

# Chains

by Laurie Halse Anderson

Books written about fictional characters, but real events from history, like *Chains*, are known as historical fiction.

## Prepare your notebook

Any type of notebook will work, even loose pages stapled together. The first page of your notebook gets lots of wear & tear, so go to the 2nd page and start numbering the pages, including the backs. Number them up to page six. The 1st numbered page will be your title page. Write the title and author of the book here. Once you've finished reading it, come back to this page and draw a picture you think best fits the story.

## Table of Contents

Go to page number five of your notebook and label it "Table of contents." As you answer questions and do activities in this document, continue to number the pages in your notebook and add them to your table of contents.

## Answer Questions & Complete Activities

As you read the book, use your notebook to take notes and answer questions or complete activities from this project. Title each section as this book project is labeled, e.g., chapters 1-3 or chapters 4-6 (or use Roman numerals like the author does). Be sure to include the page number and title in your table of contents.

## Glossary

Throughout this book project, you'll find vocabulary words you'll need to add to a glossary. You'll also need to look up the definitions of those words and include them too. Go to the back of your

You can look up words for your glossary at [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com) bookmark this site. Be sure to find the meanings used in the book. It may not always be the first meaning listed!

Whenever possible, buy your own copy of any book you read. That way you can underline and highlight it and write notes in the margins. This is a great way of marking figurative language you find too. I like to underline it and write an "M" in the margin for metaphor, "S" for simile, etc.

notebook and count inward five pages. Label this page "Glossary." You may want to use a post-it note to make a tab for this page so it's easy to find. You'll be numbering these pages and adding them to your table of contents once you've finished this entire book project.

## Figurative Language

As you read this book, notice the use of figurative language such as metaphors, personification, and hyperbole. A great example of simile is in chapter 5. "The working people were dressed muchly as we did out in the country, but there were a few gentry who stuck out of the crowd like peacocks wandering in the chicken coop." The author, Laurie Halse Anderson, makes it easy to picture plain clothing on "working people" and colorful, fancy clothing on the "gentry" or rich people. **Print the chart on page twelve of this PDF.** Tape or glue it into your notebook on page two (fold the paper so it fits nicely into your notebook and only glue it to one side). Fill out the chart by writing examples of figurative language you find throughout the book. You'll be comparing your examples to your classmates at the end of the book, so don't copy from anyone, you'll need your own examples.

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# Chapters I-III

## Questions & Activities

1. What does the quote at the beginning of chapter 1 mean? To what nation is Thomas Paine referring? What is the "seed time" of something?
2. Read about Thomas Paine's famous pamphlet "Common Sense." This was the first time this phrase was ever used. What important questions did he ask?
3. What do you think it means that Ruth has a "peculiar manner of being" and is "simple"?
4. How do you think Isabel felt to be told to "go pray for her that owned you" instead of her own mother?
5. As you continue reading this book, you'll discover what Pastor Weeks meant when he said teaching slaves to read "only leads to trouble." Predict what "trouble" people like Pastor Weeks believed would occur.
6. Isabel describes her father as what type of animal? Which animal does she describe herself as? Why did the author pick these two animals as metaphors for Isabel and her father? What's the difference between how he behaved and how she behaved when they were faced with their family being split apart?
7. Slave markets were common in America, especially in the South. [Go to this document](#) and read one of the descriptions of slave auctions. Write a paragraph describing what you read. Be sure to include the name of the slave who wrote or told the story.
8. The author includes in her description of Mrs. Lockton that "a fading yellow bruise circled her right wrist like a bracelet." How would someone get a bruise like this? Authors sometimes use a technique called foreshadowing to give a hint about what's going to happen later

Learn more about the 1775-1782 [smallpox epidemic](#) and find out what George Washington did to try to stop its spread in his army.

Dig deeper...

Wikimedia Commons

9. [Go to this site](#) and read the 7<sup>th</sup> paragraph which begins "Rhode Island, of course, was among the most active Northern colonies..." Between 1709-1807, how many slaves did Rhode Island merchants bring to the New World? After the Revolutionary War, how much of the slave trade in America did they control?
10. [Go to this site](#) and scroll down to the table. Which state had slaves the earliest? Which ended slavery the latest? Look at the differences in when slavery was outlawed or officially ended and when it actually ended. Which state has the biggest difference? How many years is that difference?
11. What's the difference between an indentured servant and a slave?
12. The sound of Mr. Robert's coins dropping into his velvet bag reminded Isabel of "clods of dirt raining down on a fresh coffin." This isn't just what she heard, it is a metaphor for how she feels. What does this tell you about how she is feeling at this point in the story?

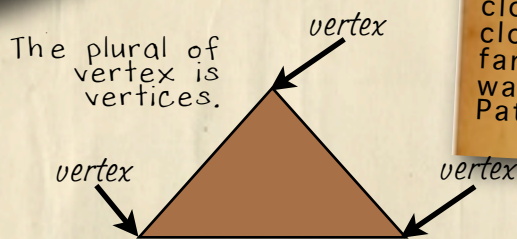
Add these words and their meanings to your glossary:

peculiar  
kin  
mourn  
bold

procure  
insolence  
impudence

You can add your own words to your glossary too!

# Chapters IV-VI



"Home spun" fabric was made by women who called themselves "Daughters of Liberty." They refused to buy sugar, tea, or cloth imported from England. They learned to spin thread from sheep's wool, weave it into cloth and make clothes for their families from it. It was considered a Patriotic thing to do.

Dig deeper...

## Questions & Activities

- Isabel's father was stolen from **Guinea** as part of what was known as the Triangular Slave Trade. **Go to this site to learn about the Triangular Trade** (requires Flash Player). click on the arrows in the legend to see each route. Draw a diagram of it in your notebook. Label the "vertices" with the three places traders frequented. Draw and label the routes they took and list the cargo they shipped on each route.
- Bellingham suspects Lockton is a Tory. **Go to this site** and read about the people fighting in the Revolutionary war. What were the other names for Tories? After reading this article, take the quiz at the bottom of the page and write down your score in your notebook.
- Because Halse Anderson is writing from Isabel's perspective, she uses nonstandard language. An example is in chapter 5 when she writes, "Ruth and me trailed behind." To be grammatically correct it should say, "Ruth and I trailed behind." Learn when to say "me" and when to say "I" **at**

When writing about a person, the first time you mention him or her, use the full name. After that, use only his or her last name, *never* just the first name.

Add these words and their meanings to your glossary:

brackish  
wailing

somber  
vexing

**this site.** In your notebook, write down what to do to figure out whether to use "me" or "I."

- once the Locktons get the trunk of "private linens" loaded onto their carriage, Mr. Lockton tells Mrs. Lockton, "Well done, my dear." What did she do well? What was happening here?
- Curzon tells Isabel the Locktons will speak in front of her because she is a "slave, not a person." This really happened. What must it have felt like to not be considered a person? Isabel said earlier she had some type of loyalty to the Locktons even though it made her feel "prickly." What adjectives would you use to describe the institution of slavery and how slaves were treated? List at least ten.

When Ruth giggled, it sounded like a "small silver bell," but Isabel said it was "a bell tolling disaster." These seem opposite. A small silver

bell doesn't usually make you picture disaster. This is a type of figurative language known as a paradox. A statement that seems to contradict itself.

A "barrow" is a flat rectangular frame used for carrying a load. The word is typically only used as part of the compound word "wheelbarrow" now, meaning a barrow with wheels.

A packet-ship was a small ship usually used for delivering mail or passenger's short distances (instead of across the ocean).



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Lines to love! ❤️

"The fat moon lit the water like a lantern over a looking glass." (A looking glass is a mirror.)



# Chapters XIII-XVI

## Questions & Activities

1. In the quote at the beginning of chapter 13, [Abigail Adams](#) writes to her husband (and the future president), [John Adams](#) that "all men would be tyrants if they could." Add tyrant and its definition to your glossary. Do some research and write a paragraph about the treatment of women in colonial America. What rights did they have? What happened to them when they married?
2. George Washington and the other men who were members of the Continental Congress were considered traitors to the king and really would have been executed if captured. They swore secrecy, agreeing not to talk about anything said while they met. [Go to this site to read the text of their Secrecy Agreement.](#) How did Benjamin Franklin sign his name? Which two future presidents also signed?

Add these words and their meanings to your glossary:

steely  
fervor  
tranquility  
treason

3. Why was Isabel/Sal pretending to be asleep and acting "befuddled" when Mr. Lockton was meeting with the mayor?
4. The "illness" that Ruth has is probably epilepsy. [Read this description of epilepsy.](#) What was the "fit" Ruth had really called?
5. Why did Colonel Regan believe



A basket of eels

Watch this [video](#) to learn more about the history of slavery in America (28 minutes).

Dig deeper...

Because there was no indoor plumbing in Colonial times and it was difficult to get to the privy or outhouse at night, people had "chamber pots" or large bowls under their beds used when they needed to "go to the bathroom" during the night.



© Cookie Davis

A chamber pot

- Isabel? Be sure to cite specific examples from the book. Why did he ask her to return the list to where she found it?
6. [Read this list of laws affecting slaves in Manhattan \(PDF\).](#) Which laws would affect Isabel? About which law is she most worried?

7. Just like the Patriots, we use Latin phrases frequently. [Go to this list](#) and skim through the phrases. Choose 3-4 of your favorites, or ones you recognize. Write the phrases and their definitions in your notebook.



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Learn how to make your own cornhusk doll [here](#).

Lines to love! ❤️

"The air was hot and dripping, as if the city were wrapped in a wool blanket just pulled from a boiling pot."

# Chapters XVII-XXII

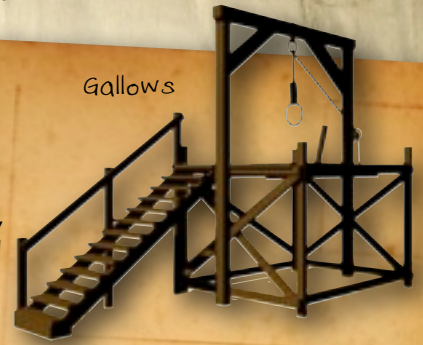
The past tense of hang is hung except when the word means to have executed someone by hanging in which case the past tense is hanged. "We hung party decorations." "Thomas Hickey was hanged."

Thomas Hickey was a real person who really did get hanged in 1776 for his part in the plot to kill Washington. Some say Washington was saved by his servant. There are two versions of the story:

1961 Newspaper Article

Thomas Hickey

What do you think would have happened if he was successful?



Gallows

Dig deeper...

## Questions & Activities

1. Isabel says Ruth "showed no ill affects of the small fit at the Battery. It had been a brief shower, not a thunderstorm." What type of figurative language is this? What does she mean?
2. Becky got an attack of the ague (a fever, usually caused by the disease Malaria). Isabel said she wasn't so bad as to "require purging or leeches." Medical care in colonial America often hurt more than it helped. Purging is also known as bloodletting. Read [this article about it](#). Besides surgeons, which other profession would "blood-let"? Draw a picture of what these professionals used to advertise their services.
3. Go to [this site](#) to see the text of the Declaration of Independence. copy down the first sentence of the second paragraph that begins, "we hold these truths to be self-evident..." and ends with "...most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness." This is one of the most important sentences in American history!
4. Colonel Regan was obeying the law by turning Isabel over to Madam. Do you think he was right in doing so? Is it ever okay to break the law?
5. The judge mistakenly says, "contrary to the laws of our colony," instead of "state" and is corrected by the lawyer. What happened to cause the colonies to want independence from England? [watch this video](#) to learn about the taxes imposed upon them. Write down all the "acts" and what they were taxing.
6. Isabel's punishment for her "insolence" is to be branded. Add the word insolence and its definition to your glossary. Have you ever been insolent? What punishment did you receive?

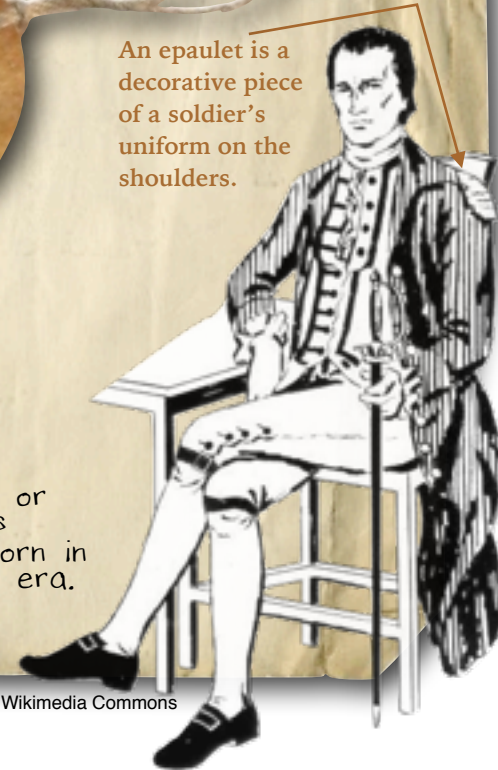
Cat's cradle (also called Jack in the Pulpit or just the Game of String) has been around for thousands of years. Get some string and find a partner! [Go to this site to learn how to play.](#)

An epaulet is a decorative piece of a soldier's uniform on the shoulders.

Add these words and their meanings to your glossary:

coconspirators, torment, beseech, lass

This is an example of "breeches" or short pants commonly worn in the Colonial era.





# Chapters XXIX-XXXIV

Bellows



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A serviette is a napkin.

## Questions & Activities

1. [Go to this site](#) to learn about the Hessians. From which country were the Hessians? How many Hessians fought for the British in North America? How many stayed in America?
2. At the end of chapter 30, Isabel is so tired, she goes to bed without removing her skirt or bodice. Colonial people wore many layers of clothing. [Go to this site](#) to dress people from the colonial era and find out just how many layers they wore! (Requires Flash Player) Write the name and draw the pictures of at least four items of clothing you've never heard of before. Be sure to write what layer it is, too!
3. There really was a fire in New York city on September 21, 1776. [Go to this site](#) to learn about it. What percentage of the city burned? Exactly how many houses burned?
4. Nathan Hale is famous for what he said just before being hanged by the British.

5. [Go to this site](#) to learn about him. What were his exact words? How old was he when he died?
6. Madam glues mouse fur onto her eyebrows. This was a very odd, but true story of the crazy fashions of the time. [Go to this site](#) to see a woman with mouse fur eyebrows. Under the picture of Ester Boardman is a poem about this odd fashion trend. Write the poem in your notebook. What fashion trends do we have now that may be viewed as weird in 100 years?
7. At the end of chapter 34 Isabel says a "a dim plan had hatched itself" in her brain without her consent (permission) and she didn't like it. What do you think she's planning? Why do you think she doesn't like it and why would she consider carrying out her plan if she doesn't like it?

The British flag is known as the Union Jack



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The style for wealthy women's hair in the 1770's was very elaborate and very tall!



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The Kennedy Mansion that was Washington's headquarters

Wikimedia Commons

Add these words and their meanings to your glossary:

quaint	inferno
unseemly	barracks

Learn how to say thank you in 26 different languages.



# Chapters XXXV-XL

Learn more about Thomas Paine and his famous pamphlet by [watching this video](#).

Read some of Phillis Wheatley's poems [here](#).  
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"Spat" is the past tense of spit.

Victuals is pronounced "vittles" and it means food.

## Questions & Activities

1. Prisoners of war were poorly treated. Once prisons on land were full, the British began holding them on ships in the bay. Those on ships couldn't receive food from friends or loved ones like Curzon. [Go to this site](#) to learn about the harsh treatment on prison ships. How many prisoners died on all the prison ships? How many soldiers died during battle? How many more died on prison ships than died in battle?
2. Despite being on the verge of starvation, the prisoners in Curzon's cell pass the bucket around and only take one small scrap at a time. What does this say about how they feel about each other? How can this be when at the same time Curzon tells Isabel to take her cloak because as soon as he fell asleep "it would be . . . borrowed"? What's the difference between the food and her cloak?
3. Isabel says Madam cannot chain her soul. She

can hurt her, but she could not hurt her soul unless she "gave it to her." What does Isabel mean by this? What does this say about Isabel's character? What do you think makes her so strong?

4. [Watch this video](#) about Washington's attack at Trenton. What three things did Washington do that armies don't normally do?
5. Why is it Isabel doesn't feel at peace until she gives the bread pudding to the family in the canvas hut?
6. Lady Seymour tells Isabel she tried to buy her to protect her from Madam. Isabel doesn't feel grateful though. What line from chapter 40 explains how she feels and why she can't be grateful? Do you think Isabel is right for feeling this way?

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Download a copy of Common Sense here.

Read Robinson Crusoe yourself! You can download it free at Project Gutenberg.

Wikimedia Commons

COMMON SENSE;  
ADDRESS TO THE  
INHABITANTS  
OF  
AMERICA,  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
SUBJECTS

In chapter 37 it says Lady Seymour was would eat breakfast and "dinner" in her chamber, but join everyone else for "supper." In many parts of the United States, the meal you eat in the middle of the day is not lunch, it's dinner and the meal you eat in the evening isn't dinner, it's supper.

Add these words and their meanings to your glossary:

caterwauling	belching
sundry	passel
contraband	steadfast
reprimand	pestilence

Lines to love! ❤️  
"For the second time on the very same day, tears threatened. I rubbed them away and vowed not to cry again. 'Twas a nuisance."

# Chapters XLII-XLIII

More examples of Halse Anderson's use of non-standard English are: saying "et" instead of ate or eaten and saying "remembery" instead of memory. What other examples can you find?

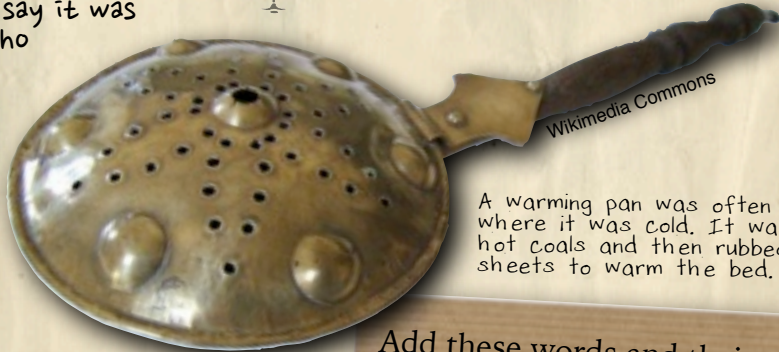
## Questions & Activities

1. People who grow up in a country with royalty (king, queen, prince, princess, sultan, emperor, etc.) are taught to hold them up as superior. These people are born to their position. Mary says she saw just the queen's carriage and it is thought of as very special. The United States was very different because they could elect "common" people to be president. Read the quote at the beginning of chapter 41. Even today, the stereotype is that people in other countries think Americans are (over) confidence and impudent. Write the word "impudent" and its definition in your glossary. Do you think being impudent was helpful for the patriots? why or why not?
2. How is it that so many rebels agreed with Thomas Paine that "all men being originally equals, no one by birth could have a right to set up his own family in preference to all others for ever" when it comes to royalty, but didn't feel the same when it applied to slaves? why do you think this happened?
3. Watch this video about the Declaration of Independence. When does the video say it was approved? who are the five men who wrote it? Go to this site to read about it. When did the continental congress really approve it? when was it really signed? what is the significance of July 4<sup>th</sup>?



Her Majesty, Queen Charlotte of Great Britain, Duchess Sophia Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz was married to King George III and she really did have 11 babies! In fact, she had 15 babies, 13 of whom survived to adulthood.

4. Are the bookseller and Isabel right? Are words dangerous? what does she mean "Twas a wonder the book did not explode into flames" in her hands?
5. Isabel says she would be "et by a bear or drowned in a swamp" if she tries to escape by walking up the center of the island. Go to this site to see a photo of what Manhattan used to look like and what it looks like now. Read the first few paragraphs. which wild animals lived in Manhattan then? what was the name of the Native Americans? what does Manhattan mean?



A warming pan was often used in areas where it was cold. It was filled with hot coals and then rubbed between the sheets to warm the bed.



Scones are a type of bread—sort of like a biscuit.

Folderol: a showy but worthless thing.  
Seamstress: someone who makes clothes.

Add these words and their meanings to your glossary:

- ruckus
- insurrection
- tarry

Lines to love! ❤️  
"She was set on keeping my arms and legs dancing to her tune and my soul bound in her chains." "If an entire nation could seek its freedom, why not a little girl?"

# Chapters XLIII-XLV

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A riding crop



## Questions & Activities

1. Who was compared to a lion earlier in the book? What has changed in Isabel that makes it appropriate to compare her to a lion now? Why did the author choose to do this? What is she trying to tell you about Isabel's personality?
2. Isabel's character is further strengthened when she decides the "I" on her cheek doesn't stand for insolence anymore, but Isabel. This becomes a turning point for her. What does she call her mark?
3. Isabel finds the tide chart for the Hudson River. She just says, "The tide would not turn against me for a few hours." She doesn't say whether a high tide or low tide would be in her favor. Rivers are tough to row across because the flow of them carries you downstream. Isabel probably wanted high tide because rivers emptying into the ocean can be slowed significantly as the tide rises against them and can sometimes even flow backwards. The Mohican's (Native Americans in that area) called the Hudson River "Mahicanituck" which means "the river that flows both ways." [Look at today's tide chart](#) for the Hudson River near where Isabel would have been. When is the highest tide? How high is it? When is the lowest tide? How low is it? If Isabel were rowing across the Hudson today and wanted a high tide for several hours, when would be a good time for her to leave?
4. Why do you think Isabel decided to help Lady Seymour before leaving? Lady Seymour tells her to run. What does this say about what will happen to Isabel if she stays?
5. "My hands blistered, the blisters popped, they re-formed and popped again. I rowed with my hands slick with blood." use a thesaurus to find the best possible word you can that describes Isabel as she rows across the river.
6. Isabel says, "I had set myself free." The author chose to have her say this instead of just saying, "I was free" or "I had gotten away." Give three specific examples of things Isabel did that make her comment, "I had set myself free" appropriate. Be sure to indicate page numbers where you find your examples.
7. Finish numbering the pages of your notebook (including the glossary) and add them to your table of contents.
8. Go back to your title page and draw a picture you think best fits the story.
9. In groups of 3-4, compare the examples of figurative language you found for your chart. Decide who has the best example for each type of figurative language listed. Share your best or most creative examples with the rest of the class. Write down each group's example.

A reticule is a small cloth purse with draw strings at the top to close it.

Add these words and their meanings to your glossary:

commotion  
tomb



Lines to love! ❤️

"Tongues of fog oozed across the water and curled around the bits of ice that floated past."

# Figurative Language Chart for *Chains*

Pg #	Type of figurate language	Quote from the book	What does it mean?
25	Simile	The fat moon lit the water like a lantern over a looking glass.	The moon was reflected so brightly in the water it looked like a lantern held over a mirror
	personification		
	simile		
	metaphor		
	hyperbole		
	Your choice:		
	Your choice:		
	Your choice:		

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