

## Reviews for Last Stop Freedom

5.0 out of 5 stars: Non-stop reading for Last Stop Freedom

By Wendy E. Thomason

Format: Kindle Edition

When we first meet Julia Bigsby, she is running for her life through the swamps of South Carolina as she is chased by hounds and a tracking party. Someone wants Julia back. This is a far cry from the Reverend's daughter who up until recently had lived with her widowed father tucked safely away within the church's boundaries.

It all started with a letter addressed to Miss Julia Bigsby, Troy, New York from her Cousin Mary in 1851 inviting her to visit with members of her Aunt's family. Julia, whose daily entertainment includes mending her father's robes and writing his sermons, longs for the excitement and adventure such a visit would bring. With a little bit of cunning on her part, she wins the argument with her father and sets off to join "the wealthy side" of her family and one which her father - a man so frugal he limits the coal for heating not on the temperature but by the calendar- abhors for its constant displays of wealth.

During her visit, in order to escape the torment of returning to live under her father's rule, Julia agrees to marry Nathaniel Hamilton, a plantation owner in South Carolina. Little does she know that this decision just moves her from one house of repression to another. Her only source of comfort at the plantation becomes the black slave in the house; Fanny who listens to her and gives her emotional strength. When Nathaniel threatens to sell Fanny, Julia must step up and make some decisions in order to take back control over her life.

What follows is an intriguing story of cultures and morals clashing including - North vs. South, men vs. women, black vs white, and religious doctrine vs. free will. Ann Nolder Heinz does a wonderful job of weaving all of these points of view into a solid story filled with beautiful imagery and accurate historical facts.

Heinz deftly shows us the inner turmoil of her main character as she struggles with what is allowed, what is expected of her, and with what she knows is the right thing to do. With a quick pace and nice use of credible dialogue, Heinz brings us along as Julia, who had only wanted to be out in the world to have adventure and escape her father's rule, matures into a young woman of strength who becomes committed to a cause that although not popular, and is dangerous for all involved, is the absolute right thing to do.

Heinz who has also written: Will Thou Be Mine, Final Victim, Free Fall, and Extreme Influence, is an accomplished and prolific writer who does a wonderful job of bringing us along to watch Julia's awakening as she moves from being the child of her father to becoming the strong, independent woman she is capable of being.

5.0 out of 5 stars: Lessons to be learned! Great Read

By Sandra Heptinstall  
Format: Kindle Edition

The author has done a remarkable job taking us back into the pre-Civil War era. It was a time that left a dark spot in the history of our country. While this book is historical fiction, the atrocities it mentions were all too real.

This is the story of a young woman named Julia who keeps house for her preacher father and acts as his assistant. She has no friends and is resigned to a life alone. One day she receives an invitation to spend a couple of weeks with her cousins and uncle at a resort in Saratoga Springs, New York. She accepts even though her father refuses to bless the trip. While there she meets a man named Nathaniel Hamilton who owns a plantation in the South and represents the southern way of life as superior to all others. In particular, he claims that his slaves are treated as trusted servants and are content in their lives.

They are instantly attracted to one another. Julia accepts his marriage proposal and moves with him to his plantation, where she soon discovers the truth about the horrors of slavery. From there on you will learn about the Underground Railroad and the abolitionist movement, as well as the manner in which slaves were really treated. I pray we have learned from the past to never judge others. Yet at the same time I pray for forgiveness from others also.

Don't let the number of pages in this book put you off. While reading it, I often had to stop and do other things. But each time I picked it up again, I found it was just as fascinating as when I started it.

5.0 out of 5 stars: History Comes Alive  
By HV  
Format: Kindle Edition

I enjoyed this book on many levels. As a history lesson, slavery and the Underground Railroad came alive for me. I now have a better understanding of how our country reached the point of a Civil War. The author puts us into each character's emotions and feelings. We grasp what it meant to be both slave and slave-owner. We feel a wide range of each character's emotions including love, anger, shock, betrayal, and fear.

This book is a long read, but I continued to want to turn each page to see what happened next. Good twists, especially as the suspense builds at the end. I could visualize each scene in the book so vividly that I kept thinking this would be a great movie.

I look forward to Ann Nolder Heinz's next book and will read that one, too.

5.0 out of 5 stars: Very good book. I will read more of her  
By J. Buhrow  
Format: Kindle Edition|Verified Purchase

4.0 out of 5 stars: This is really good!

By A Book Vacation

Format: Paperback|Verified Purchase

This is a very well written novel showing the immense atrocities of slavery. Julia is a young woman who has grown up under the oppressive hand of her religious father. Afraid she may never get away and take ownership of her own life, she chooses to marry the mysterious Nathaniel Hamilton, a plantation owner from the Deep South. However, instead of taking ownership of her own life and starting anew, Julia finds herself in a new oppressive environment, hundreds of miles from her family, in a new society where men and woman are even more highly divided than in the North, and where slavery is a business.

Sheltered and alone, Julia must fight for her own "freedom," though not a slave in the same terms that her young maid, Fanny is, Julia is anything but free. Together, these two women, one white and one black, forge a relationship that binds them deeply together as the story unfolds, and I found it highly intriguing.

Though the story is a bit long, the depth of the characterization is exemplary and the reader is drawn into the story, falling in love with Julia and Fanny, feeling their pain, watching their hopes and dreams die and rekindle... and what I loved the most is that these strong females never give up. Though they are put down and terrible things happen to them, these women remain strong and it is impossible not to cheer them on as they fight for their own freedom through the Underground Railroad.

There were some great, uplifting parts of this novel as well... with a twist of character that I really didn't see coming. And though there were a few typos here and there, honestly, the story itself was so intriguing that I easily overlooked them. Truthfully, this novel is very interesting and I highly suggest that history buffs read it. Likewise, it's a great tale for young adults as it shows what life was like in the 1850s and how terrible slavery was. It also shows the bonds that can be created between people regardless of color, and that, in the end, we are all created equal, which is a theme that many of our young still do not fully understand. I highly recommend this novel.

4.0 out of 5 stars: Very nice historical fiction.

By Mini Truth

Format: Kindle Edition

I think it's important to elaborate a bit on the story-line as the blurb doesn't do much to explain the story. This Historical Novel focuses on the 1850's during a time where Slavery was a way of life.

Julia and Fanny are two friends in a time where they weren't even considered equals. Julia saw past their skin color, while Fanny demonstrated an intelligence that most white people did not believe a black woman was capable of having.

Julia is from a humble beginning, having been the daughter of a preacher man from a small town. Julia's mother died when she was still young, causing Julia's father to try to raise her by

himself. He did the best he could in bringing her up to be a godly woman, and capable wife. However, his shortcomings manifested in the fact that Julia remained naive in many things. One of those things was “the real world”.

Fanny, the daughter of a slave that she’s never met, was too a slave herself. Fanny’s mother also died, having succumbed to a terrible fate. Fanny never knew the experience of what home or family felt like. Bouncing around to various masters, finally Fanny saw herself being purchased by Nathaniel, Julia’s husband to serve as Julia’s handmaiden.

Julia and Fanny have many parallels in their lives; they were both misfits, they were both smarter than the average person, they were both motherless, they were both strong. As things would have it, Julia and Fanny became the best of friends.

Living through love, love lost, trials, tribulations and successes, these two women form a massively strong bond. More than anything, “Last Stop Freedom” is a story of true friendship in a time of unparalleled hardships.

I give “Last Stop Freedom” 4 stars. Well done.