

Ex-School Teacher & Award-Winning Author Shines Light on Slavery & Underground Railroad in Unique YA Historical Fiction

SID JOHNSON AND THE PHANTOM SLAVE STEALER by Frances Schoonmaker

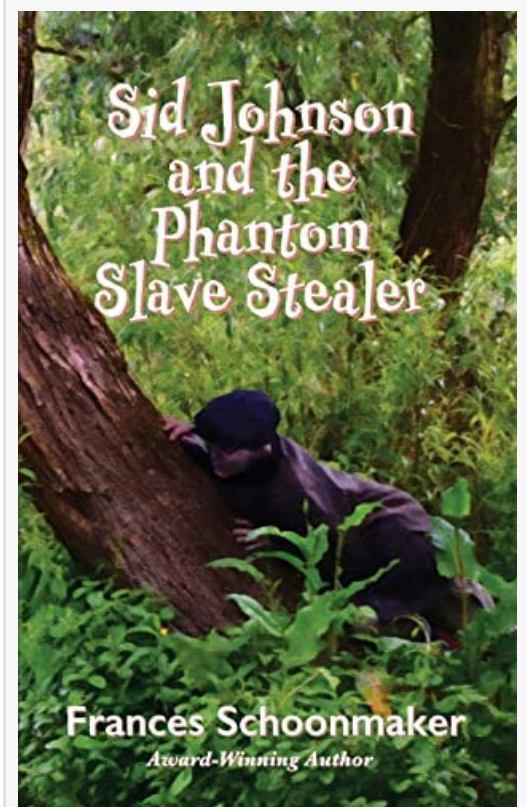
UNITED STATES, December 13, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Fresh off of penning an award-winning trilogy, *The Last Crystal Trilogy*, a historical fantasy for middle grade/young adult readers and anyone who loves an adventure, former educator and grandmother [Frances Schoonmaker](#) is at it again.

A recipient of The Agatha Award, the author shares insightful coming-of-age messages while she spins an amazing tale that helps young readers appreciate history when imagining other eras. Her newest book is [Sid Johnson and the Phantom Slave Stealer](#).

In the book, Sid Johnson's parents claim they don't know anything about a slave stealer that slaveholders call the "Phantom." But when Sid discovers that their Southern Illinois farm is a stop on the Underground Railroad, he isn't so sure Ma and Pa are telling him the truth. They could get caught breaking the law. When bounty hunters threaten Pa, Sid resolves to take action to protect the family. Before his plans are in place, bounty hunters burn the barn. With a civil war brewing and the farm compromised as a stop on the Underground Railroad, Ma and Pa decide to go west. Disappointed that he failed to learn any more about the slave stealer, Sid is glad to leave the slave question behind. He is about to find out that the ugly shadow of slavery reaches beyond the Johnson farm to the Santa Fe Trail, and his involvement with the Phantom Slave Stealer has just begun.

Schoonmaker is available to discuss the following:

- Why learning of the Underground Railroad and slavery is so important.
- Why a former elementary school teacher and grandmother is perfectly positioned to write



Sid Johnson and the Phantom Slave Stealer

exciting books, filled with danger and discovery, for kids.

- What is missing from middle-grade YA fiction books today.
- Why time travel is a popular mechanism to tell an interesting, escapist story.
- How some children may struggle to overcome their fears – but how they can be inspired by the books they read to meet any challenge.
- Why the well-worn Santa Fe Trail is the perfect location to set a historical novel.
- How to inspire more young minds to consume books and explore the depths of their imagination, curiosity, and enjoyment.



Frances Schoonmaker

Writing books for children is the latest dimension of a professional career where Schoonmaker has devoted herself to serving young minds and their needs. She taught elementary school for a dozen years before directing an international teacher preparation program at Teachers College, Columbia University, one that drew heavily on story-telling.

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Deserving of a place on the shelf of a children's section of every library.”

M. Gordoni, Pacific Book Review

“I love sparking the imagination of young minds by using history to inform and inspire them,” says Schoonmaker. “Learning about the Underground Railroad is very important.”

Reviews For Sid Johnson and the Phantom Slave Stealer :

“Deserving of a place on the shelf of a children's section of every library.” --M. Gordoni, Pacific Book Review

“A worthy, engaging story of an abolitionist family.” --Kirkus Reviews

“Historical storytelling at its finest, bringing to life a fascinating time in American history with a tale of adventure, mystery and suspense.” --K. Hall, BookTrib

“We need more books like this for the age group. . . reads well and tells a good story.” --Leo Oliva, Santa Fe Trail Historian

"Solid characterizations and [a] superb plot. . .the best historical novel I have ever read." --Alex Ndirangu for Readers' Favorite

"Libraries looking for vivid historical backdrops and action-packed adventures that pose no easy solutions for their characters will find ... an engrossing story that deserves not just acquisition, but assignment for discussion groups tackling the history and issues of slavery." --D. Donovan, Senior Reviewer, Midwest Book Review

"An immensely satisfying tale that brings to life a dramatic and troubling part of our history."
--Lynn Slaughter, award-winning author of young adult mysteries, *Leisha's Song* and *Deadly Set Up*

"Schoonmaker skillfully examines an important part of U.S. history while delivering a dazzling adventure story." --Richie Narvaez, author of *Anthony* and Award-winning young adult mystery, *Holly Hernandez* and *the Death of Disco*

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