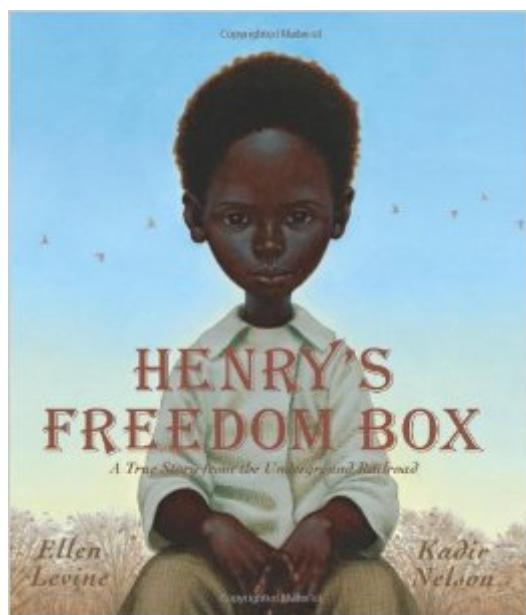


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# Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story From The Underground Railroad



## **Synopsis**

A stirring, dramatic story of a slave who mails himself to freedom by a Jane Addams Peace Award-winning author and a Coretta Scott King Award-winning artist. Henry Brown doesn't know how old he is. Nobody keeps records of slaves' birthdays. All the time he dreams about freedom, but that dream seems farther away than ever when he is torn from his family and put to work in a warehouse. Henry grows up and marries, but he is again devastated when his family is sold at the slave market. Then one day, as he lifts a crate at the warehouse, he knows exactly what he must do: He will mail himself to the North. After an arduous journey in the crate, Henry finally has a birthday -- his first day of freedom.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 380L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 40 pages

Publisher: Scholastic Press (January 1, 2007)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 9.2 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 132 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #10,200 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #12 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1800s #21 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism #30 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > African-American

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## **Customer Reviews**

Levine (Freedom's Children) recounts the true story of Henry Brown, a slave who mailed himself to freedom. Thanks to Nelson's (Ellington Was Not a Street) penetrating portraits, readers will feel as if they can experience Henry's thoughts and feelings as he matures through unthinkable adversity. As a boy, separated from his mother, he goes to work in his new master's tobacco factory and eventually meets and marries another slave, with whom he has three children. In a heartwrenching scene depicted in a dramatically shaded pencil, watercolor and oil illustration, Henry watches as his

familyâ€¢ suddenly sold in the slave marketâ€¢ disappears down the road. Henry then enlists the help of an abolitionist doctor and mails himself in a wooden crate "to a place where there are no slaves!" He travels by horse-drawn cart, steamboat and train before his box is delivered to the Philadelphia address of the doctor's friends on March 30, 1849. Alongside Henry's anguished thoughts en route, Nelson's clever cutaway images reveal the man in his cramped quarters (at times upside-down). A concluding note provides answers to questions that readers may wish had been integrated into the story line, such as where did Henry begin his journey? (Richmond, Va.); how long did it take? (27 hours). Readers never learn about Henry's life as a free manâ€¢ or, perhaps unavoidably, whether he was ever reunited with his family. Still, these powerful illustrations will make readers feel as if they have gained insight into a resourceful man and his extraordinary story. Ages 4-8. (Jan.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Grade 2â€¢ œ5â€¢ •Inspired by an actual 1830s lithograph, this beautifully crafted picture book briefly relates the story of Henry "Box" Brown's daring escape from slavery. Torn from his mother as a child, and then forcibly separated from his wife and children as an adult, a heartsick and desperate Brown conspired with abolitionists and successfully traveled north to Philadelphia in a packing crate. His journey took just over one full day, during which he was often sideways or upside down in a wooden crate large enough to hold him, but small enough not to betray its contents. The story ends with a reimagining of the lithograph that inspired it, in which Henry Brown emerges from his unhappy confinementâ€¢ •in every sense of the wordâ€¢ and smiles upon his arrival in a comfortable Pennsylvania parlor. Particularly considering the broad scope of Levine's otherwise well-written story, some of the ancillary "facts" related in her text are unnecessarily dubious; reports vary, for instance, as to whether the man who sealed Henry into the crate was a doctor or a cobbler. And, while the text places Henry's arrival on March 30, other sources claim March 24 or 25. Nelson's illustrations, always powerful and nuanced, depict the evolution of a self-possessed child into a determined and fearless young man. While some of the specifics are unfortunately questionable, this book solidly conveys the generalities of Henry Brown's story.â€¢ •Catherine Threadgill, Charleston County Public Library, SC Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

This review has spoilers but since it's a 40-page picture book, you will find out the ending of the book within 10 minutes of starting to read it anyway!Henry's Freedom Box is the true story of Henry

"Box" Brown, a man who escaped slavery by mailing himself to freedom. While written for young children, this book doesn't sugar coat how horrible slavery was. The very first page tells us that Henry doesn't know when his birthday is because slaves weren't allowed to know their birthdays. However, it did make me uncomfortable I read, "Henry's master had been good to Henry and his family," because I don't think you can really be good to someone if you are that person's "master". The master dies and leaves Henry to his son. Henry marries another slave and has three children. The most horrible part of the book is when the master's son sells Henry's wife and children. Henry runs to the center of town just as his wife and children are being driven away. At this point in the story, my six year old was almost crying. The story ends somewhat happily. Henry makes it to freedom but he never finds his wife and kids. After I finished reading it to him, my six year old told me he was afraid he was going to have nightmares because Henry never found his family. It's a conundrum - I want my kids to learn the history of this country but at the same time, I want to shield them from all bad things. They need to learn this stuff sometime though - I can't keep them in a bubble forever! Kadir Nelson's illustrations are fabulous, especially the paintings of Henry as a young boy. The pain and sadness in Henry's eyes is heartbreaking. This was a tough story but it was also amazing. I can't imagine stuffing myself into a box for over 24 hours. The perseverance of Henry "Box" Brown is truly remarkable.

Good story but a bit confusing due to sudden jumps forward in time. My granddaughter was amazed that this was a true story of a boy who traveled so far while being nailed into a box.

Love this book, love this story. My six year old likes this book too.

Excellent quality, price and delivery was early, too! The drawings are incredible and it is a true story!

Perfect reading for black history month

Wonderfully, marvelously illustrated book. Does not sugar coat the experience of slavery, although this is a children's book. When Henry's family was sold "down the river" there is a poignant, wrenching illustration. Later, there is no way to overlook the tragic reality that he never saw them again. Still Henry's story is uplifting. His desire to escape from slavery led to a very creative attempt, which could have failed at any moment. I am getting more copies to give to friends with and without children.

Used as a resource to help teach 2nd graders about The Underground Railway during Black History month. The children LOVED learning about this REAL man and the clever route to freedom he chose. An A+ book!

Close your eyes if you will and imagine what it would be like to curl up in a box and ship yourself as cargo. Hard to imagine isn't it. For one brave slave, Henry Brown, this became his way to escape to freedom. Sold away from his family as a child, Henry Brown did what many slaves had to do. They accepted their lives as slaves, but continued to dream of freedom. Henry soon found himself married with two children and the reality of being separated loomed each day. Their greatest fear now reality exploded before Henry as he watched helplessly as his family was dragged away. A man who found happiness from within and with his family, Henry became withdrawn and resolved to escape to freedom. His ingenious idea of mailing himself as cargo and with the assistance of a white doctor, Henry did just that. Come along on this heart wrenching journey to freedom through the true story of Henry "Box" Brown. You'll find your heartbeat racing for his safety.

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