

# Freedom Line

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This story represents the struggle that slaves went through to reach freedom. Many slaves crossed the Mason-Dixon Line bound for freedom. Until 1850, crossing the Mason-Dixon Line was considered being free. When the Fugitive Slave Act was passed in September 1850, runaway slaves had to make it all the way to Canada to be truly free. This story was set in 1847, 3 years before the Fugitive Slave Act was passed.

My breathing is heavy. I know that I am close to the Mason-Dixon Line, the landmark that will let me know if I am free or not. I have been on the run for eight days. I started running from my master's plantation, sprinting into the woods. The next morning I hid in a hollowed tree. I heard the dogs barking and growling from far away. As they got closer my breathing became fast and my heart pounded with terror. The same terror grips me now. I can hear the dogs barking and growling close behind me. Mixed with the sounds of running animals, I hear shouts from the men chasing me, slave catchers ready to take me, dead or alive, back to my owner. I can see the crown stone ahead. After a lifetime of slavery I am ready for freedom. Suddenly, a dog jumps from the brush beside me and bites my leg! I am limping, trying to shake the dog stuck to my leg. I finally hit it with my hand and knock it off of my leg. I am trying to run, sure that my beating heart has already alerted the posse of slave catchers to my position. A burst of strength propels me towards the crown stone. Using my non-injured leg, I jump over the

Mason-Dixon Line! I can hear the slave-catchers behind me, yelling to one another. I find a suitable tree and start to climb. When I am in the upper levels of the tree, I stop. I know that they won't find me here, as I have covered myself with leaves and sticks to hide my body. Silently my heartbeat returns to normal and I slowly fall asleep. I dream of what I can become in this state of freedom that I have recently gained.

I awake to the sounds of a spring morning. Realizing that I must get to Philadelphia, I climb from my tree. I find a small, edible root to eat and begin my trek to the city.

After two hours I wander into a small town. Seeing a train station, I pull the 5 dollars that I made playing the fiddle at several parties back in North Carolina. My master needed a fiddle player, and he decided to teach me. Luckily, I had enough money for a one way trip to Philadelphia. I board the train and set off on a bumpy ride to freedom.