

## Congratulations on being chosen for the 8th grade ELA honors class.

All of the honor classes for ELA, grades 8-11, are required to complete summer reading. Your summer reading is the novel Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson. In the past, Chains was required reading in 7th grade for those entering the honors program. It was a way for you to demonstrate competency of the skills you will need next year. Therefore, I am assigning you an abbreviated packet that I have used previously to maintain this standard.

A principal expectation of the packet is that you will develop and demonstrate your skills in reading and writing, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. You are expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is vital, as well, that you are able to relate events and the feelings of characters to your own lives and experiences and describe your interpretation of a particular passage.

You are expected to have read the novel and completed the packet for the first day of school. We will be using this novel for the first few weeks of class.

If you have questions about any work in the packet or any part of the novel, please reach out to me- [mkrohn@schoharieschools](mailto:mkrohn@schoharieschools).

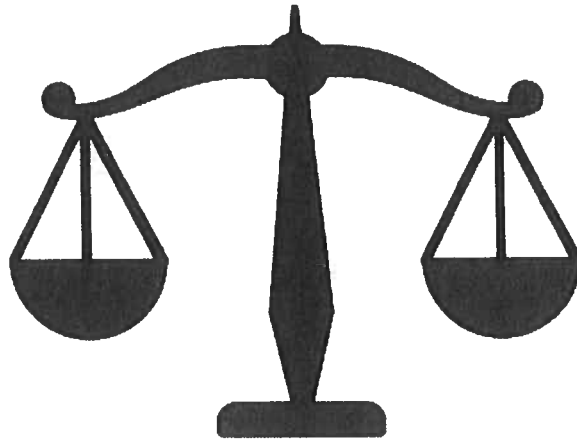
### **CHAINS**

#### **synopsis**

Chains is an historical novel set during the Revolutionary War in the United States (1776). The protagonist is thirteen-year-old Isabel, an African-American slave fighting for her and her younger sister's freedom. Although the book is fictional, many of the events described in its pages are plucked from history. Isabel is encouraged to spy on her Loyalist master as a means of gaining her freedom. In doing so she puts her very life in peril.



# Chains



*By Laurie Halse Anderson*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_





**Before you read the chapters:**

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy.” The main character of *Chains* is Isabel, an African-American slave in 1776 New York. Isabel is an extraordinary young girl, who faces many trials and challenges in her quest to gain freedom for herself and her younger sister, Ruth. An intriguing protagonist is really important in helping a reader enjoy a story. What was one particularly memorable protagonist from a book you have read or a movie you have seen? What made this character so unforgettable?

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**Comprehension Questions**

1. What is the setting of the story at the beginning of Chapter 1? Remember to give both the date and place. \_\_\_\_\_
2. What recent event was the cause of so much upheaval in Isabel and Ruth’s lives? Why did this event have such a dramatic effect on them? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What caused Isabel to feel that Mr.Robert’s actions were especially unjust? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What two concerns did Isabel have with regard to her sister’s mental/physical well-being?

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5. What was there in Jenny’s past that enabled her to be empathetic to the plight of slaves?

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6. What prevented Jenny from buying Isabel and Ruth? What do you think her plans would have been if she been able to purchase them? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Describe your first impressions of the Locktons. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Ch 5-8**



**Before you read the chapter:**

*Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction. (John F. Kennedy)*  
In the coming chapters Isabel seems to lose her sense of purpose. Why do you think this is so important in life?

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**Comprehension Questions**

1. Bellingham suspected Lockton of being a Tory. What did this mean? Were his suspicions correct? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. How did Isabel show her courage and selflessness in this section? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What is your impression of Curzon? On what did you base this impression? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What did Curzon want Isabel to do in the Lockton household? What did he suggest the rebels might do for her in exchange? Why did she hesitate? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What do you think Isabel meant when she said, *I had no map for this life*? Why do you think she felt this way? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Before you read the chapter:**

Describe the one scene or event in the novel which you have enjoyed the most thus far.

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**Cloze Call**

Complete the following reading by filling in the correct words from the word box.

lead	waterfront	rebels	mansion	informant
tongue	jeopardy	bells	parlour	bottom
bars	pet	linen	budge	pass

Isabel was called to the \_\_\_\_\_ by Madam where she was meeting with Lady Seymour. There she saw Ruth, dressed up as Madam's pretty \_\_\_\_\_ and that she had been crying. Isabel was then assigned the task of serving to Mr. Lockton and his guests plates of cold, sliced \_\_\_\_\_, cheese, bread and pickles. The men were discussing how they were concerned about the rising power of the \_\_\_\_\_ in New York. When Isabel returned from the kitchen with bread and apricot jam, she saw Madam's \_\_\_\_\_ chest filled with paper currency.

Later that night Isabel snuck out of the house, even though she knew that slaves were not allowed out after sunset without a \_\_\_\_\_ from thier master. She ran all the way to \_\_\_\_\_ to a shed behind Bellingham's house where Curzon lived. After she told Curzon about the trunk, he told her he would pass the information on to Bellingham, and to make sure she told no one that she was \_\_\_\_\_.

The next day a group of merchants and soldiers appeared at the door of the Lockton \_\_\_\_\_. The soldiers were carrying long, metal \_\_\_\_\_ instead of guns. Bellingham told Lockton that the army needed the \_\_\_\_\_ from his house for ammunition. Lockton was told that even the churches were donating their \_\_\_\_\_ to be recast into cannons. When they found the chest in the bedchamber, Mrs. Lockton immediately sat down upon it and at first, refused to \_\_\_\_\_. Finally her husband told her to get up because there was nothing to worry about. When the soldiers didn't find anything in the chest Isabel wanted to scream, *The money is underneath in the false* \_\_\_\_\_. When the soldiers finished their search Mr. Lockton was arrested for putting the lives of thousands in \_\_\_\_\_.



**Before you read the chapters:**

Every story needs a really interesting antagonist (*bad guy*) that the reader loves to hate. Who do you think would qualify as the antagonist of *Chains* thus far in the novel? Support your choice with proof from the novel.

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**Storyboard**

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tells an important event in a story. Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first 15 chapters of Chains.

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.



Ch 16-19



**Before you read the chapters:**

Waiting for something important to happen in your life can really try one's patience (as Isabel is about to find out as our story unfolds). Describe briefly a time in your own life when you had to be very patient.

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**Comprehension Questions**

1. Describe the dangerous mission that Isabel set out upon in chapter 16, as well as the results of this mission. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Why did Mr. Lockton insist that his wife remain in their house in New York after he fled the city? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Describe how Mr. Lockton escaped the city. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Describe the dramatic scene witnessed by Isabel, Ruth and Curzon in chapter 18.

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5. How did Isabel see the good side of having to sit in the upstairs gallery at church? \_\_\_\_\_

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Ch 20-24



**Before you read the chapter:**

The great Winston Churchill once said, *Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.* How would you define or describe **courage**?

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## Comprehension Questions

1. What event prompted so much excitement in New York on July 9, 1776? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Describe the details of Madam Lockton's scheme whereby she was able to sell Ruth without Isabel being aware of her plans. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Ruth was sold to the island of \_\_\_\_\_ to a \_\_\_\_\_ family.

4. Was your opinion of Colonel Regan heightened or diminished after reading chapter 21? Why?

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5. What was Isabel's punishment determined to be? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Chapter 23 ends with the ominous words, "Night crept into my soul". What do you think is meant by this? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Why do you think Lady Seymour took Isabel into her home to recover after her branding experience. What do you think this says about her character?

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Ch 25-28



**Before you read the chapter:**

Good chapter titles can really help to make a story more interesting. The author's choice of chapter titles in this novel is quite unique - using the dates of the events contained in each chapter. After reading Chapters 25-28 come back to this question and create a new title for one of these chapters. (No dates please.) Be sure that your title reflects the content.

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## Comprehension Questions

1. Describe in as much detail as possible Isabel's state of mind as Chapter 25 opens – and the reason for why she felt this way. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Isabel tells Curzon, They (the Patriots) don't want us free. They just want liberty for themselves. Do you think she has a point or is she just taking out her anger on the rebels? Please defend your response.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The woman in the yellow head cloth says, The rebels want to take our freedom, but they won't share it with us. Some of the Patriots owned slaves yet at the same time claimed that all men were created equal. How do you think they justified themselves or were they just a bunch of hypocrites? Please explain your answer.

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4. What do you think Grandfather meant when he told Isabel, A scar is a sign of strength?" The sign of a survivor?

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\_\_\_\_\_

### Ch 29-32



#### Before you read the chapter:

If you had to choose your favorite (or the most interesting) character of *Chains* so far, who would it be – and why? (For a challenge, choose a character other than the protagonist.)

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\_\_\_\_\_

1.	Despite being threatened with a beating, Isabel refused to divulge to the British the location of General Washington's former headquarters.	True or False
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2.	The captain informed Isabel that they only employed slaves who ran away from rebel slaveholders.	True or False
3.	When Isabel met Mister Lockton coming ashore she told him she was there to purchase things at the market.	True or False
4.	Captain Campbell told Lockton that Isabel wished to escape from slavery by offering her services to the British army	True or False
5.	Hessians were hired soldiers from Shetland.	True or False
6.	Mr. Lockton came to see that selling Ruth had been a mistake on his wife's part.	True or False
7.	Mrs. Lockton reluctantly allowed Isabel to go to help at Lady Seymour's because all of her Dutch girls had fled.	True or False
8.	Without Isabel's help Lady Seymour would not have made it out of her burning house alive.	True or False
9.	The following is an example of a simile: ... each caught in a devilish whirlwind.	True or False

10. Isabel states, All I lost in the confusion was Ruth's doll. All I had lost was everything. Why do you think this loss was so devastating for her?

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11. What do you think Isabel meant when she said, *I was chained between two nations*?

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**Ch 33-35**



**Before you read the chapter:**

What do you think was the most dramatic event in the novel so far? What made this event so memorable?

**Comprehension Questions**

1. Most readers would agree that Madam Lockton is a very horrible person. Cite a proof for this statement from these chapters. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What had Isabel done for Lady Seymour for which the old woman was forever grateful?

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3. What does Isabel discover at the end of Chapter 33? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. How does Chapter 34 end in a cliffhanger? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Why did Isabel feel compelled to try to help Curzon? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Ch 36-38



#### Before you read the chapters:

Read the excerpt from complaint by George Washington to General Howe situated under the title of Chapter 36. What do you think this chapter is going to be about? Check back after you have read the chapter and see if you were right.

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**Cloze Call:** Complete the following exercise filling in the correct words from the Word Box.

ship	physician	tea	shoes	lads	purchase	enemy	
work	fever	fear	soul	pork	burial	calm	close

When Lady Seymour was struck by a \_\_\_\_\_, Madam Lockton suggested that she recover in Charleston, but the doctor forbade it. Conditions at Bridewell prison had eased up somewhat. Although the British had promised the prisoners two pounds of \_\_\_\_\_ every week there was no fire to cook the meat. Lady Seymour asked Isabel to \_\_\_\_\_ some books for her at the shop on Hanover Square. The man in the shop urged Isabel to keep feeding the \_\_\_\_\_. One day Isabel volunteered to fetch the \_\_\_\_\_ water because it was \_\_\_\_\_ to the prison. When trying to find out where Curzon's cell was, Isabel passed some \_\_\_\_\_ pits behind the prison. Dibdin asked Isabel to speak with Captain Morse so that a \_\_\_\_\_ might be sent to the prison. The captain told Isabel that Curzon had been \_\_\_\_\_ and brave during his first battle and he was a good soldier. Master Lockton told his wife that he would be taking the next \_\_\_\_\_ to London. Isabel was promised that on Christmas Day she would have a day without \_\_\_\_\_. On Christmas Lady Seymour gave Isabel a pair of black leather \_\_\_\_\_. Madam told Isabel that she knew she had been visiting the prison on Lady Seymour's orders, for the older woman said that caring for the \_\_\_\_\_ is doing the Lord's work. Madam told Isabel that she should \_\_\_\_\_ when her husband left and Lady Seymour died. The thought terrified Isabel but she told herself that Mrs. Lockton would never be able to chain her



**Before you read the chapter:**

In Chapter 41 Isabel felt that Mrs. Lockton was set on keeping *her soul bound in chains*. Do you think it is possible for a person who is a slave to have a soul which is free? Please defend your answer.

**Comprehension Questions**

1. What did the soldier, Fisher, agree to do for some cake? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Why was Isabel still somewhat disturbed by Lady Seymour's news that she had once tried to buy her from the Locktons? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Why did Isabel think that purchasing her own freedom would be impossible? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Why wasn't Isabel able to deliver Captain Farrar's message right away? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Number each of the following events from these chapters to indicate the order in which they took place.**

	Event	order
a	Isabel agrees to deliver a penny to Captain Farrar for Captain Morse.	
b	Lady Seymour tells Isabel that she had once tried to buy her from Mrs. Lockton.	
c	Captain Morse gives Isabel a loaf of bread with a note inside to give to Dibdin in the prison.	
d	Lady Seymour has a frightful seizure of the apoplexy.	
e	Mr. Lockton leaves for England.	
f	Captain Farrar gives her a note to deliver to Captain Morse.	
g	Colonel Hawkins receives the news that the British were defeated in a battle at Princeton, New Jersey	
h	Sarah gives birth to a baby boy and names him George.	



**Before you read the chapters:**

Briefly predict how you think the novel will end.

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**Comprehension Questions**

1. The climax of a story usually occurs at the most exciting or important point of the plot. Where do you think the climax of this novel occurs? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What did you enjoy most about this novel (i.e. a scene, character, issue...)? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What do you think would have been the repercussions had Isabel not burned Captain Farrar's note? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What shocking news did Isabel learn about Ruth? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Think of one reason why Isabel should have helped Curzon escape and one reason why it probably wasn't such a good idea.

Good Idea	
Not	

6. Were you satisfied with the conclusion of the novel? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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