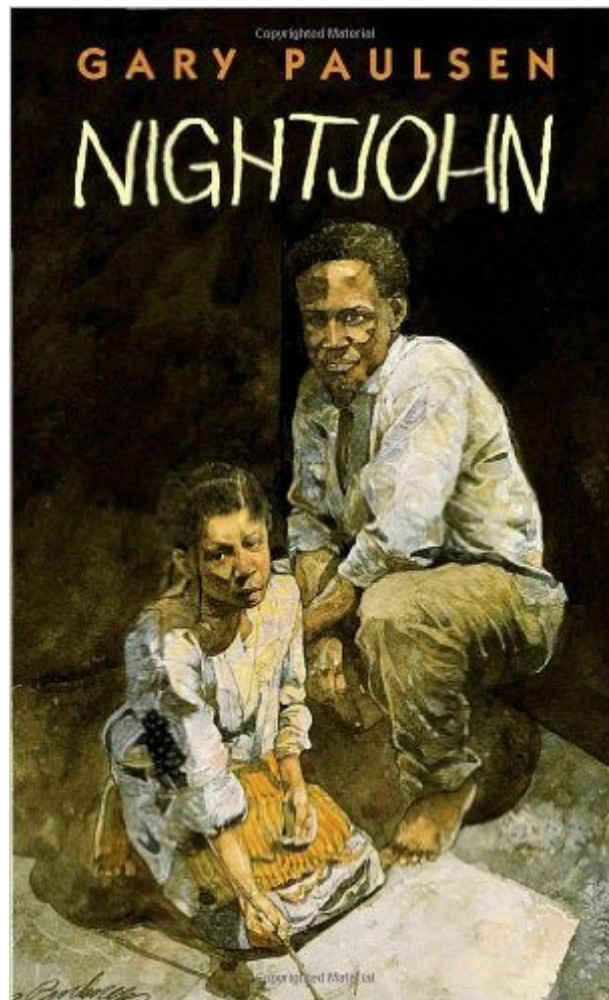


The book was found

# Nightjohn



## Synopsis

"To know things, for us to know things, is bad for them. We get to wanting and when we get to wanting it's bad for them. They thinks we want what they got . . . That's why they don't want us reading." --Nightjohn "I didn't know what letters was, not what they meant, but I thought it might be something I wanted to know. To learn." -- Sarny Sarny, a female slave at the Waller plantation, first sees Nightjohn when he is brought there with a rope around his neck, his body covered in scars. He had escaped north to freedom, but he came back--came back to teach reading. Knowing that the penalty for reading is dismemberment Nightjohn still returned to slavery to teach others how to read. And twelve-year-old Sarny is willing to take the risk to learn. Set in the 1850s, Gary Paulsen's groundbreaking new novel is unlike anything else the award-winning author has written. It is a meticulously researched, historically accurate, and artistically crafted portrayal of a grim time in our nation's past, brought to light through the personal history of two unforgettable characters.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 770L (What's this?)

Mass Market Paperback: 112 pages

Publisher: Laurel Leaf; Reprint edition (January 1, 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0440219361

ISBN-13: 978-0440219361

Product Dimensions: 4.2 x 0.3 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 0.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (119 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #72,875 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #37 in Â Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > 19th Century #104 in Â Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1800s #181 in Â Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > African-American

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

This story is an intense and graphic account of the brutal conditions endured by slaves. The "Master" exerted extreme control over all facets of the slaves' lives, including eating, sleeping, and reproduction. Horrific punishments were dealt out to those who violated any of the rules. I found this

short book moving and affecting, illuminating the inhuman conditions the slaves endured. However, this book was assigned to my 10-year old son as summer reading. This book is grossly inappropriate for children. Despite its brevity, this book is way too intense for children, dealing with a topic that is better suited to high school.

Reading - what does it mean to you? Many adore that word, and those people happen to be bookworms. But some detest that word, considering that reading is boring. Many people take reading for granted. But for an enslaved person, the ability to read is very powerful. "Nightjohn" is the tale of a young, female, black slave who learned how to read, and the man who dared break the rules to teach it. Sarny is a curious, little girl, a slave from birth, who resides in the plantation of Mr. Waller during the Civil War. For her, life is the same, until a mysterious black man named John teaches her something new, the ability to read and write. Though the rules forbid that a slave should learn that, Sarny and John risk everything to learn and teach one of man's most powerful tactics. "Nightjohn" - an inspiring tale set during a time of despair and suffering, when the Civil War tore a nation apart, when people sorrowfully leave their families to do what they believed was right. It was a time when slavery existed, and suffering slaves risk their lives to seek freedom. Short and fast-moving (only 90 pages), "Nightjohn" has an important message. Many people can learn from this story. It teaches that words are the most powerful weapon that can be used against injustice and corruption. The book accurately portrays the cruel and violent life of a slave during 1800s America, and the despairs and hopes they kept during a horrible time. "Nightjohn" will convince you that slavery should never have existed!

What a great book! I disagree with the reviews above when they say that the violence is redundant and excessive. Truth is, life was really like that on the plantation. The reader is almost transported back in time. This book is a good contrast to many history books that tend to downplay the intense cruelty inflicted on southern slaves. My recommendation? Take this book with you to Williamsburg, VA and ask the tour guides questions about it as they tell you how "well treated" the slaves were.

I think you should read Night John by Gary Paulsen because this book is about slavery. Personally, I like the part with the quarters because the slaves make a lamp from pork fat and a bowl that was pretty cool. Also in the book, the slaves have a lot of rules like they can not have any lights on, no praying, reading, and no writing. As well, there are punishments too. If you read or write you will get your thumb or toes cut off or smashed off. If you pray and have a light on you will

probably get yelled at or whipped. You should read Night John because it is about slaves. For instance, the things we did to them. Like we cut off body parts, killed them, whipped them, and chased them. I think that is not right and not nice. Also, I did not know some of the things they did like chasing them with dogs and cutting off body parts if they read or if they wrote. Also, there is something I know, like they whipped them. When you read this book you can learn more about slaves and what they did to them. Did you know it was against the law for slaves to read because if the slaves read then they will want to run their lives and try to escape. In other words, I am glad they can read now and run their lives because they only have one. This book is very interesting. It is a good book so you should read it. Also, you should read it because there is a lot of parts that are about slaves. There are funny parts and sad parts. Also, gross parts (if you like that). That is why you should read Night John!

I am a big Gary Paulsen fan. I'm trying to read all of his books. I started reading Hatchet in 5th grade. I've read, about 5 of his books, and soon found out that he has a wide selection of more books. I just finished "NightJohn". I thought this book was very well written. I understood it very well. But I do recommend something before you read this book. I am an 8th grader, and I have just finished studying in my History class about the Civil War, and slavery, and I recommend that you should learn a little about the Civil War, and slavery before you read this book. Because you wouldn't understand it if you didn't know about. I liked this book a lot. The semi- part life time tale of Sarny. Sarny is a young black slave who is born into a plantation in the South. She tells the story in a very "horrific" way I think. She tells of her "master" and how badly they are treated. I gave this book 5 stars for its well written contents. I almost was going to give it 4 stars because of the continual cursing. But by all means, this is a great book, and I would buy it again.

One of my favorite ways to teach history is through making connections between historic fictions and non-fiction books. Gary Paulsen has done an excellent job with drawing the reader in and holding their attention. This is one of the most moving books for this time in history. The kids get totally involved emotionally as I read it aloud. Great class discussion pursue with lots of critical thinking. This is a must have book for a classroom library but of course pretty much all of Gary Paulsen books are.

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