

*The religious group known as the Quakers has always worked hard to bring about social reforms. The Quakers were leaders in the fight against slavery, and often helped slaves escape by means of the Underground Railroad. This story tells how one Quaker managed to deny that he was hiding a slave—without telling a lie.*

As eleven-year-old Allen Jay crossed his front yard, whistling, he saw a man riding along the road. It was the doctor. When the doctor reached the front gate he called to Allen's father.

"Isaac Jay, it troubles me to have to come to thee again on such a matter, but there is no one else and no time to be lost," said the doctor. "A runaway slave is hiding in the woods below the meetinghouse, and his owner is heading this way."

"Thee knows what to tell him," replied Allen's father.

The doctor turned his horse around and rode away.

There were many questions Allen wanted to ask his father, but Quaker children in 1842 were trained to hold their tongues. So he simply waited.

"Allen," his father said at last, "I am going out back of the house to work. If any Negro should happen to come to the gate, thee can hide him in the cornfield, but thee is not to tell me or anyone else."

Allen climbed up into the old apple tree by the gate and waited. Finally he saw a Negro coming closer and closer, and he jumped down from the tree and ran to meet him. The poor man looked terrified, for he

didn't know who Allen was.

"Please don't be afraid," whispered Allen. "I know about thee and I know where to hide thee. My father wants me to help thee."

"Who is your father?"

"Isaac Jay."

The runaway sighed in relief. "That's the name the doctor told me," he said. "The doctor's a good man; he put some stuff on my back where they whipped me. That's why I ran away. I'm never going to be whipped again."

Allen led the way through the cornfield and stopped at a place where the corn was very tall. There the boy helped the slave take off the rough shirt that rubbed against his wounds.

"Thee will be safe enough here," said Allen. "I will come after thee when it is time."

As Allen ran back to his house, he noticed two strangers coming down the road. He hid behind a tree and watched as they walked up to his house and called to his father.

"Mr. Jay," the bigger of the two men said, "this gentleman here is from Kentucky. One of his slaves has run away, and he'd like to find him. Maybe you saw him go by today?"

"No, I didn't."

"Now, Mr. Jay, I hate to doubt your Quaker honesty, but maybe, just maybe, he didn't go by here because you invited him in for dinner! It's a long way from Kentucky, and I'd hate to have this gentleman go home disappointed. So we're going to have a look inside your house."

Isaac Jay looked the man steadily in the eye. "I have no objection," he said, "but

first I would like to see your warrant.”

This the men were unable to produce. So after a few threats and some mumbling between themselves, they finally left—for the time being, anyway.

That evening Isaac Jay said to Allen, “Son, how would thee like to go to thy grandfather’s?”

“I would like to, Father.”

“If thee knows of anybody thee thinks ought to go, thee had better take him along.”

Allen found the runaway slave asleep. He shook him awake, and they both climbed into the buggy.

A short while later they turned into Grandfather Jay’s farm.

“Grandfather,” called Allen, “I have brought thee someone who is anxious to see thee.”

Thirty minutes later the Negro, astride a fast horse, turned out of the yard. He was headed north—toward freedom.

## CHECK YOUR READING

1. The Quakers were a
  - A religious group
  - B political party
  - C military outfit
2. The man Allen saw riding along the road was
  - A a doctor
  - B his father
  - C the slave
3. There was a need to hurry because the slave's
  - A health was bad
  - B family was waiting
  - C owner was coming
4. Allen's father told him to hide the Negro in the
  - A apple orchard
  - B cornfield
  - C woodshed
5. When the Negro first saw Allen, he was
  - A frightened
  - B relieved
  - C puzzled
6. The Negro ran away because he had been
  - A starved
  - B whipped
  - C overworked
7. Allen's father would not let the two men look inside his house because they had no
  - A money
  - B manners
  - C warrant
8. Allen took the slave to
  - A his grandfather's farm
  - B the meetinghouse
  - C another state
9. When the Negro left, he was heading
  - A east
  - B west
  - C north
10. Quakers made it a point to
  - A mind their own business
  - B give children great freedom
  - C tell the truth at all times