**Underground to Canada**

***Barbara Smucker***

***Student Study Guide***

Chapter 1

1. Describe the setting at the opening of the novel.

***Massa Hensen Plantation, Virginia, positive mood overall***

1. Describe June Lilly.

***12 year old girl, tall, black as the night, looks like a woman***

1. Who is Missy Hensen and what does she tell Old John, the coachman?

***Wife of Jeb. She says that the slaves are going to be sold***

1. Define the term foreshadowing and give an example.

***Foreshadowing: When the author gives clues to the reader about events that will happen later in the story.***

1. Identify one metaphor and one simile used in this chapter.

***Metaphor: “Up and down the cotton rows the message spread, faster than a winging bird.”***

***Simile: “She was as still and as black as the night”***

Chapter 2

1. Why did the slaves get up so early?

***They had to work before the heat from the mid day sun***

1. What does Mammy tell June Lilly to do if she is sold?

***To seek a place called Canada; to mind the Massa***

1. Briefly describe the slave trader.

***Nasty, mean, greasy, long hair, white, yellow teeth***

4. Why was Julilly so frightened?

***She was about to be separated from her mother and didn’t know what would happen to her or the others.***

Chapter 3

1. How did the tall white man offer to help the slaves?

***By getting them some drinking water.***

1. What is meant by the phrase, "their eyes spoke fear"?

***It means that you could tell by their eyes that they are afraid.***

1. Why did the fat man become so angry?

***He became angry because he resented the tall white man who was helping the slaves. He also did not approve of the free black, in this case the young boy. The Quakers, or any group opposed to slavery, were often referred to as abolitionists as they want to abolish slavery.***

Chapter 4

1. Why were Adam's ankles torn?

***Adam’s ankles were torn, swollen and bleeding as Lester, Adam and Ben were shackled or chained together.***

1. How do we know the fat man is completely insensitive to the needs of the slaves?

***He is so insensitive because, the fat man whips the slaves when the mud holds down their ankle chains.***

1. How did Julilly help the men in the cyprus swamp?

***Julilly wadded into the swamp and pulled up the mud covered chain allowing Lester and Adam to lift themselves out of the mud.***

Chapter 5

1. How does the fat man know that they are probably back in Mississippi?

***He realizes this is Mississippi as the land is becoming flat and the green fields are dotted with cotton fields.***

1. Locate the state of Mississippi in an atlas.
2. How does the reader know that the house that Julilly is describing is a large mansion on the plantation?

***Julilly describes the large white pillars and the staircase fanning out like a peacock’s tail. There were also people sitting on the porch.***

1. Compare the slave quarters on this plantation with the ones at Massa Hensen's.

***There was a stark contrast between the slave quarters in this new plantation and those of the Hensen place. The huts were quite dilapidated and there had been no gardens planted by the slaves. However, worst of all, the slaves were not singing, laughing or even talking. It was a very unhappy place.***

Chapter 6

1. How does Liza describe Julilly's new home?

***“This is a no-good place.”***

1. What happened to Liza when she tried to run away?

***‘Old Man Sims’ whipped her until she was convinced that she would die.***

1. What is a "cat-o'-nine-tails?

***A "cat-o'-nine-tails is a whip with nine pieces of knotted cord attached to a handle. It was often used for flogging humans and was a most efficient way of inflicting pain.***

1. Why does Liza consider Julilly a friend?

***Liza was quite crippled with a hunched back. She thanks Julilly for picking the high cotton that she had difficulty reaching and whispers to Julilly that she is the first person to ever do this for her.***

1. What are the two girls talking about just before they fall asleep?

***Julilly initially tells her about the Hensen plantation but later they both begin talking about Canada and how there is freedom for the slaves who reach it.***

Chapter 7

1. What happened to the old people if "they didn't meet the measure"?

***Every man, woman and child was expected to pick a hundred pounds of cotton a day. The old people had a difficult time and if they did not fill the quota, they would receive 25 lashes on the back from Sims, with a cat-o’-nine tails.***

1. Describe the rumours about Canada.

***One said that the folks in Canada would skin a black man’s head, eat his children and wear their hair as a collar. There were also rumours about cold weather and how only black peas can grow in the countryside. (These rumours were brought about to discourage the slaves from trying to escape from the plantations.)***

1. Who is the new visitor and why is he there?

***The new visitor is Mr. Ross who claims to be an ornithologist researching birds in the area. The slaves later discover that he is an abolitionist helping slaves escape to Canada.***

1. What evidence is there that he is concerned about the slaves?

***He stops Sims from continuing to whip Julilly pretending that he is in a hurry to select some slaves as guides for his research.***

1. According to Julilly, what feels like the sting of a hundred bees?

***Being whipped by Sims feel like the sting of a hundred bees.***

Chapter 8

1. Why does Mr. Ross choose Lester and Adam to help him?

***To help him look for birds.***

1. Why did all the slave girls "whisper" about Canada that night?

***They were probably motivated to talk about Canada because they knew that Mr. Ross was Canadian. News of Canada had travelled along the plantation “grapevines” from places like Virginia and North Carolina.***

1. How does Mr. Ross react when Sims tells him that Canada is very cold?

***Julilly saw a smile flicker on Mr. Ross’ face.***

1. What secret does Liza reveal to Julilly at the end of the chapter?

***Liza tells Julilly that she intends to escape before all the cotton is picked. Julilly then promises that she will accompany Liza.***

Chapter 9

1. Describe how the Hensen plantation was different from where Julilly is presently living.

***At the Hensen plantation Saturday meant dancing while Sunday was a day of rest and also when a preacher might come. At the Riley’s plantation, singing and dancing were forbidden and Sunday was set aside for washing and cooking.***

1. What does Lester reveal to Julilly about Massa Ross?

***He reveals that Mr. Ross wants to help the slaves escape to Canada and freedom.***

1. What is the signal that Julilly is to listen for that evening?

***She is to listen for three calls of the whippoorwill.***

1. Why is Adam surprised that Mr. Ross doesn’t own slaves?

***He assumed that all white men owned slaves - Probably since that was all he had ever known.***

Chapter 10

1. Why did Liza and Julilly no longer talk at night in their cabin?

***They wanted to ensure that they were well rested for their long journey to Canada. They also said little during the day as they did not want to anger Mr. Sims.***

1. Why were the slaves disappointed when it didn’t rain?

***They were disappointed because they did not work on the days that it rained. This meant that not only did they not have to work but they didn’t have to endure the terrible heat.***

1. Why were Julilly and Liza happy that it didn't rain?

***They girls were happy that a wind had blown the rain clouds away, leaving a clear sky which would enable them to see the North Starr and thus find their direction during the escape.***

1. Who cut the girls' hair?

***Lester clipped their hair with scissors that Mr. Ross had given him.***

1. What sound frightened the girls?

***The sudden sound of the bloodhounds baying in the distance frightened them as it meant the slave hunters were on their trail.***

Chapter 11

1. Why did they wade through the swamps when they saw men on horseback?

***No doubt they felt that it would conceal their scent from the dogs.***

1. Why was Liza surprised when Lester told her that he could read?

***She thought that Lester was lying, as slaves weren’t normally allowed to read. Massa Hensen was obviously somewhat liberal for a slave-owner of his day in that he allowed Lester to learn how to read.***

1. What comment does Julilly make about the password?

***When Adam tells Julilly that the password is “friends with a friend”***

1. Whom did they think had rode by in the moonlight?

***Adam and the others thought that it was Mr. Sims that had ridden in by moonlight.***

1. What was the *Fugitive Slave Act*?

***As slaves were property their owners could cross state lines when attempting to capture runaway slaves, even if the state was itself a free state. Naturally Canada would be excluded from this piece of legislation.***

Chapter 12

1. What was the round glass object with the black needle?

***It was a compass. Mr. Ross left it with the four fugitives to aid them in their escape to Canada.***

1. What is the Underground Railway?

***It is a network of people who helped slaves escape.***

1. What did Julilly think it was?

***She thought that it was an underground road that led all the way to Canada that was built by Abolitionists.***

1. What misfortune befell Lester and Adam at the end of the chapter?

***They were recaptured.***

Chapter 13

1. How were they able to see the compass at night?

***Because the sky was clear and there was a large moon.***

1. Describe what happened when Julilly asked the white woman for food.

***The women at the cabin door demanded she get off her land. She also accused Julilly of stealing and threatened to shoot her if she didn’t leave immediately.***

1. Describe their welcome at the next house.

***It was a warm welcome. They were given a tub and water to take a bath as well as a lot of food. They were also given food for their trip and warned to go into the mountains before heading north so as to avoid the slave hunters in the valley.***

1. What surprised Julilly about the rows of cabins on this farm?

***She realized that they were not slave cabins. They were new with lovely gardens and flowers. The opposite of what Julilly was used to.***

1. What did Julilly notice when she scrubbed Liza's back?

***She saw a crisscross of scars on Liza’s back from repeated whippings.***

1. When did Julilly and Liza realize that their visit had ended?

***When the woman who spoke English brought them their washed and mended clothes.***

Chapter 14

1. What terrified the girls as they made their way through the mountain paths?

***The sound of the shrieking of strange animals in the night and were also concerned about following the narrow pathway at night.***

1. Why did Julilly and Liza decide that it would be better to travel during daylight?

***A bad storm had washed away most of their path and Liza told Julilly that it was too hard for her to walk at night.***

1. What valuable information does the old man give to Julilly?

***He told them to hide in the bushes until nightfall at which time they should follow the railroad tracks to Covington. He told them that they would find a free colored man named Jeb Brown. Jeb could help them cross the Ohio River in his little boat.***

1. What does Liza notice about the old man’s back?

***She notices that his back is more bent than hers.***

1. What news did the two girls receive about Lester and Adam?

***They found out that the boys jumped from the slave hunter’s wagon in the middle of the night and escaped into a swamp. The boys had eventually made their way to Jeb Brown’s home and Jeb told the girls that Lester and Adam were probably now free in Canada.***

1. Define the following terms used by the underground railway: a) station b) freight c) dry goods d) hardware e) tracks

***Station: Homes of the Abolitionists; Hiding places***

***Freight: Escaped Slaves***

***Dry Goods: The Women***

***Hardware: The men***

***Tracks: The roads the slaves had to follow; Routes fixed by abolitionists***

Chapter 15

1. Who woke Jeb?

***Pal the dog.***

1. What instructions did Ella give to the girls?

***She instructed them to take all of their belongings and climb up onto the flat roof using the rope ladder.***

1. Why did the Ohio River hold “mystery and terror” for Julilly and Liza?

***The river was rough that evening and neither of the girls knew how to swim.***

1. To whose home were the girls going?

***They were going to the home of Levi Coffin, a Quaker and Abolitionist who was vehemently opposed to slavery.***

Chapter 16

1. Describe Levi Coffin.

***He is a tall man with a gaunt face and blue eyes. He was also wearing a wide brimmed Quaker hat.***

1. Why did Sheriff Donnelly end up at the Coffin home?

***Because he had told Levi Coffin that he had been searching for the escaped slaves and their trail ends right at the Coffin home.***

1. Why does Levi inform his wife that it is best if the girls leave right away?

***He suspects that the sheriff will return with more men to conduct a thorough search of their house.***

1. Why does Liza think that Lester ad Adam might think the girls are Queen Victoria herself?

***The girls joke about this as “Aunt Katie” has just given them new clothes to wear including beautiful sweaters for the winter.***

Chapter 17

1. Describe the girls' journey on the train.

***The girls were hidden in sacks and placed in a freight car to Cleveland. The ride was rough and the girls had to stay in the sacks. They became quite dehydrated as they had nothing to drink.***

1. Locate Cleveland in an atlas.
2. Who met the girls at the train station?

***Mr. Ross met them at the train station although Julilly didn’t recognize him at first sight, as his appearance and dress were different from their first encounter.***

1. Why did the man caution Liza to drink slowly?

***Mr. Ross cautioned them to drink slowly as their bodies had be drained of moisture and drinking too quickly would be a shock to their system.***

1. What news did the girls receive about Lester and Adam?

***Both Lester and Adam reached freedom. Lester found work in a town of St. Catharine’s but unfortunately Adam died only one day after reaching Canada. His chains had cut into his flesh that resulted in poisoning.***

1. What was the *Mayflower* and where would it take the girls?

***The Mayflower was an Abolitionist boat according to Mr. Ross that would transport them across Lake Erie to Canada.***

Chapter 18

1. Where did the captain hide the girls?

***He hid them in a lifeboat under some canvas. He felt that it was no longer safe for them to stay below the deck, as the slave hunters might search the ship.***

1. How do we know that the girls are determined not to become slaves again?

***They made a solemn pledge to one another that they would jump in the water if they happened to be discovered by the slave hunters. Although they could not swim, they felt anything, including death, would be preferable to living in slavery.***

1. Who were the two men that the captain shoved onto the plank?

***The two large men were the slave hunters.***

1. How does Liza react when she arrives in Canada?

***Overcome with joy, she drops to her knees, kisses the ground and cries out, “Bless the Lord, I’m free!”***

Chapter 19

1. Who is Ezra Wilson?

***Ezra was an escaped slave who had arrived in Canada the year before. He was to transport the girls to St. Catherine’s.***

1. How long would the trip to St. Catharine’s take?

***It was a two day trip by cart to St. Catharine’s.***

1. Who worked at the Welland House Hotel in St. Catharine’s?

***Lester***

1. Who was Julilly surprised to see in the kitchen?

***She was overjoyed to see Mammy Sally, her mother.***

1. Did the white people of St. Catharine’s welcome the blacks into their community?

***No. Although the blacks were now free, they were not welcomed into the white institutions such as schools and churches. They still experienced different forms of racism.***