



Cowslip A Slave

Betsy Haynes

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Cowslip is on the auction block. The year is 1861, and the Civil War has begun, but it means little to a frightened black girl still at the mercy of whites. An old slave at her former home has taught her magic spells to use against the cruel master, who in his heartlessness had given Cowslip her very name as a mean joke. But all those spells are no good to her now.

In her new home Cowslip is put in charge of the Master's children. She soon makes many new friends, among them Job, who is educated and had once been free, and Reba, whose lover has run away to the North. These people dream of freedom and dare to speak of forbidden things. Through them Cowslip becomes involved in frightening and dangerous activities she does not fully understand.

Cowslip A Slave Details

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Author : Betsy Haynes

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From Reader Review Cowslip A Slave for online ebook

Catherine says

"I got to put my scaredness under my feet and stand on it." I think we all need to do this at times. Like Twain did in Puddin' Head Wilson, Haynes talks about the brainwashing that went on with slaves and how that brainwashing kept many slaves from feeling like freedom was a right. The bible was used to try to keep them slaves. I also enjoyed the hoodoo that was included - superstition was rampant during this time period among both blacks and whites. This is a sad book, but one with hope and dignity as well.

This is a book that should be reprinted because it is very hard to find. It was originally published in 1973. The copy I found is titled Slave Girl but says on the cover, "Original title: Cowslip."

Amy says

"I got to put my scaredness under my feet and stand on it," she told herself firmly.

Slave Girl tells the story of Cowslip, an orphaned slave in the beginning years of the American Civil War, sold at 13 to pay her owner's debts. Told in the 3rd person, the reader is given a window into her mind and heart of an incredibly brave and compassionate girl, as she grows in experience and wisdom. Dreadful, but common to the American slave experience, events happen, one after another: the steady diet of fear, loss of loved ones, glimmers of hope, dashed hopes, brutalities, humiliations of the most cruel & unusual kind...along with succinct explanations of slave culture, if I may call it that...to laugh, to keep one's face blank as a wall.

Published for Scholastic in 1973, this is a gem. I appreciated the understated, yet easy to understand, depictions of Cowslip's life and world. Betsy Haynes, the author, has respect for her material and for her readers.

Brie says

I won this book in a Goodreads First Reads contest.

I passed the book on to a young reader who really loved it. It has made her want to read more on US history and slavery. She really enjoyed the book and it continues to widen her world of books.

Sharon Huether says

I won this free books through Goodreads First-reads. A wonderful story circa 1861 of a young slave girl named "Cowslip", which means a flower wild and free. This description was told to her by the butler. It gave

her a strong hope, she one day would be free. She was great with the master's children and his wife was so pleased with her work that she was to remain in the main house, and be the children's nurse

Jane Must says

I read this book a very long time ago. I think it was 3rd or 4th grade is when I picked up this book out of boredom and started reading it(to be honest, I don't think it was very appropriate for a girl my age but what's done is done). From what I can recall, it was a good read. It had an interesting character and a story that kept me coming back. I really liked it, considering I still remember my tattered paperback copy.

Tammy says

When I read this as a young girl, it forever changed how I saw the world. I'm so glad my eyes and heart were opened.

Christine says

I read this book multiple times as a kid. My mother had given it to me, saying I would like it and she was definitely right. At nine, I was fascinated and appalled that something like slavery existed in my country, but this book actually helped me understand the whole horrid incident more. Learning Cowslip's story was both educational and entertaining. As I recall, there were somewhat harsh times in the book (which is to be expected) but it was overall a happy tale. Any young reader would be a great audience. I wish I hadn't lost my copy so I could lend it to my youngest sister.

Laura says

I read this in 3rd grade, and it was my first book about slavery & the Civil War. It made such a mark on my mind that I can still vividly recall several parts of the book, often more clearly than my recent reads.

This is a truly excellent book.

Takaysha Johnson says

One of the best books i ever read

Jennifer Daniel says

Read this one over and over as a kid. An amazing book about slavery that made it seem real to me, that this

happened to real people, real kids, not just names in a text book. I am desperately looking for a copy for my own kids to read. Very hard to find.

Bobbie Grob says

(This was originally reviewed for Readers' Favorites)

Cowslip: A Slave by Betsy Haynes tells of slavery from a unique perspective - that of a 13-year-old female slave named Cowslip. The story starts during the Civil War as Cowslip and several other children are being sold at a slave auction and follows Cowslip as she is taken to a new plantation with new masters and unfamiliar slaves. In the course of the story, many of Cowslip's beliefs are challenged, and she is forced to decide whether to think for herself or continue to blindly believe everything that she has been told.

The story takes place in just a matter of weeks, but many things happened and as I followed Cowslip down her path, I couldn't help but wonder what would happen to her. Would she follow the path she had always known or forge a new one?

My only complaint with the book is that there were quite a few typos that could have been avoided. Still, I had to give the book 5 stars. It is wonderfully written and is told from a perspective that I had never considered before. In 2014 it is difficult to truly realize what life must have been like for slaves, but with a first-person point of view like this, I felt like I was right there with Cowslip on the plantation. What struck me the most is how Cowslip felt about herself and her position in life. That made me stop and put down the book to really think about slavery and how devastating it was.

This book deserves every single star I gave it, and then some. I don't know whether Ms. Haynes plans to continue the story of Cowslip, but if she does, I will gladly purchase the book!

Erin says

I so adored that the main character's name was "Cowslip".

Corinna says

If I read this now, my rating might be different. But I recall reading this as a kid and being so completely mesmerized.

Patrick Nolan says

Simplistic elegance with a powerful message from an earlier time. This is quite a gem.

Marshaferz says

Re-read this after not having seen it for 30 years. It's simplistic, but still affecting. And it's incredible what details have stuck with me.
