friend) and ask them these important questions (you might want to record their answers or take notes): How has your hometown changed since you were a little boy or girl? What's the most important thing you ever learned? What can you tell me about your own parents or grandparents?

Social Studies

Have children read several stories regarding the Underground Railroad, and then create a pamphlet, poster, or timeline based on what they learn. They should answer the five main questions that a reporter seeks to answer: who, what, when, where, and why.

Additional Books

- *Moses* by Carol Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Kadir Nelson
- *Escape from Slavery: The Boyhood of Frederick Douglass in His Own Words*, edited by Michael McCurdy
- *Get on Board: The Story of the Underground Railroad* by James Haskins
- *Freedom River* by Doreen Rappaport, illustrated by Bryan Collier
- *Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky* by Faith Ringgold
- *Freedom Ship* by Doreen Rappaport, illustrated by Curtis James

Web Sites

- www.freedomcenter.org
- <http://memory.loc.gov> (Library of Congress Web site—click on African American History for great primary sources).
- <http://www.appleseedrec.com/underground>

Music

- Listen to traditional songs about freedom and slavery. Afterwards, children should write a brief journal about the music. Discuss lyrics, rhythm, instrumentation, and beat.

Math

- If Gran'pa and Polly have to travel 125 miles to reach freedom but can only travel about twenty miles a day, then how many days will it take them to reach Ohio if they aren't stopped?
- What if they have to make a longer journey from deeper in the South? What if they have to travel 300 miles? How many days will it take them to reach freedom?
- If Gran'pa has 54 apple seeds to plant, but only half of them become trees, then how many trees will he have?

Art

- Review the story and notice the change in colors between the “present day” of the story to the flashback of Gran'pa's memory. Why do you think Mr. Pinkney decided to change the colors so much in the story? What colors did he use? How do they add intensity and fear to the escape scenes?
- After studying Mr. Pinkney's techniques, sketch and paint a scene from your interview with an older person. In a brief journal, explain what your scene depicts and why you chose the colors that you did.



About the Author

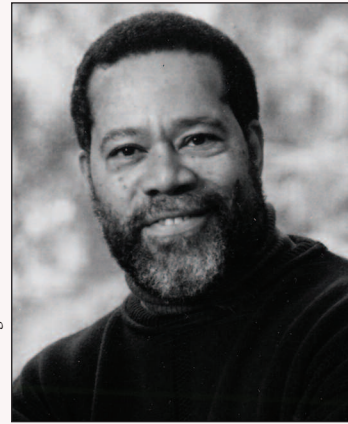


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Ann Grifalconi is the author and illustrator of more than one hundred books for young adults and children. She has received numerous awards, including a Caldecott Honor for *The Village of Round and Square Houses*; a Jane Addams Honor for *The Village That Vanished*, illustrated by Kadir Nelson; and a Jane Addams Award for *Patrol* by Walter Dean Myers.

Ms. Grifalconi lives and works in New York City.

About the Illustrator



Alan S. Orting

Jerry Pinkney has illustrated more than one hundred books for children, including *God Bless the Child*, a visual interpretation of Billie Holiday and Arthur Herzog Jr.'s song; *The Old African* by Julius Lester; and *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman* by Alan Scroeder. His exceptional art has won numerous awards, including Caldecott Honors and Coretta Scott King Awards and Honors. A member of the National Council on the Arts, Mr. Pinkney lives in Westchester County, New York, with his wife, author Gloria Jean Pinkney.

