



## **Runaway** **Becky Citra**

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Consider the following question as you read *Runaway*:

**How does Max's decision to help Lucas change both of their lives?**

### Story

Max must face his first moral dilemma when an abused boy turns up in his secret fort in the forest.

*The sound came from behind the cabin, like someone hitting something hard. I glanced up at the windows. What had happened to Papa? I sucked in my breath and ducked around the side.*

*A boy was swinging an axe at a log propped up against a stump. I slipped behind a tree and watched. The boy split the log in half and then picked up the pieces and threw them on a pile.*

*I'd never seen such a skinny boy. When he swung the axe his shoulder blades stuck out under his shirt. His feet were bare and his pants ended in a ragged line just below his knees. The boy split two more pieces of wood. Then he dropped the axe and leaned over, gulping in air, his hands on his knees.*

Max is horrified when he sees Sam Black, a new neighbor, strike a boy who is in his charge, but Max still shouts, “Thief,” and tries to catch the boy when he sees him steal from the general store in The Landings. When the abused boy runs away and takes refuge in Max's secret fort in the woods, Max must decide where his loyalties lie.

### Author

In the fourth volume of her historical series set in Upper Canada in the 1830s, Becky Citra tackles the serious subject of abuse while staying true to her characters and telling a gripping story. In addition to the Max and Ellie stories, Becky is also the author of *Dog Days* (Orca, 2003) a hilarious story about a boy who must deal with his fear of dogs in order to make friends in a new town.

A primary school teacher and writer, Becky Citra lives on a ranch in Bridge Lake, BC, where horses, bears and coyotes abound and where many of the chores have not changed since Max's day.

## Curricular Connections

### Language Arts

- Historical fiction is a rich way to learn about the past. It allows the reader to become part of the history they are reading about. *Runaway* is the fourth book in a series about its characters Max and Ellie. Find and make a list or web of facts from *Runaway* that explains what life was like in Upper Canada in the 1830s. Read one of the other books in the series and add information to your list. Share your list with others in your class and use the information to write a descriptive paragraph about what your life would be like if you were transported back to the time of Max and Ellie.
- Teaching with historical photographs provides students with a firsthand look at the past. Using the History Place website listed below for example, look through the photos and decide which ones might be suitable for you to use with your students. Have them look at the photos and write about what they see from the perspective of the children in the photos.
- Search through Debbie Martin's unit plan on *Child Labor Today and Yesterday* listed below for a selection of activities to use in the classroom.
- Choose an artifact (object) from *Runaway* to use as an introduction to writing a paragraph about the story. For example: a potato, nails, a plaid cap, a coin or a tin cup. Place one of these items in a bag or box. Have students ask yes or no type questions as they try and guess the contents. Once they have guessed the artifact, have them create a list or web of as many connections they can think of to the story. Use these lists to write different styles of poetry connected to *Runaway*.
- Pair up students in the class for this interview activity. Have one student act as a newspaper reporter and the other act as one of the characters from *Runaway*. You may want to list some suggestions or ideas for the reporters to follow or allow them to make their own choices. Compile the newspaper articles into a class newspaper.

### Drama

- “Historical fiction may help readers develop a consciousness of how time and place influence who they are. That is, by better understanding the past, children better understand themselves, their community, their culture and

the world” (Temple). Have students select a part from *Runaway* containing historical information and have them write a short skit to act out. For example: “On the way home, I watched the broad backs of Napoleon’s oxen as we bounced over the rough wagon road” (page 20), or “Napoleon and Papa were hitching Napoleon’s oxen to the plough, hoping to turn the new field before the storm” (page 24). Compare this information with what you know about your country and note similarities and differences.

### Art

- The characters in *Runaway* seem larger than life. Divide the class into groups and have each group draw a life-size model of one of these characters: Max, Ellie, Napoleon, Pierre, Red, Lucas, Sam, Papa, Jeremy and Kate. Using the information from *Runaway*, choose appropriate clothing and facial expressions to put on each of the characters. Display these around the room to help bring the story to life.
- Art forms and artists popular at this time include quilts and quiltmaking, John James Audubon’s birds and Cornelius Krieghoff. Select one of these to find out more about. Research the style of art and create a sample drawing in the style of the artist.
- ArtVenture is an exciting series of lessons relating to old paintings and prints of Canada from the 1800s.

### Social Studies

- On a blank map of Canada draw and label the areas known in the 1830s as Upper Canada, Lower Canada and Rupert’s Land. Label the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa Rivers. Compare this map to a current map of Canada. Research when and why the names for these areas changed.
- Clothing worn in the 1830s was very different from our clothing today. Research the main types of material used to make clothing during that time. Compare it with the types of material used to make our clothing today. Create a chart or web of your information. Find out what the following types of clothing look like and where they originated or what

they were made of: skeleton suit, trousers, tunic, bootees, knee breeches, pantaloons, shawl, pinafore, gigot sleeves and smock. Use the information to draw pictures of the clothing then and draw a comparable item of clothing found today.

- What's it like living in the 1830s? Research how life was in your area at this time in history. You may search old newspapers online or the archives in your local library. If possible find photographs and information about a location close to you. Write a story about what it was like then and what it is like today.

## Suggested Resources

### Fiction

Avi. *Captain Grey* (A young boy is held captive by a pirate).

Browne, Anthony. *Tunnel*.

Chamberlain, Penny. *The Olden Days Locket*.

Citra, Becky. *Ellie's New Home, The Freezing Moon, Danger at the Landings, Dog Days, Strawberry Moon*.

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Bud, Not Buddy*.

D'Amadao, Francesco. *Iqbal*.

Ellis, Sarah. *The Several Lives of Orphan Jack*. (How an orphan makes a difference).

Hall, Donald. *Milkman's Boy*. (An historical book about a family helping their neighbors).

Hermes, Patricia. *Westward to Home: Joshua's Diary, The Oregon Trail, 1848*.

Levine, Ellen. *My Name is America: The Journal of Jedediah Barstow*.

Little, Jean. *Dear Canada: Orphan at my Door: The Home Diary of Victoria Cope, Ontario, 1897*.

Love, D. Anne. *Bess's Log Cabin Quilt*.

Montgomery, L.M. *Anne of Green Gables*.

- Morpurgo, Michael. *Mr. Nobody's Eyes* (Harry runs away from the people who are hard on him).
- Paterson, Katherine. *Jip His Story* (Story of a boy living on the town poor farm).
- Polacco, Patricia. *John Philip Duck* (Keeping a secret can be worth it).
- Shea, Pegi Deitz. *Carpet Boy's Gift*.
- Synder, Zipha Keatly. *Cat Running* (Cat escapes a difficult homelife by building a secret hideout).
- Taylor, Cora. *Ghost Voyages II: The Matthew*. (Jeremy runs away because his mother may lose custody of him).
- Vaughan, Marcia K. *The Secret to Freedom*. (Slaves escape through the Underground Railroad).
- Wilder, Laura Ingalls. *By the Shores of Silver Lake*.

### Nonfiction

(Dewey Decimal Classification numbers appear in parentheses where applicable.)

- Anderson, William. *Laura Ingalls Wilder: A Biography* (813).
- Blizzard, Gladys S. *Come Look with Me: Landscape Art with Children* (758.1).
- Greenwood, Barbara. *A Pioneer Story* (971.04).
- Gryski, Camilla. *Cat's Cradle, Owl's Eyes: A Book of String Games, Super String Games* (793.9).
- Harvey, Stephanie. *Nonfiction Matters* (372.64).
- Hoyt, Linda. *Make it Real: Strategies for Success With Informational Texts* (372.6).
- Kalman, Bobbie. *Early Settler Life Series, 19th Century Clothing* (391).
- Kielberger, Craig. *Free the Children: A Young Man Fights Against Child Labor and Proves that Other Children Can Change the World* (305)
- Libby, Wendy M. L. *Using Art to Make Art* (372.5).
- McGovern, Ann. *If You Lived 100 Years Ago* (973.9).

Merrit, Susan E. *Her Story: Women From Canada's Past*

Myers, R.E. *Now What? Moral Dilemmas That Build Character*. (372)

Springer, Jane. *Listen to Us! The World's Working Children*

Townsend, Charles Barry. *World's Most Incredible Puzzles* (793-73).

Westerhout, Lynn. *Making it Home: The Story of Catherine Parr Traill* (920).

### Online

“Child Labor Today and Yesterday: A Unit Plan by Debbie Martin”  
[Teacherlink.ed.usu.edu/tlresources/units/Gallagher2003Fall/DMARTIN/INDEX.HTM](http://Teacherlink.ed.usu.edu/tlresources/units/Gallagher2003Fall/DMARTIN/INDEX.HTM)

“The History Place: Child Labor in America 1908-1912”  
[www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor](http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor)

“PBS Frontier House Lesson Plans”  
[www.pbs.org/wnet/frontierhouse/resources/lessons.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/frontierhouse/resources/lessons.html)

“Teaching With Historic Places Lesson Plans”  
[www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/4logcabins/4logcabins.m](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/4logcabins/4logcabins.m)

“Clothing of the 1830s”  
[www.connerprairie.org/historyonline/clothing.html](http://www.connerprairie.org/historyonline/clothing.html)

“ArtVenture: A Collector's Challenge”  
[www.collectionscanada.ca/education/art/0506021101\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/education/art/0506021101_e.html)

“Education Place Outline Maps”  
[www.eduplace.com/ss/maps](http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps)

“Teaching With Moral Dilemmas in the Elementary and Secondary School Classroom: Strategies to Develop Students' Moral Reasoning”  
[www.bctf.ca/social/conferences/TeachingWithMoralDilemma.html](http://www.bctf.ca/social/conferences/TeachingWithMoralDilemma.html)

“Random Acts of Kindness Foundation” [www.actsofkindness.org/classroom](http://www.actsofkindness.org/classroom)

“The Institute for Global Ethics: Elementary Decision Skills”  
[www.globaethics.org/EDS/guide.html](http://www.globaethics.org/EDS/guide.html)

“Kids Can Free the Children” [www.freethechildren.org](http://www.freethechildren.org)

“Information on Child Labour Around the World”

[www.globalmarch.org/cl-around-the-world/](http://www.globalmarch.org/cl-around-the-world/)

“Life as a Pioneer” [www.campsilos.org/mod2/teachers/life.shtml](http://www.campsilos.org/mod2/teachers/life.shtml)

“The Backwoods of Canada”

[www.collectionscanada.ca/moodie-trail/t1-5001-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/moodie-trail/t1-5001-e.html)

“Roughing it in the Bush”

[www.collectionscanada.ca/moodie-trail/t1-5000-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/moodie-trail/t1-5000-e.html)

“Pioneer Life in Upper Canada” [www.projects.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/pioneer/](http://www.projects.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/pioneer/)

“Pioneer Life” [www.42explore2.com/pioneer.htm](http://www.42explore2.com/pioneer.htm)

### **A Few Words From the Author**

Dear readers,

*Runaway* is the fourth book in my series about Max and Ellie, and one of my favorites!

If you have read some of the earlier books, you will see that Max's neighborhood is changing. More families are moving into the area and Max and Ellie are not nearly as isolated. Most of the new people are good neighbors, but I thought it would be interesting to write about a neighbor who caused problems and so I created Sam Black.

I live with my husband and daughter on a ranch in a small community called Bridge Lake. Our house is right beside a lake, just like Ellie and Max's house. In the summer we swim and canoe, and in the winter we cross country ski and skate. We have a big vegetable garden, animals to look after and a wood stove. But in most ways our lives are very different from the pioneers. After all, I write my books on a computer, heat my cocoa in the microwave and relax in our hot tub!

My idea for *Runaway* started with Max's fort. When I was young, I loved building forts. My best fort was under the stairs in our basement, with a big yellow bedspread for a door! Over the years, my daughter and her cousins built piles of old sticks and branches on Spooky Island in the middle of our lake. They hid bottles with messages in the stick walls and had fun reading them the next summer. Once I had decided that Max was going to have a

fort, it was fun to think up an adventure. I knew that someone was going to hide in Max's fort, and I came up with the character of Lucas.

*Runaway* has some of my other favorite characters in it—Napoleon, the chopper who was introduced in *The Freezing Moon*, Pierre the logger and Red, a lively boy from the general store in *Danger at the Landings*. I enjoyed bringing them all together in *Runaway*.

I hope you have lots of fun reading about Max's adventures.

From,  
Becky Citra