

BREAD for WORDS

— A FREDERICK DOUGLASS STORY —



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I know where I was born, not when. It was Tuckahoe, Maryland.



I lived free as a bird near the bay in a small cabin with Grandma. There wasn't a whole lot to do inside our cramped cabin, so I called to the birds, the frogs, the cats, and the dogs. I chirped and barked and squabbled until even the animals couldn't tell if I was one of their own.

One day, Grandma told me I would have to leave.

“Why?” I asked.

“We belong to Old Master,” she said. “We are slaves.”

“What does that mean?” I thought I belonged to Grandma.

“They won’t teach you a thing, but to work.
And you won’t have a choice.”

“But **why am I a slave?**” I did not want to be told when to work,
where to work,
how to work . . .
and not have a choice.





Grandma was silent on the day we left the cabin early in the morning. We walked twelve long miles on a day swamped with heat and bugs to a place called the Great House Farm.



When we arrived, children ran out to see me. They surrounded me, laughing and teasing me so. Then Grandma left without saying goodbye. I met my brothers and sisters at the Great House, but I didn't know them well. Without Grandma, I was too sad to play.

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