

CHAINS (SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS 1-3) + HISTORICAL FACTS

At the very beginning of the book, we meet Isabel, a thirteen-year-old enslaved girl living in Rhode Island. Her life is hard, but she has one goal that matters more than anything else: protect her little four-year-old sister, Ruth.

Isabel's owner, Miss Mary Finch, has recently died. Before she died, Miss Mary promised that Isabel and Ruth would be freed. Isabel believes that promise. She holds onto it.

But when Miss Mary's relatives arrive, everything changes.

Her relatives come to take her things and make decisions about what happens next. They say the papers are missing. They say the girls are still property. The main decision-maker is Mr. Robert, her nephew, who does not care about the promise she made.

CHAINS (SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS 1-3) (Cont.)

Discussion

Isabel is only thirteen — the same age as some of you. But she is not living like a normal thirteen-year-old. She is making adult decisions because Ruth is only five. Ruth cannot protect herself, argue, or understand danger. That means every choice Isabel makes is really about two people, not one.

Isabel must act like a parent.

Ruth cannot stay silent or be careful.

Speaking up can hurt Ruth.

Staying silent can also hurt Ruth. Why?

Staying silent can also hurt Ruth. Why?

Isabel learns that staying silent can sometimes keep her safe.

But Ruth is only five years old.

Ruth cannot always stay quiet, follow rules, or understand danger.

When Isabel stays silent, no one speaks up for Ruth.

Ruth is too young to protect herself.

She may:

Cry

Speak at the wrong time

Act in ways adults don't like

If Isabel stays silent:

Ruth can be punished

Ruth can be taken away

Ruth can be hurt

Even if Isabel speaks up for Ruth, it does not guarantee safety.

The people in power can still punish them or separate them.

Isabel does not control the outcome — adults do.

Isabel and Ruth are owned

The owner has total power

Speaking up can:

Anger the owner

Lead to punishment

Cause Ruth to be taken away anyway

Isabel knows that speaking up might protect Ruth —but it might also make things worse.

The Big Idea

Isabel is choosing between two dangerous options, not a safe one and a bad one.

What makes the story powerful?

Isabel's choices are so hard.

She is not choosing between right and wrong.

She is choosing between **two risks.**

When Isabel Realizes They Will Be Sold

After Miss Mary Finch dies, Isabel still believes the promise that she and Ruth will be freed. She waits for someone to keep that promise.

Instead, Miss Mary's nephew, Mr. Robert, takes control.

Isabel tries to explain that Miss Mary promised freedom. Mr. Robert listens — but only long enough to become angry. He says there are no papers to prove the promise. He says promises do not matter without documents.

To him, Isabel and Ruth are not girls — they are property. When Isabel continues to speak, Mr. Robert punishes her to prove who has power.

At first, Isabel still hopes he will change his mind. Then she hears him talking. Isabel realizes that Mr. Robert is not planning to free them at all.

He plans to sell her and Ruth at an auction, like objects, to whoever offers the most money. This is the moment Isabel understands the truth: the promise is gone, freedom is gone, and her only goal now is to keep Ruth with her.

From this point on, Isabel is no longer waiting for adults to do the right thing. She knows she must survive — and protect Ruth — on her own.

Were Isabel and Ruth sold?

Isabel and Ruth were sold at an auction!

They were sold to Madam Anne Lockton.

Madam Anne Lockton

Lives in New York City

Is wealthy and powerful

Supports the British (a Loyalist) –see the explanation in the next slides

Becomes their new owner

Madam Lockton buys Isabel and Ruth because she wants more servants.

The American Revolution

The American Revolution The American Revolution took place from 1775 to 1783.

During this time, the American colonies were controlled by Britain, but not everyone agreed about what should happen next.

This period eventually led to the United States becoming independent from Britain.

Not Everyone Agreed

During the American Revolution, people in the colonies did not all agree.

Some people wanted independence from Britain.

Others wanted to stay loyal to the British king.

Because of this, there were two main sides.

What Does “Supports the British (a Loyalist)” Mean?

During the American Revolution that took place from 1775 to 1783, people in the colonies did not all agree.

It led to the United States becoming independent from Britain.

Some wanted independence from Britain.

Others wanted to stay loyal to the British king.

So, there were two sides.

What Does “Supports the British (a Loyalist)” Mean? (cont.)

Two Sides

Patriots

Wanted independence from Britain

Believed the colonies should govern themselves

Loyalists*

Stayed loyal to the British king

Believed Britain should stay in control

Supported British soldiers and laws

A LOYAL PERSON – someone who does not quit on you when things get harder.

Ex: You are loyal to your friends when you don’t talk badly about them behind their back.

Who Were Loyalists?

Loyalists were American colonists who stayed **loyal** to Britain during the American Revolution (1775-1783). They were also called “Tories.”

What Does “Loyal” Mean?

A loyal person is someone who does not quit on you when things get hard.

Example: You are loyal to your friends when you don’t talk badly about them behind their back.

Why did they support Britain?

Even though the colonists were controlled by Britain, many Loyalists supported Britain because:

Reason 1:They felt like British

Many Loyalists were born in the colonies.

But they still thought of themselves as British citizens.

Britain was their home country.

Reason 2 — Trust in the British Government

They trusted the British king and government

They believed Britain provided:

Laws

Order

Protection

Especially protection from enemies and chaos

Reason 3 — Fear of War and Chaos

They feared war and chaos

Some Loyalists believed rebellion would cause:

Violence

Poverty

Destruction

Vocabulary Box

REBELLION

Refusing to obey and trying to change who is in control.

Example: If a class has a rule and students say, “No! We won’t follow it!” and try to change it —that is a small rebellion (and probably punishable 😊).

In history, rebellions can be much bigger and can lead to protests or war.

Reason 4 — Money and Jobs

They made money from Britain.

Merchants and workers who traded with Britain.

Did not want to lose business or jobs.

Independence felt risky to their livelihoods.

To Summarize: Who Were Loyalists?

Loyalists supported Britain because they believed staying with Britain was safer and more stable than fighting a war.

They feared change, trusted the British government, and worried about chaos.



Who Were the Neutrals?

Neutrals were colonists who did not choose a side during the American Revolution. They did not clearly support the Patriots or the Loyalists.

Why Did Some People Stay Neutral?

1. They Wanted to Stay Safe

Choosing a side could be dangerous

Neighbors might punish them

Armies might attack their homes

Staying neutral felt like the safest choice.

2. They Were Tired of Conflict

Some people did not want:

Arguments

Violence

War

They wanted peace more than change.

3. They Were Focused on Survival

Farmers, workers, and families

Daily life mattered more than politics

For many people, survival came before choosing sides.

4. They Did Not Trust Either Side

Some didn't trust Britain

Some didn't trust the Patriots

They felt stuck in the middle.

But...Staying neutral was not easy and not always safe.

Patriots sometimes punished neutrals

Loyalists sometimes punished neutrals

Neutrals were often suspected by both sides

So, Neutrals were colonists who tried to avoid choosing a side during the American Revolution.

Three Groups During the American Revolution

Patriots – wanted independence

Loyalists – supported Britain

Neutrals – tried not to choose a side

ACTIVITY TIME

ACTIVITY 1

Choices During the American Revolution

Follow the instructions on the handout.

Connection to “Chains”

In Chains, Madam Lockton is a Loyalist.

This means she supports the British king and welcomes British soldiers into her home.

This is why Isabel is surrounded by powerful people — and dangerous secrets.

Chains — Next Summary: After Isabel and Ruth Are Sold

After the auction, Isabel and Ruth are bought by a woman named Madam Lockton.

Madam Lockton is wealthy and powerful.

She lives in New York City, where the streets are tense and full of soldiers.

When Isabel and Ruth arrive at Madam Lockton's house, Isabel immediately understands that this woman is very different from their previous owner.

Madam Lockton is strict, angry, and enjoys controlling others.

She speaks harshly and expects complete obedience.

Isabel notices that Madam Lockton treats Ruth with little patience.

Ruth is only five years old, and she struggles to stay quiet and follow rules.

Chains — Next Summary: After Isabel and Ruth Are Sold (cont.)

Isabel quickly realizes that any mistake Ruth makes could lead to punishment.

From this moment on, Isabel's main goal is not freedom —it is keeping Ruth safe.

Isabel also notices something else about the house.

Many visitors come and go. British soldiers and important people are often there.

They argue, complain, and speak openly — especially when they think no one important is listening.

Isabel understands something important: people talk freely around her because they believe she is invisible.

And Isabel begins to realize that in this house, listening carefully may be just as dangerous as speaking.

ACTIVITY TIME

ACTIVITY 2

How the Sale Changed Isabel's Life

Follow the instructions on the handout.

Homework: Choices and Consequences in Isabel's World (Chains)

Directions:

Complete all parts in complete sentences.

Use what you learned about Patriots, Loyalists, and Neutrals, and what you learned about Isabel and Ruth.

Part A: Understanding History

1. Choose ONE group: Patriots, Loyalists, or Neutrals.

Explain why people in this group made the choice they did.

2. What was ONE danger this group faced during the American Revolution?

Part B: Connection to the Novel Chains

3. Isabel is enslaved and owned by a Loyalist.

Explain ONE way this affects her life.

Homework: Choices and Consequences in Isabel's World (Chains) (cont.)

4. Why is it difficult or impossible for Isabel to be neutral?

Part C: Thinking Question

**5. Which is more important for Isabel right now:
freedom or protecting Ruth?
Choose one and explain your thinking.**

Quiz time!

Please review the PowerPoint material. It will be part of the quiz.

Good Luck!

