

# EDUCATOR’S GUIDE

## TWICE ENSLAVED

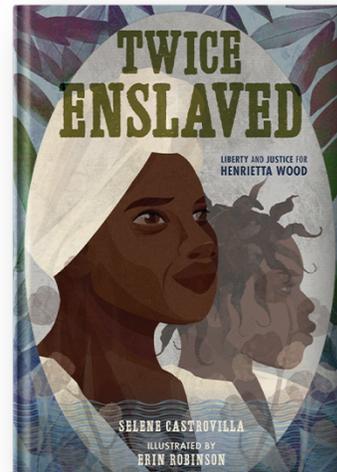
### Liberty and Justice for Henrietta Wood

By Selene Castrovilla

Illustrated by Erin Robinson

ISBN 9781662680748 HC \$19.99 US/\$25.99 CAN

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Grades: 4-7

Ages: 9-12

#### ABOUT THE BOOK

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Here is the story of Henrietta Wood, who was enslaved twice—but who demanded justice and was awarded the largest reparations ever granted for enslavement. This nonfiction book for ages 9–12 puts a human face on the current issue of reparations.

#### PRAISE FOR *TWICE ENSLAVED*

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“Told through a series of poems, this illustrated biography sheds light on a little-known historical figure, pairing powerful verse with striking illustrations to underline the humanity of those who lived through the atrocities of slavery and their ability to hope and fight for a better life.”—*The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

“Castrovilla’s efficient lines of verse make for a digestible, fast-paced account, while Robinson’s full color art spreads between chapters add emotion and depth to this layered rendering of a woman who endured injustice after injustice. Though readers will easily read this tale in a single sitting, its lessons will linger. A testament to the resilience of the human spirit.”—*Kirkus Reviews*



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### KEY THEMES

#### **Freedom & Borders**

The Ohio River symbolizes both hope and confinement, representing the fragile line between enslavement and freedom.

#### **Family, Memory & Identity**

Loss, separation, reunion, and the preservation of self despite trauma.

#### **Kidnapping & Injustice**

The narrative explores the dangers free Black Americans faced and the legal systems that failed to protect them.

#### **Legal Systems & Courtrooms**

Henrietta's two court cases—before and after the Civil War—provide insight into evolving legal landscapes and the barriers to justice.

#### **Restitution & Accountability**

Her pursuit of reparations invites conversations about justice, responsibility, and historical repair.

#### **Emancipation & Juneteenth**

Delayed freedom, information suppression, and the historical origins of Juneteenth.

#### **Resilience & Perseverance**

Faith, strength, endurance, and the courage to reclaim voice and dignity after profound loss.

### ELA Mentor Text Applications

#### **Free-Verse Structure**

The narrative offers opportunities to study:

- purposeful line breaks
- pacing through short and long lines
- repetition for emphasis
- shifting rhythm to match emotion
- imagery that builds tension or softness



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### Voice & Perspective

Students can explore how the text:

- conveys emotion through concise, deliberate language
- blends internal reflection with historical events
- provides immediacy while honoring historical truth
- reveals agency through silence, prayer, and endurance

### Sensory Language

Use richly descriptive moments to examine how sensory detail creates atmosphere:

- rattling carts, shackles
- river crossings and steamboats
- oppressive heat, forced labor
- fearful courtrooms and dim slave pens

These passages provide strong models for student writing.

### Discussion Questions

1. How does the Ohio River function as a symbol throughout Henrietta's life?
2. What different forms of courage does Henrietta show at various stages of the narrative?
3. How does the text express hope in moments of despair?
4. What risks did Black individuals face when attempting to testify before the Civil War?
5. How does Henrietta's delayed freedom shape readers' understanding of Juneteenth?
6. What makes her second lawsuit historically significant?
7. How does the free-verse structure influence the emotional impact of her story?
8. What does justice mean in this narrative, and how might that meaning differ today?
9. How does the narrative illuminate the dangers facing free Black Americans in border states?
10. What role does faith play in Henrietta's survival?



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### Cross-Curricular Activities

#### **Mapping Henrietta's Journey (Social Studies)**

Students map:

- Kentucky
- Louisville
- Cincinnati
- New Orleans
- Natchez
- Texas
- Return to Ohio

Discuss the significance of borders, state laws, and forced migration.

#### **Primary Source Comparison (ELA + History)**

Students compare:

- the narrative
- the Afterword
- selected primary sources referenced in the bibliography

This activity supports:

- evaluating sources
- understanding narrative nonfiction
- distinguishing fact, inference, and gaps in the historical record
- analyzing how evidence is transformed into story

#### **Free-Verse Writing Activity (ELA)**

Students write their own free-verse poem about:

- a moment of courage
- a journey or crossing
- a border (physical or emotional)
- justice or injustice
- a meaningful symbol (river, papers, chest, memory)

Encourage pacing, line breaks, imagery, and repetition.



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### Juneteenth Connection (History + SEL)

Discuss:

- Henrietta learning about freedom years after the Emancipation Proclamation
- why Texas became the final holdout
- the origins, meaning, and modern observance of Juneteenth
- the emotional complexity of “delayed freedom”

### Courtroom Roleplay (Civics)

Students reenact elements of Henrietta’s second lawsuit to explore:

- persuasive evidence
- legal obstacles
- different definitions of justice
- how testimony and truth-telling shape outcomes

### SEL: Courage, Identity & Healing

Students reflect on:

- resilience under oppression
- the role of hope and faith
- the pain of separation and the joy of reunion
- identity reclaimed after injustice
- the emotional impact of silence and survival

Suggested journal prompts:

- “What helps people stay strong during difficult times?”
- “What does freedom mean both personally and historically?”
- “How do memories shape who we become?”

### Extension Opportunities

- Compare Henrietta’s lawsuit with contemporary discussions about reparations.
- Research her descendants and how her victory shaped their lives.
- Pair with the Pulitzer-winning book *Sweet Taste of Liberty* for deeper historical study.
- Explore other narratives of survival, resilience, and legal justice in U.S. history.



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### **Author Visit Opportunities**

Classroom and school programs can include:

- writing workshops on free verse
- exploring historical research and primary sources
- examining the people inside history
- discussing justice, memory, and resilience

Contact Selene Castrovilla to discuss! [selenecastrovilla@gmail.com](mailto:selenecastrovilla@gmail.com)



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