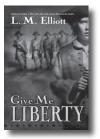
. Elliott is the author of the historical nee, Between the States, an IRA/CBC Teac

L. M. Elliott is the author of the historical novel Annie, Between the States, an IRA/CBC Teachers' Choice and a New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age. She is also the author of Flying South and the picture books Hunter's Best Friend at School, an IRA/CBC Children's Choice, and Hunter and Stripe and the Soccer Showdown, both illustrated by Lynn Munsinger. She lives with her husband and their two children in Virginia.



Give Me Liberty

Tr 0-06-074421-9 • \$16.99 (\$21.99) Lb 0-06-074422-7 • \$17.89 (\$22.89)

Also by L. M. Elliott



Annie, Between the States

Tr 0-06-001211-0 • \$15.99 (\$21.99) Lb 0-06-001212-9 • \$16.89 (\$25.89) Pb 0-06-001213-7 • \$6.99 (\$8.99)



Flying South

Tr 0-06-001214-5 • \$15.99 (\$23.99)



Hunter and Stripe and the Soccer Showdown

Illustrated by Lynn Munsinger Tr 0-06-052759-5 • \$15.99 (\$21.99) Lb 0-06-052760-9 • \$16.89 (\$22.89)



Hunter's Best Friend at School

Illustrated by Lynn Munsinger Tr 0-06-000230-1 • \$15.99 (\$21.99) Pb 0-06-075319-6 • \$5.99 (\$8.50)



www.harpercollinschildrens.com

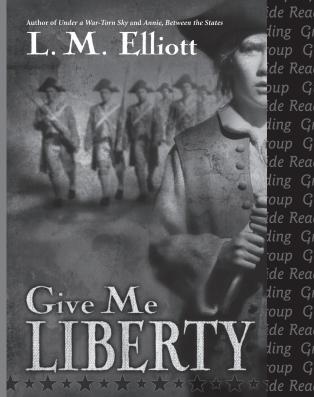
For exclusive information on your favorite authors and artists, visit www.authortracker.com

Reading guide prepared by Karen Peterfreund, writer and editor, educational publishing, New York, NY. To order, contact your local bookseller or distributor. Prices and availability subject to change without notice.

Group Guide Reading Gr Guide Reading Group G Reading Group Guide Read

Reading Group Guide

Guide Reading Group G Reading Group Guide Read Group Guide Reading Group G



Group Guide Reading Gı Guide Reading Group G

Rea

Give Me Liberty
By L. M. Elliott

Group Guide Reading Gı Guide Reading Group G

roup Guide Reading Group Guide ading Group Guide Reading Group ide Reading Group Guide Reading

About the Book

Set in America during the years 1774–1775, *Give Me Liberty* explores the life-or-death risks, triumphs, and tragic disappointments colonists faced in their quest for liberty.

Nathaniel Dunn is a thirteen-year-old indentured servant who has known only hardship since arriving in Virginia from England in 1772. His mother died during the ocean passage, and his father, purchased by a frontier planter, abandoned him. Nathaniel is taken by a Tidewater tobacco planter who goes bankrupt and must sell off Nathaniel. At that auction, Nathaniel is separated from the one friend he has made, a teenaged slave named Moses. But his luck is about to change.

Nathaniel is rescued by Basil Wilkinson, an eccentric and idealistic schoolmaster and music teacher. Basil brings him to Williamsburg, where revolutionary zeal is igniting. There, Nathaniel works in a carriage maker's shop. All around him, people are struggling for liberty; but trained by his past misfortune to duck trouble at all costs, Nathaniel avoids taking action or sides. Gradually, under Basil's tutelage and the influence of a patriotic apprentice named Ben, Nathaniel develops inner strength. As he endures the tyranny of the ill-tempered carriage maker, Nathaniel identifies with the colonists who are struggling against British rule. When Basil joins the infantry, granting Nathaniel's freedom, Nathaniel takes control of his own fate. He chooses to accompany Basil as a fifer in the 2nd Virginia Regiment.

The only thing that mars Nathaniel's belief in the Revolution is the fact that his friend, Moses, is still in bondage. As a slave, Moses' only chance for liberty is to run away from his owner and join the British. In the dramatic battle at Great Bridge in December 1775, Nathaniel will not only face well-trained British troops commanded by Royal Governor Lord Dunmore, he will confront his oldest friend. Nathaniel faces crucial choices as his courage and sense of self-worth, of right and wrong, are put to the test.

Discussion Questions

- **1.** After Edan Maguire attacks Nathaniel for supposedly betraying him, Nathaniel suddenly understands the patriots' cause and identifies with them. Explain how "his world of the carriage shop mirrored the struggle between the colonists and the British king" (p. 244).
- 2. During the Revolutionary War, a third of Americans were patriots and a third loyalists, while a third, such as Edan Maguire, simply wished to remail neutral. When Edan Maguire falls ill in chapter 27, the surgeon determines that "something was strangling Edan's heart" (p. 228). He later dies when his heart gives out. What strangles Edan's heart and destroys him? Do you feel any sympathy for him, or is he a completely unsympathetic character?
- **3.** The novel's characters seek liberty—literal and spiritual—in different ways. Choose three characters. What type of liberty is each character seeking? How does each one try to attain freedom?
- **4.** In many ways, Nathaniel and Ben are opposites. Compare and contrast the two characters and their actions. How has Ben learned "that steady men make better leaders" (p. 266)?
- **5.** Nathaniel views Moses as a great friend. How do they both show friendship and loyalty to each other? Why does Nathaniel fear that "their separate quests for liberty could make them enemies" (p. 325)? Explain how Moses' plight reveals the hypocrisy of the patriots.
- **6.** Basil becomes much more than just Nathaniel's master. In what ways does he become a father figure for Nathaniel?
- 7. Nathaniel's father abandons him and does not search for him later. He waits until Nathaniel's regiment is about to leave the camp before identifying himself and offering Nathaniel the opportunity to lead a life together in the future. What reasons does Nathaniel's father give for his actions? What is your opinion of his reasons and behavior? Do you share Nathaniel's view of his father?

- **8.** Throughout much of the novel, the past shapes Nathaniel's thoughts and actions. When Mrs. Maguire catches him putting money in Basil's tin in chapter 27, she tells him that he must leave the past behind. How does Nathaniel's refusal to whip Jeremiah in chapter 36 show that he has learned Mrs. Maguire's lesson?
- **9.** In the beginning of the novel, Nathaniel believes that being brave or defiant brings trouble. How does he change and find his courage by the end of the book?
- 10. The Revolution was grounded in a strong belief in the common person's inborn intelligence and nobility. How does Basil try to instill this belief in Nathaniel and help him unlock his potential? How do Nathaniel's actions reveal that Basil has succeeded?
- 11. Although Nathaniel wants to avoid making choices at first, he is faced with a series of critical decisions. Which of his choices do you think is the most important? Why? By the end of the novel, what does Nathaniel learn about making choices?
- **12.** Unlike his mother, who believed in possibilities, Nathaniel feels at first that "only fools hoped" (p. 9). Why does he feel that way? How does his view of hope change by the end of the book?
- 13. In her dedication, the author quotes Jacqueline Kennedy's statement that all the changes in the world were first brought about by words. How does the novel illustrate this? How does Basil—and historic figures such as Thomas Jefferson—represent the Age of Enlightenment and its revolutionary thought?

Famous people mentioned in *Give Me Liberty* to inspire discussion:

- Thomas Jefferson
- George Washington
- Patrick Henry
- lames Monroe
- · John Marshall

www.harpercollinschildrens.com