



## North by Night: A Story of the Underground Railroad

*Katherine Ayres*

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It's 1851 and Lucy Spencer's family is keeping a secret. Their Ohio home is a station on the Underground Railroad, the network of people and places that helps fugitive slaves escape to freedom in Canada. Lucy believes in what she and her family do to help the fugitives, even if it means putting herself in danger.

So Lucy doesn't hesitate when she is asked to stay with the Widow Aurelia Mercer and help her with a family of runaway slaves hiding in her attic. And she learns so much from her experience--about growing up, love, and standing on her own. But what will Lucy do when she is asked to make the ultimate sacrifice and leave all she loves behind?

## North by Night: A Story of the Underground Railroad Details

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Author : Katherine Ayres

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## **From Reader Review North by Night: A Story of the Underground Railroad for online ebook**

### **Katie says**

REALLY like this book. It was about the life of a young woman who worked at a stop on the underground railroad, but it was so well written that you forgot it was a historical book, and got really involved with the characters. I was really impressed with the author's writing style. All in all it was a great way to pass the time while waiting in line for the H1N1 vaccine.

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### **Jarrett Bell says**

What a confusing book. It is written in diary format, but constantly switches between narration, diaries, and letters, often with 90's girl giggles about different boys that don't really seem to fit 19th century Quaker realities. However, provides a nice backdrop to the life of those who harbored the "Canadian Geese" during the 1850's time of the Fugitive slave laws.

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### **Elizabeth Dyck says**

This book was really interesting. The diary/journal layout is wonderful. Lucy Spencer is sixteen and a big helper in and supporter of the Underground Railroad. The Canadian Geese, the secret code for runaway slaves, are migrating continually. Though they are never sure when to expect some slaves at their door, they are always ready. One slave Lucy meets is Cass, a pregnant woman. They become close friends as the day draws nearer for Cass to deliver her baby. While they are waiting for the babe to arrive, Lucy is troubled by what she is going through. The age old problem of love. She has to decide between two young men who both want her. A few days after Cass delivers her baby, she dies, leaving a baby in the hands of Lucy. Lucy flees to Canada with the little girl she's named Hope. She leaves behind her family, a man she has come to love and who loves her in return.

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### **Amy says**

I really love historical fiction -it is my favorite genre. I bought this on vacation for my daughter to read, but it looked good so I decided to read it. The story is told through a series of journal entries and letters written by the main character Lucinda. I was hooked from the beginning where she and her family help to hide some runaway slaves as part of the underground railroad. Lucinda is 16 and boy crazy, and a large part of this book is about a love triangle involving Lucinda and two boys. The book does a good job of portraying the dangers to those who choose to help runaway slaves to freedom and the sacrifices that were made. Although I really enjoyed this book there are several plot holes, and lots of unresolved issues at the end which is why it got 3 stars instead of 4.

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### **C.P. Cabaniss says**

Yet another re-read of this favorite from my teenage years. The story centers around Lucy (it's her diary), a 16 year old girl who believes in freedom and works with her parents on the underground railroad to help runaway slaves. While Lucy can be irksome at times, her story is interesting and her love life no less so. Jeremiah Strong is just the type of man we all hope for and another boy in the story (won't say names here) is just the type we all cringe around and try to avoid. While I was not as enchanted with this story as I was the first time I read it at 13 or so, I definitely think it's a nice story with some memorable characters and lessons to be learned. The story centers around runaway slaves and I often found myself cringing through the tales of their hardships. Very heart touching and heart warming story.

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### **Amara says**

Lucy Spencer and her family are helpers of the Underground Railroad. At night, she stays up and waits for anybody to come knock on her door and say, "I am a Friend with a Friend." But her life gets turned upside down when she and Widow Mercer have to care for 10 runaway slaves, one of them nearing the end of her pregnancy. But when the slave owner comes into town looking for 10 of his slaves, Lucy has to conceal the slaves as well as she can. That's not all, Lucy is having some trouble with 2 boys: Jonathon Clark and Jeremiah Strong. She has liked Jonathon for a long time, but after 1 kiss from Jeremiah, she can't choose.

I give this book 3 stars

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### **Martina says**

I always love historical fiction, so this book was no different. It is a story of a young girl whose family works with the Underground Railroad. It takes place in Ohio, so the places referenced in the book were very familiar to me. The story especially speeds up toward the end and is fairly exciting. It was a good book with a lot of good historical information and I enjoyed it.

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### **Rachel says**

Not my favorite, Also read this with Sadie for literature circle. They tried to make this a love story and the underground railroad. My girls are 11 and not into the love note thing. Only 1 out of 8 in my group even wanted anything to do with that. Brings up the concept of rape and I didn't go into detail in the group discussion about slavery and the owners raping their slaves. luckily none of them really caught on. Mentioned to the teacher who will not be doing this book again next year. Most the book was written fine but then the letters were written with thee and thine etc. got a bit annoying.

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### **Becca Kirkman says**

It is a good short read. I first I thought it was too much teenager drama, but evens out. It was an amazing story of a young girl coming to age in the Civil War. The main character is Lucy who helps her family aid the runaways on the Underground railroad. She found out what she really believes and makes huge sacrifices for the cause of freedom.

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### **Lesley says**

Following my daughter around the rows in the library I picked this one up for myself in the teen/young adult section. This was great tale of how white families were in just as much danger for helping slaves get to freedom. This is the story of the ultimate price one slave gave and the white girl who gave up her family in ohio to save a slave baby.

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### **Dr. A. says**

Great book on the surface. It is well written, easy to read, contains legitimate history, and is heartfelt. I even really began to like Lucy and could understand her youthful love triangle and angst.

My issue is one that any ally would have: the same old story about the white savior. The white privilege oozing from the pages can not be ignored, in fact while William Lloyd Garrison gets a mention no real black abolitionists do.

It is not that I didn't enjoy the book because I did. It is just that I recognize the flaws and they concern me enough that I wouldn't recommend this book to just anyone and I wouldn't keep it in my classroom.

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### **Sydney says**

the only thing keeping me from giving this book 5 stars is the very abrupt ending and the romance in this book. But other than that this book was great.

It is one of those books that when you get to the end you are wondering how everything that needs to happen will fit into the last few pages. and I think there needs to be another book after this. I just wasn't ready for it to end.

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### **Amanda G. Stevens says**

What a confusing book. Its length is typical of middle-grade (175 pages), and protagonist Lucy behaves like a typical twelve-year-old. The problem: Lucy is actually sixteen. She's caught in a love triangle and will have to choose between her suitors (and marry one of them) fairly soon, and yes, her dithering composes a large portion of the story.

Modern ideologies, especially the stereotypical Independent Woman Ahead of Her Time, creep into this historical novel rather often. The moralizing is heavy-handed even for middle-grade fiction but really doesn't

work as young adult. I know, this isn't a young adult novel: for proof, see the cover. And the word count. And the existence of a subtitle. (And the back cover, which says reading level 5.0.)

I don't understand why the book was written this way, why Lucy is sixteen-going-on-twelve. Why the main secondary character Cass is a nineteen-year-old, escaped slave who is pregnant for the third time with a child of the white master who rapes her. Why so much of the book involves Lucy complaining about things like the weather and having to remind herself that Cass's life is worse than hers.

All that said, there are seeds of a good story here. An effort was made toward nineteenth-century diction. The devout faith of the Quakers--the cultural faith of all the characters--is an appreciated, historically accurate touch. Doubling the length (but not the dithering), aging the character behaviors appropriately, and deepening characterization past types might have made it worthwhile. As it is, too many things feel groundless or rushed. 2.5 stars.

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### **Grace Caleigh says**

see my blog [www.graceblogsaboutbooks.wordpress.com](http://www.graceblogsaboutbooks.wordpress.com)

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### **Sarah says**

Written in Diary format, this book gives the eye view of a young girl learning that law is not necessarily right, and dealing with the conflict of feelings between love and helping those who need her.

This was a book I read when I was in elementary school, and I certainly recommend it to any girl of that age. The writing is simple and easy to understand, and overall PG while teaching valuable lessons in equality. It got me interested in a topic I otherwise find rather boring. Unfortunately trying to reread it now, I find it far too simply written for my taste, but it is a very fast read, only taking a couple hours.

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