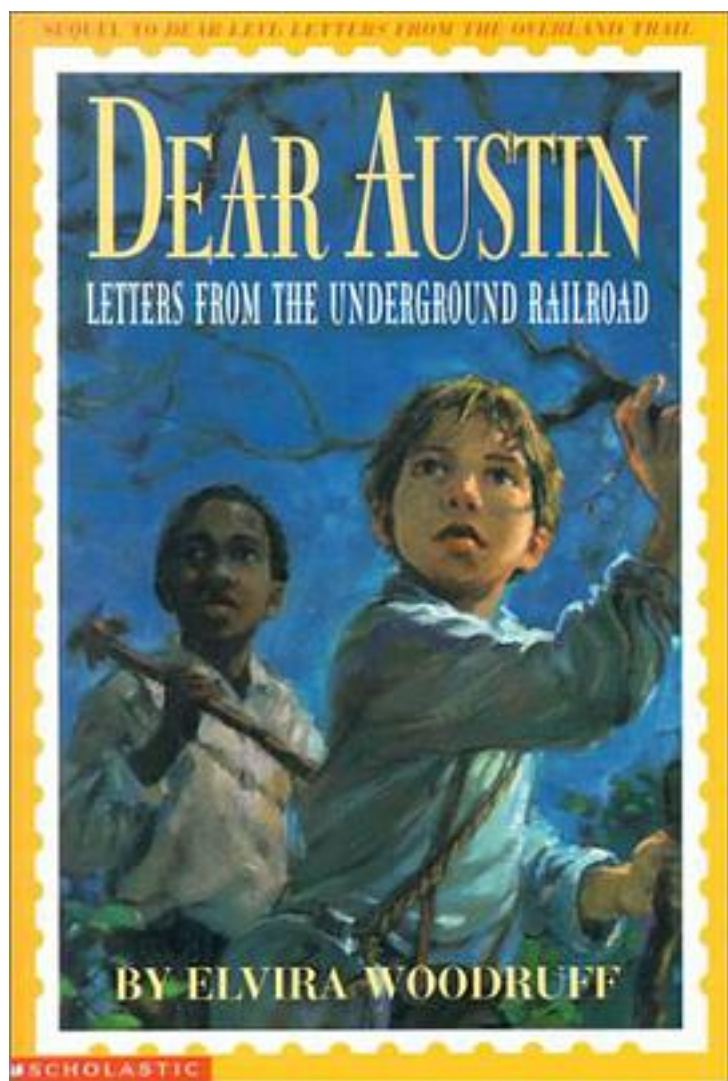


Dear Austin



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From School Library Journal Grade 3-6-Set in 1853, this sequel to Dear Levi (Knopf, 1994) consists of letters written by 11-year-old Levi Ives to his older brother Austin. Remaining with his guardian, Miss Amelia, until he is able to join Austin on the family claim in Oregon, Levi describes his escapades in the Pennsylvania countryside with his friend, Jupiter, the son of a former slave. When Jupiter's sister is captured by slave traders, the two boys undertake a dangerous journey south to try and free her. While hiding in the woods, they meet Harriet Tubman, and Levi realizes that Miss Amelia and some of his neighbors are part of the Underground Railroad. Rich in adventure, mystery, and suspense, the succinctly written narrative depicts Levi's struggle to understand the prejudicial attitudes of others. The boy's life of freedom is beautifully juxtaposed against Jupiter's life and his constant fear of capture. The plot advances through Levi's letters, which also speak about his feelings for his guardian, his friends, and his brother. Each character is an individual whose actions are believable in the context of the story. This carefully researched and vividly imagined novel presents the emotional and gripping tale of one boy's confrontation with the issue of slavery and its significance in American history. Janet Gillen, Great Neck Public Library, NY Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title. From Kirkus Reviews Readers don't have to have read Dear Levi (not reviewed) to enjoy this sequel, a gripping historical novel that covers two boys' journeys from innocence to manhood. In 1853, young Levi and his buddies, Possum and Jupiter, create a daredevil's club, through which they attempt to outrun bulls, jump off cliffs, and investigate strange occurrences in their small Pennsylvania town. The tone shifts from the humor of boyhood scrapes to tragedy when Jupiter's little sister, Darcy, is captured by slave traders. Jupiter and Levi head south to find her, a journey that is particularly eye-opening for naive Levi. The action unfolds through his letters to his brother Austin; these range from laugh-out-loud funny to poignant. Powerful emotions are subtly and expertly conveyed, from Levi's amusing embarrassment in dancing class, to his guilt for Darcy's kidnapping, to his horror at the slave auction. Woodruff combines swift pacing, historical detail (Harriet Tubman makes an appearance), humor, suffering, depth, and precise characterizations, for wholly satisfying page turner. (Fiction. 8-12) -- Copyright © 1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title. See all Editorial Reviews"

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