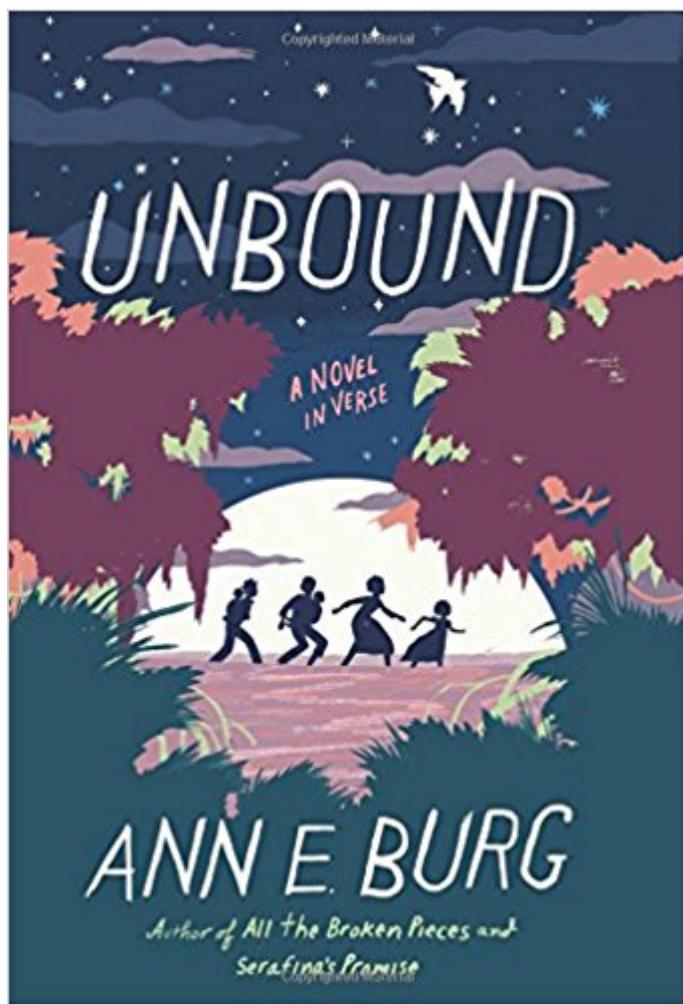


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# Unbound: A Novel In Verse



## **Synopsis**

The day Grace is called from the slave cabins to work in the Big House, Mama makes her promise to keep her eyes down. Uncle Jim warns her to keep her thoughts tucked private in her mind or they could bring a whole lot of trouble and pain. But the more Grace sees of the heartless Master and hateful Missus, the more a rightness voice clamors in her head-asking how come white folks can own other people, sell them on the auction block, and separate families forever. When that voice escapes without warning, it sets off a terrible chain of events that prove Uncle Jim's words true. Suddenly, Grace and her family must flee deep into the woods, where they brave deadly animals, slave patrollers, and the uncertainty of ever finding freedom. With candor and compassion, Ann E. Burg sheds light on a startling chapter of American history--the remarkable story of runaways who sought sanctuary in the Great Dismal Swamp--and creates a powerful testament to the right of every human to be free.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 900 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: Scholastic Press (September 27, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0545934273

ISBN-13: 978-0545934275

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.4 x 8.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #109,487 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #150 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism #152 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1800s #280 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > African-American

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 6

## **Customer Reviews**

Gr 4-8 • Grace is a light-skinned, blue-eyed slave who is called to work in "The Big House," leaving behind her family and friends in the fields. What she sees of the Master and Missus

gives Grace even more motivation to escape, including Missus's decision to sell members of Grace's family at the auction block. Soon, Grace and her family flee to the Great Dismal Swamp and become "maroons" who survive independent of society. This is a historical novel in verse written in a Southern patois. Though some might find the language challenging, strong readers will appreciate the rhythmic flow of the poetry and the well-executed pacing. Shedding light on a period of U.S. history that is often ignored, Burg's portrayal of the Great Dismal Swamp and the runaways' sanctuary reads like a testimony. The book is, in fact, based on narratives of the formerly enslaved. VERDICT This is an ideal selection for classrooms and libraries and would incorporate easily into history and social studies curricula across a wide grade range, from upper elementary through middle school.

•Shalini Miskelly, St. Benedict Catholic School, Seattle

Praise for *Unbound: A Novel in Verse*: \* "A combination of historical precision, honesty, and adventure . . . Beautifully done." -- Kirkus Reviews, starred review \* "[S]trong readers will appreciate the rhythmic flow of the poetry and the well-executed pacing . . . This is an ideal selection for classrooms and libraries and would incorporate easily into history and social studies curricula across a wide grade range." -- School Library Journal, starred review

Awards and Praise for *All the Broken Pieces*: Jefferson Cup award winner

Booklist Editors' Choice ALA Best Books for Young Adults

IRA Notable Book for a Global Society

ALA Popular Paperback for Young Adults

"[A] stirring debut novel . . . will make readers want to rush to the end and then return to the beginning again to make connections between past, present, friends and enemies." -- Booklist, starred review

"The verse form carries highly charged emotions and heavy content with elegiac simplicity."

-- Kirkus Reviews, starred review

"Using spare free verse, first-time novelist Burg beautifully evokes the emotions of a Vietnamese adoptee as he struggles to come to terms with his past." -- Publishers Weekly, starred review

"...the story is a lovely, moving one." -- School Library Journal

Awards and Praise for *Serafina's Promise*: Starred review from Kirkus Reviews and School Library Journal

Kirkus Best Book of the Year

Parents' Choice Gold Award winner

School Library Journal Best Books of the Year

New York Public Library 100 Books for Giving and Sharing

The Herald-Sun Wilde Award for Longer books

Middle grade novel Cybils Awards Finalists

Middle Grade Fiction NAACP Image Awards Outstanding Literary Work-Youth/Teens nominee

ALA Notable Book

ALA Notable Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies

Michigan Great Lakes Great Books Award nominee

Bank Street College Children's Book Committee - Best Children's Books of the Year

Américas Award, Commended Title

Kansas' William Allen White Award

"Serafina's dreams are challenged by poverty, flood, and earthquake, but her tenacious spirit hangs on through

it all. The grace of the Haitian people is revealed in Burg's poetic language, the vastness of Haiti's needs apparent in the details of Serafina's world. Serafina's journey is one readers will find unsettling but, at the same time, rich with examples of true courage and dignity."

--Karen Hesse, author of the Newbery Medal winner *Out of the Dust* and *Safekeeping* "Serafina is certainly a resilient and admirable character who will touch the hearts of many adults as well as children and put a human face on the poverty and tragedies of the Haitian people. Through this story, Ann extends the reputation she established with *All the Broken Pieces*." --Don Gallo "Ann E. Burg has masterfully crafted a lovingly cadenced book in which, behind each gemlike story, another gemlike story rises, synchronizing poetically with the local landscape, where there is another mountain behind each mountain. Serafina's Promise, a fascinating poetic tale, a magic window that opens gently and brings to your heart the cultural richness and wonders of a fate-taunting nation." --Denize Lauture

My copy of *Unbound* arrived from today. I ordered this book after my son's fourth-grade teacher asked me about how this work based on enslaved people's narratives may fit within a fourth-grade curriculum on social justice. I have barely been able to put the book down. This work's horribly, haunting, beautifully written verses make the tragedies of slavery tangible and take the reader on a heart-wrenching, tension-filled journey. Before reading this novel, I was unaware that indigenous and enslaved people forged lasting communities of freedom in swamps. It would be a weighty undertaking to guide fourth graders through this book to teach about the brutal injustices of the economic system based on slavery that ensnared both perpetrators and victims, but I highly recommend doing so.

We read this story out loud as a family and my kids wouldn't let me put the book down. It is so well written and sucks you in to the story.

It's a familiar testimonial, but there is nothing wrong with that. I did feel that the story dragged, especially when Burg kept repeating Grace's feeling of guilt.

This book was really good but the beginning did not grab me as I thought it would it is a southern book

I found this YA book, written in verse, to be very moving. It is about a young slave girl trying to get to

freedom. Burg has a light touch, never over-explaining, but giving tiny details in the most beautiful language. As she races through the swamps in the dark, night after night, trying to get away from the horrors of "home", she says to herself over and over again, like a prayer, "keep moving, keep moving". A book that left me feeling sad and hopeful all at once, and a book appropriate for any age. While it outlines the cruelty of slavery, it is written in such a way that a young child could read it and be moved without being scarred. In the end it is a book more about freedom than slavery.

My fourth graders loved it!

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