



# Freedom's Just Another Word

*Caroline Stellings*

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## **Freedom's Just Another Word** Caroline Stellings

The year Louisiana – Easy for short – meets Janis Joplin is the year everything changes. Easy is a car mechanic in her dad's shop, but she can sing the blues like someone twice her age. So when she hears that Janis Joplin is passing through her small town of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Easy is there with her heart - and her voice - in hand. It's 1970 and Janis Joplin is an electrifying blues-rock singer at the height of her fame – and of her addictions. Yet she recognizes Easy's talent and asks her to meet her in Texas to sing. So Easy begins an unusual journey that will change everything.

## **Freedom's Just Another Word Details**

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# From Reader Review Freedom's Just Another Word for online ebook

## Nicole says

[The title "Freedom's Just Another Word" has multiple meanings, which become apparent as the story progresses. The story, set in 1970, revolves around a young African-American woman, Louisiana "Easy" Merritt, who works in her f

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## Laura says

I was a little too young in 1970 when this book takes place, so I don't remember too well the things that were going on then and I certainly was not a young black woman living in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. And yet this novel felt so real so true to the time that once I got past the introduction I was hooked on her voice and her dream of becoming a blues singer

This is the story of how Louisiana meets Janis Joplin and is offered a chance to audition if she can get down to Austin Texas in time.

And you would think that would be enough to the story but this is not a simple road trip, but a journey of thoughts as well as places. The world is changing in 1970, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse.

I thoroughly enjoyed this story and felt the author got everything right including Janis Joplin. I highly recommend this book. Well done historical fiction.

Thanks to Netfalley for providing this book for an honest review.

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## Monica Fastenau says

Read the full review here: <http://newberyandbeyond.com/arcs-ya-f...>

\*Note: I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

This book was pretty interesting, if a little sad. Easy is an African-American girl growing up in the 1970s, and her one dream is to become a blues singer. So when Easy meets Janis Joplin and gets invited to sing with her in Texas, Easy jumps at the chance—even though it means road-tripping with a couple of nuns to get there.

During the course of the story, the author discusses racism, being judgmental, and drug and alcohol abuse. There's nothing too heavy, but it's not a lighthearted book, either.

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## Shira says

I received an ARC from Netgalley in exchange for an honest and unbiased opinion.

A great piece of Janis Joplin fan fiction; however, something about it left me less than satisfied.

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## Mar says

3.5 I struggle with YA fiction at times, but did enjoy this book. It deals with discovering a deeper understanding of oneself in a few ways amongst a few characters. Louisiana (Easy), the main character wants to be a blues singer. She meets up with Janis Joplin who may be able to help her in a singing career. As she works to get to Texas to sing with Joplin, she learns some things about herself and others. I don't know a lot about Joplin and her music, but that wasn't necessary to appreciate this novel.

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## Erin says

*"I don't think anyone's life really begins at birth. being born is just a technicality. Everyone chooses a certain moment, a particular experience from which they look ahead, and to which they return, time and again, wondering if life would have been different had that one incident never occurred."*

See reviews first on my blog

Easy is a mechanic by day and an aspiring blues singer at night. She works alongside her father everyday and because of this has heard horror stories about her parents early life in the southern states before they moved to Canada. This doesn't stop Easy's dream of becoming a singer though it only makes her want to do it more, and to show her parents how things have changed now that it's the 70's.

When Easy meets her idol Janis Joplin one night and help her out, she is offered an opportunity to sing for her in Texas. With the help of some nuns she starts on a road trip that will take her to Texas and show her how things really haven't changed that much since her parents time.

*"Think of all the black singers that would have given their right arm to sing at Threadgill's but weren't allowed in the door. Bessie Smith wouldn't have been allowed to sing there. Billie Holiday would have been tossed out with the garbage. Janis, now she glorifies these women right down to their faults, their addictions. You can go that route, Easy. Or you can honor them another way- by standing for something."*

I loved Easy's character, she was headstrong and sassy, but yet still incredibly naive and missed things that were right in front of her. While in Canada racism was present for her, it wasn't as big of a problem as it was in the states. Nor did she expect things to be as bad as they were in Texas & Louisiana as they were when she got there. You can tell this really affected not only her but also the Nun she was traveling with.

Now for the Nuns: Marsha was a character that at first you will dislike with a passion, but as you get to know her story and why exactly she wants to be a nun. You start liking her and see that her life wasn't as easy as it appeared to be.

*"Humility isn't an abstract virtue, Marsha. It's an absolute necessity if you plan on mission work. You can't expect to help anyone in this world if you're up on a cloud somewhere."*

The other Nun we get to see for awhile, but I never really felt anything towards her besides her small friendship that she made with Easy along the road-trip.

This book deals with multiple different issues: Racism, cheating parent, white birth mother, and dreaming. It deals with all of these things in a easy to understand way and makes you feel for all of the people involved in these situation.

*"I remember Thelma telling me that pearls are the result of sand getting into the shell of an oyster. The irritation is what makes the silky fluid flow." "So?" "She said it's like trouble in your life. Without it, you don't amount to much. Without something abrasive, you never find out what you're made of."*

Now I'm not going to lie I really didn't know much at all about how racism was/is in Canada or how different it hopefully was from what was happening here in America during that time. I also knew nothing about Janis Joplin besides the fact that she was a singer, that died from drugs/alcohol like so many in the 70's & 80's. While I can see how some people say this feels like Janis Joplin fan fiction, it is also so much more and should NOT just be thrown into that category. It's about dreaming and maturing and realizing what your willing to give up to live those dreams. Or if your not willing at all to compromise everything you've been taught for just a shot at possibly getting that dream.

Was this book perfect no, but it talked about things we are still dealing with today sadly. It showed how awful hatred can be, and how we sadly haven't gotten very far on treating each other how we would want to be treated.

*"I learned...well, I learned not to hate anyone. Let's just say I learned what hate can do. And it frightened me."*

After reading this one I want to read more of Stellings book and see how she handles other topics.

Thank you to Second Story Press and Netgalley for an e-ARC of this book in exchange for my honest review.

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## **Aoife says**

I received a free digital copy from the author/publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest feedback.

Louisiana 'Easy' Merritt knows that she only wants to be one thing in life - a Blues singer. When Easy meets her idol, Janis Joplin, by chance in her Canadian town, she gets the chance to travel to Texas to sing for Janis' people. Easy makes her way through the States with two nuns travelling the same way and faces things like racism and judgement that she never has before.

*"I don't think anyone's life really begins at birth. being born is just a technicality. Everyone chooses a certain moment, a particular experience from which they look ahead, and to which they return, time and again, wondering if life would have been different had that one incident never occurred."*

This was a quick and easy read and very, very enjoyable. I had to read this on time for net Galley but I also felt that, given the events in the US this week, it was a timely read as well. Easy was a fantastic character to

read, she was smart, strong and spunky and she was really able to hold her own. It was very hard seeing her face an intimidating and scary kind of racism that she'd never experienced before and having to hold her tongue, knowing that she would make everything worse if she tried to stand up for herself. There's a lot of emphasis on judging people in this book and not making assumptions, particularly with Marsha's story and then Easy's own feelings about her white birth mother Wendy Wood. There's also an emphasis on what exactly you'll do to achieve a dream and what you're willing to give up. Janis Joplin's role is this was pretty great. I don't know much about Janis in real life but I really enjoyed her attitude towards things, especially how Easy was treated and allowed herself to be treated. I really enjoyed this book and recommend it for anyone who is a fan of music, the blues, road trips or just a good time!

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### **Blazingbooks says**

Not a literary masterpiece but if you like Janis Joplin and stories about coming of age in the 70's it's a good read.

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### **Naomi says**

3.5

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### **Trisha says**

I loved this a lot.

Will write a longer review for Megan's blog before release date.

Update: Megan has just posted my review at Children's Books Daily.

Copy was provided by Netgalley and read with thanks. 'Freedom's just another word' will be published on September 13.

Highly recommended.

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### **Alissa says**

This one has been sitting on my "To Review" pile for some time.

A fast easy read. Road Trip + Historical Fiction with a whole lot of Fangirling sprinkled throughout (*Because really, who wouldn't want to meet and hang out with a legend like Janis Joplin...even if it was only vicariously through a character*). At least this is what this story seemed at first. But there was a whole lot more depth, despite the story's short length (less than 200 pages). In addition to the issue of racism, something that, unfortunately, is true even today, the story addressed the challenge of being a strong woman and following your dreams in a time where such a thing was far more difficult to do than it is today.

But the book's real strength is in its characters. The author did such a fantastic job with this! I can't say enough good things! I loved Easy. She's such a strong, badass young woman. Her journey (both physical and personal) really resonated with me. She made me care. I really enjoyed spending time with her character and watching her grow as her story came full-circle. The sisters were awesome! Especially Sister Grace. I totally want to road trip with them! And Marsha, whose snotty mary-sue attitude annoyed the \*\*\*\* out of me until I kind of wanted to slap her! I fiercely hated her for much of the book, but was glad the author gave her the chance to redeem herself at the end. I mean, how perfectly fitting was that?!? Only then did I realize her attitude came from immaturity and some very deep personal baggage. And I loved Janis/Pearl. How her character was written actually reminded me of my Great Aunt Wee-Wee, whose real name was Rosemary, but who everyone called Wee-Wee (*Long story there*). This outspoken lady smoked like a chimney, could drink a trucker under the table, and had a vocabulary so colorful that it could make even the crustiest sailor blush like a prudish schoolgirl (*That said, for the longest time, I thought my Great Uncle's name was Asshole, an endearment Auntie WW always used with much affection*). She was forward-thinking (*especially for someone of her generation*), did and said as she pleased, and didn't care a thing about gossip (*And in her small town, there was plenty of it*). She was kind of the family black sheep, but I thought she was awesome! Of course, looking back, Auntie Wee-Wee's behavior was likely due more to the slow progression of Dementia than anything else. But growing up in the 80s, when there was little to no awareness of such illnesses, I only saw someone who was cool. Visits to her house were always entertaining, to say the least. Plus she had a game room in her basement, and that didn't hurt either.

But I digress... (*I've been doing that a lot lately!*)

So. OMG, this book! So many feels!! Going into it, I didn't expect that. But I'm so glad to have experienced it all. I can't say enough good things. And I don't want to say more, because I can see this review getting very spoilery very fast.

So I'll leave it at this: READ THIS BOOK. NOW!!!!

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## **Shanna Miles says**

At just 232 pages, this is a quick read and as I've said before (if you follow me on twitter @srmilesauthor) we can't say we've made it until the shelves are full of girls about black girls on road trips. Admit it, it's a thing. Girl gets a pal, they go out in search of a concert or a guy or the ocean, hijinks ensue. Tons of them line the shelves with pictures of blond girls in a convertible with their hair blowing in the wind on the cover. This isn't that, and thank goodness for it. We get to know Easy, who is sassy and headstrong, but still silly and blind to things that should be obvious. We get to follow her on an adventure that probably wouldn't be possible in today's connected world. Though, traveling by car to recently desegregated Texas might be more dangerous than embarking on a road trip without your cell phone these days.

Race is a factor in her everyday life (micro aggressions by her neighbors and outright racism are presented in a few well placed scenes), but I feel the heart of the story lies in the difference between dreams and reality and youth and maturity. We see things differently from afar. Janis on the cover of her albums is quite different from Janis on the stage of a bar in Austin with blood seeping from fresh track marks on her arm. So what do we do when we see our dreams up close? That's what we get in the book, what happens when reality comes into view? Is it still worth the obsession? What are we willing to give up for it?

Discussion Questions can be found on my blog: [www.shannamiles.net](http://www.shannamiles.net)

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### **Bless says**

Truly amazing in every single way. I'm glad her mother advised her through the way and she learned more about Black struggles, the truth, and addictions. All other struggles in the world. She too needs to keep herself in check at times and listen. The main character has met a lot of people along the way and the trip has tally changed her life. Splendid job Mrs. Stellings! I recommend this book to all girls who have a dream, don't give up yet and so soon. Try it out first little by little taking small steps to see what's best for you. Remember that everyone of you has a special talent. Use it to your full capacity and flaunt it, just like Easy (Louisiana) did!

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### **Connie says**

FTC Disclosure: I received this book free from Goodreads hoping I would review it.

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