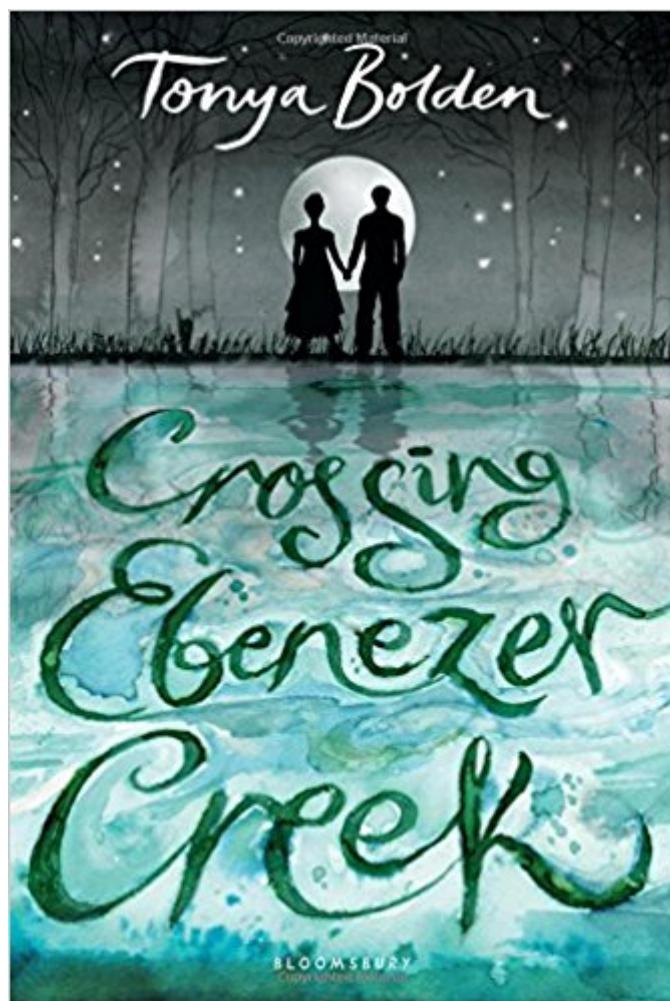


The book was found

Crossing Ebenezer Creek



Synopsis

When Mariah and her young brother Zeke are suddenly freed from slavery, they join Sherman's march through Georgia. Mariah wants to believe that the brutalities of slavery are behind them, but even as hope glimmers, there are many hardships yet to come. When she meets a free black named Caleb, Mariah dreams in a way she never dared . . . of a future worth living and the possibility of true love. But even hope comes at a cost, and as the difficult march continues toward the churning waters of Ebenezer Creek, Mariah's dreams are as vulnerable as ever. In this powerful exploration of a little-known tragedy perfect for fans of Ruta Sepetys, readers will never forget the souls of Ebenezer Creek.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Poetic in tone and savage in its depictions of the tortures slaves endured, Crossing Ebenezer Creek grants dignity and depth to its characters and considers the difficult and vulnerable position of African Americans as they adapted to freedom among whites who did not always view them as human beings. Readers will fall in love with Bolden's gentle lyricism as she unflinchingly unfolds a difficult story." - starred review, Shelf Awareness "Bolden . . . bravely concludes this concise, moving story with a historically accurate and horrifying ending." - starred review, Publishers Weekly "The well-executed premise, a compelling love story, and unique historical details will appeal to fans of Ruta Sepetys' *Salt to the Sea* . . . This moving and engrossing portrayal of a little-known historical tragedy belongs on all YA shelves." - starred review, School Library Journal "Mariah and Caleb's unforgettable story is everything historical fiction should be: informative, engrossing, and

unflinching A poetic, raw, and extraordinary imagining of a little-known, shameful chapter in American history." - starred review, Kirkus Reviews "With keen insight, Bolden mines a lesser-known historical event and brings the human cost vividly to life . . . Bolden's trenchant, powerful novel is a strong testament to the many lost lives that certainly did--and still do--matter." - starred review, Booklist "Mariah and Caleb's . . . heartbreaking fate will elicit equal parts outrage and sorrow." - BCCB "Bolden's powerful story pulls the reader into the hearts and minds of Mariah and Caleb, pursuing a life together in the midst of the turmoil and anguish of slavery and the Civil War." - Joyce Hansen, Coretta Scott King Honor-winning author of *WHICH WAY FREEDOM* "I learned more from this one novel--about love, the true meaning of family, tenacity, loss, history and hope--than from any book I've read in a long while. Generations will know this story." - Sharon G. Flake, Coretta Scott King winner; author of *THE SKIN I'M IN* and *UNSTOPPABLE OCTOBIA MAY* "Breathtaking. . . . Bolden fleshes out a small, harrowing historical betrayal, weaving an unforgettable story and capturing both the frailty and resilience of hope." - The Horn Book Magazine

Tonya Bolden is a critically acclaimed award-winning author/co-author/editor of more than two dozen books for young people. They include *Finding Family* which received two starred reviews and was a Kirkus Reviews and Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year; *Maritcha: A Nineteenth-Century American Girl*, a Coretta Scott King honor book and James Madison Book Award winner; *MLK: Journey of a King*, winner of a National Council of Teachers of English Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children; *Emancipation Proclamation: Lincoln and the Dawn of Liberty*, an ALSC Notable Children's Book, CBC/NCSS Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People, and winner of the NCSS Carter G. Woodson Middle Level Book Award. Tonya also received the Children's Book Guild of Washington, DC's Nonfiction Award. A Princeton University magna cum laude baccalaureate with a master's degree from Columbia University, Tonya lives in New York City. www.tonyaboldenbooks.com

Based on a true story, *Crossing Ebenezer Creek* was the civil war book that I have been looking for and dreaming about all my life. The main audience for this book is middle grade, or ages 11-14, but I think anyone interested in the topic and up for a little first love horror tragedy, then you should dive right in. This is an individual telling from the point of view of a group of slaves freed by Yankee soldiers. After being freed from their cruel master, they join the march on, eventually to Savannah, GA. Mariah and her brother Zeke, both slaves, jump in with hot Caleb, also a black man but a free

one, driving a wagon for the Union. This makes for a grim backdrop for a love story but the author pulls it off, and for the next couple weeks Mariah and Caleb heartbreakingly begin to dream about what it would be like for them, together, after this is all over. There were many times during this story that I honestly had tears in my eyes. What they endured!! The descriptions of what the treatment of slaves was like, however brief, were still breathtaking, and not in the Grand Canyon kind of way. To know that people treated other people the way they were treated, that their lives were actually owned by someone else, it is still so saddening even when knowing it beforehand. Her story was sad and violent and I am 100% sure very common. Since I had no idea what had happened at Ebenezer Creek, I went in not knowing and was blindsided by the end. There was so much foreshadowing in the story though, there was no way you couldn't guess something ominous was coming eventually. In the end it was hot Caleb that I thought about as I lay away after finishing the book. The amount of suffering in this book is tremendous. The two main characters, almost star-crossed lovers, force you to instantly fall in love with both of them. As a reader I found myself hopeful for them in this crazy and contradictory times in their lives. So happy to be freed from slavery but knowing that the enemy is hot on their tail, not knowing if that could all come to an end in any instant. These characters had never had any hope before, and here they are wait for it to be taken away, like some cruel joke where the rug is jerked out from underneath you. Honestly the only thing that I didn't like about the book is that the characters had accents, and the author wrote in the accent, even when the character was thinking. Sometimes I had to sound things out in order to know what they were talking about. Some may find that a deal breaker but it wasn't for me, because those places weren't abundant. This book is what I personally call a "gateway" book, one that has you asking Cortana things that you don't know about and then looking up other books that are related and adding them to your groaning TBR. I hope that kids will read this story in school, first love and a horror story, history and a tragedy, all rolled into one great yarn. 4/5 stars.*I was given this book for free in exchange for a honest and fair review.* Thank you NetGalley for the opportunity!

This book is a heartbreaker, but such a good and important read. A beautifully written story about severely brutalized characters who still manage to hold on to hope and faith. There are no simplistic or easy answers here, but you will care deeply about these characters, and they will stay with you.

Confession: I didn't buy it, I read a reviewers copy that I found. But you should buy it, and I hope

schools and libraries buy it by the ton . It was a story that drew me in, and kept me going past some unbearably sad parts. It captured something of American history through a 'family" of newly freed, very vulnerable people. There were some stretches of unlikely dialogue (who says "let's dream of better tomorrows!") but there were plenty of other moments of truly gripping, poignant , hopeful life in this book. Caleb is the vehicle for explaining military structure, as he tries to explain the larger picture of the dregs of Civil War "foraging" and skirmishes to Mariah (and readers who may not be familiar with history.....). Both Caleb and Mariah have secrets which unfold over the course of the story, and Mariah's anger comes to a murderous (and completely understandable) boil in one of the several horrifying episodes that ring true given what we know about slave times. The final turn in this book reveals the ironic, crushing cruelty of being "freed" by the North. It was startling and I am still, several days later, haunted by it. You will never think of "Ebenezer Baptist Church" or any of the other cultural references to "Ebenezer" in African American history/Civil Rights without thinking of this book.

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