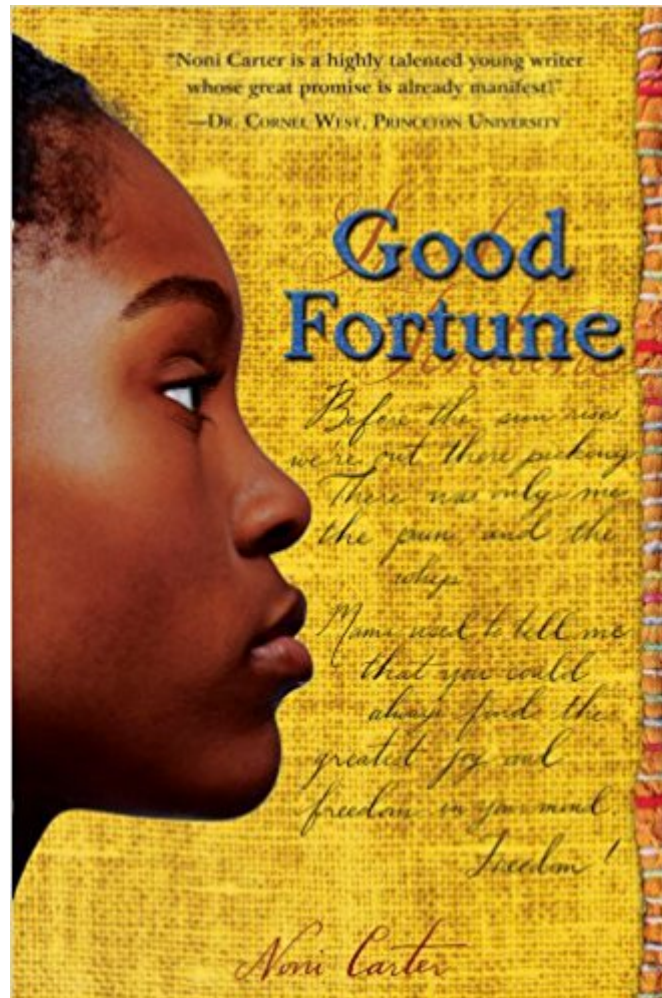




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# Good Fortune



## Synopsis

Ayanna Bahati lives in a small African village when she is brutally kidnapped, along with her brother, and forced onto a slave ship to America. As Ayanna, renamed Anna, rises from the cotton fields to the master's house, she finds the familial love she's been yearning for in elderly Mary and Mary's son Daniel—but she is also faced with more threats to her survival. Risking everything to escape the plantation, Anna manages to make it north and to freedom, eventually settling in the free black community of Hudson, Ohio, and educating herself to become a teacher. In the tradition of *Copper Sun* and *Chains*, this is the stirring tale of a girl's journey from Africa to freedom and from youth to womanhood, as recounted in this dazzling debut novel.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 760L (What's this?)

Paperback: 496 pages

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Language: English

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Fiction > Africa #367 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > 19th Century

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Grade 9 Up • Sarah, Anna, and Ayanna are the names used by one person over the course of her life. First she is Sarah, a slave on a plantation in Tennessee. Her days are full of endless labor, humiliation, and the threat of rape. She struggles to understand the meaning of freedom and to educate herself despite the danger. After witnessing a brutal whipping, she flees north to freedom. Barely surviving the harrowing journey, Sarah and her adopted brother arrive in Ohio, only to find that freedom is not as sweet as she had hoped. She changes her name to Anna and begins a new life, but she worries about loved ones left behind and is embittered by the severe restrictions

and discrimination faced by free blacks. One of the more effective literary devices is how Anna's narration gradually shifts from slave patois to more refined speech as her education progresses. Ayanna was her name as a child in Africa, remembered in nightmares, where the memories of the murder of her mother, the horrifying ocean passage in the belly of a slave ship, and being separated from her brother on the auction block haunt her. The transitions between the dreams and waking life are occasionally jarring, but on the whole the narrative flows smoothly and is well paced. An author's note about fact and fiction in the book adds weight to the historical information included. --Caroline Tesauro, Radford Public Library, VA (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In the stirring narrative of young Sarah on a Tennessee plantation in the early nineteenth century, this lengthy debut novel tells an American slavery story, weaving together the brutal labor and threats of sexual assault with Sarah's memories of capture in Africa. When she escapes with her "brother" Daniel, she leaves behind her tender, adoptive mother and John, the young man she loves, and she discovers that escape does not mean freedom. As they reach Ohio, Sarah, now 14, dreams of education, but she encounters vicious prejudice, including the n-word ("You have no idea what education is, and if you did, you wouldn't know what to do with it"). She does know what education is, of course, and later she even establishes a school. With many spelled-out messages, Carter's novel tries to fold in too much for one story, and in the long afterword, which distinguishes fact from fiction, she acknowledges plot contrivances. Despite these shortfalls, though, the harsh, realistic history will captivate readers, as will the brave young girl's struggle and triumph. Grades 8-11. --Hazel Rochman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I'm a 14 year old African American just like her and I can relate to some of the struggles that she went through. I highly recommend this book for teen girls. I was all ways happy to come home and read this book after school. I got so into the book that I felt as if the characters were real (I talked to the book, if a character died.... I cried etc.) My point is..this book is SO good.

fantastic condition, great book!

I was amazed to learn that Noni Carter was only 11 years old when she wrote this book. At first I

thought it a bit too romantic and coincidental but after learning about this young author, I was impressed. A good read. Keeps your interest all through the book. Not too graphic and perfectly balanced.

I was searching for a great book on slavery for a young adult. This was very clean and really gave a good look at the horrors of being a slave.

Brutally stolen from her African homeland at the age of four and sold into slavery on a cotton plantation in Tennessee, Ayanna (Anna) Bahati could not find relief from the recurrent nightmares of her abduction. As soon as she was old enough, Anna began toiling endless days of hard physical labor working the cotton fields. This grueling schedule changed somewhat when Anna was about fourteen and Aunt Mary, the mother figure who cared for her on the plantation, convinced the Missus to allow Anna to spend some of the day performing housework and watching the children. Although slaves were forbidden to get an education, Anna used her work with the children as an opportunity to learn how to read and write, which in turn fortified her desire to escape to freedom. Escape she did, under traumatic circumstances that left the young man she loved behind. With intense determination and some assistance from strangers, Anna found her way to a free black community in Ohio. Although she found a way to make a living, Anna soon realized that entrenched segregation and hostility against blacks meant that injustices such as the lack of education could continue, even in a free state. Anna would need to push the boundaries, at the risk of grave danger, to live the life of freedom she had yearned. Carefully researched, this debut novel from Noni Carter provides readers with a stark depiction of the abhorrent conditions that enslaved Africans endured during their passage across the ocean and their forced labor on American plantations. Readers will be drawn to the courage and spirit of the lead character, a young woman who found inspiration from the written word and from the grace of people she knew she could trust.

Ayanna Bahati was born in Africa in 1807. But at just four years old, she is cruelly torn from her mother's arms as her mother is brutally murdered. Ayanna is then packed onto a slave ship bound for America. She is sold to a plantation in Tennessee, where her name is changed to Sarah. Sarah is taken under wing by a wise slave woman named Aunt Mary and raised alongside her son, Daniel. In all aspects other than blood, Mary and Daniel become Sarah's new mother and brother. Sarah falls into the backbreaking --- and spirit breaking --- routines of life on a plantation. And though she suffers from reoccurring nightmares of her abduction in Africa and the torturous boat ride across the

ocean, she doesn't recall much from her life before slavery. But she does remember two things: the precious gift of her mother's love, and the precious gift of freedom. Sarah starts out working in the fields but later on receives new orders to care for the master's two young children. In the days that follow, she listens as the kids recite their school lessons, and the seed of knowledge is planted: she begins to dream of getting an education. Slowly and secretly, Sarah consumes the lessons that the children practice, snatches bits and pieces overheard outside the school room window, and devotes what little free time she has to practice writing letters in the dirt. She even teaches herself to read. But this tiny sip of knowledge just makes her thirst for more. Then when Sarah is 14, she overhears Daniel making plans to escape. Sarah never forgot what freedom tasted like, and with the master's oldest son threatening Sarah with rape, now is the right time to run. They break free from the plantation and run for their lives towards freedom. But Sarah soon finds out that freedom is a lot more complicated than just stepping over the state line. Noni Carter's debut novel is a powerful story filled with inspiration, hope, courage, love and determination. Carter introduces a cast of dynamic characters, the spirit burning inside of them, and the courage they find to live their lives in freedom will inspire all who share in their story. Her display of characters also proves just how capable humans can be of cruelty --- but also of kindness. Ayanna's quest for an education reminds us how most Americans take education for granted; maybe Carter's words will renew our own thirst for knowledge. GOOD FORTUNE is an amazing journey of one woman's search for freedom, in every sense of the word. It is also a shining example of never giving up on one's dreams no matter how impossible they may seem. Carter is an exceptionally talented writer, definitely one to keep an eye on and to reserve space for on your bookshelves.

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