

The Other Side of Freedom

Historical coming-of-age fiction by Cynthia T. Toney

In the 1920s rural South, a thirteen-year-old boy and his immigrant father become involved against their will in a crime that results in the murder of an innocent man and family friend.



Summary:

In 1925, thirteen-year-old Salvatore Scaviano and his Italian immigrant father, Gianni, become involved against their will in an attempted bank robbery. It goes terribly wrong, and they witness the murder of an innocent man and family friend at the scene. The criminals escape, and Gianni makes Sal promise not to tell anyone about the events.

Sal struggles with his conscience and eventually goes to the police but proclaims his father's innocence. Gianni is arrested anyway, causing the Scavianos to face the loss of their reputations and livelihood in their new homeland.

Amidst bigotry, bootlegging, police corruption, and gangland threats, Sal must discover whom he can trust in order to protect himself and his family and win back his father's freedom. He enlists the help of Antonina, the girl who is his best friend, and Hiram, an African-American farmhand. In the process of bringing the real criminals to justice, Sal learns the full extent of sacrifice that must sometimes be made for freedom and family. No one's lives are ever the same, as dreams are shattered and long-held beliefs are challenged in a small community called Freedom.

Marketing potential: Italian immigrants' struggles during the mid-1800s through the 1920s are those that children and adults of any ethnic heritage can appreciate. Few Americans are aware that early Italian immigrants had tremendous rapport with African-Americans in the South, where they worked side-by-side in the fields after the Emancipation. My close connection with American-Italian culture and my firsthand knowledge of the story's setting of a strawberry farm have given me an edge in writing this novel and will aid me in marketing it. The story employs some of the ambience of *Black Duck* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Cynthia T. Toney is the author of *Bird Face*, a YA contemporary novel published by SharksFinn Books, an imprint of Port Yonder Press. A former newspaper artist, graphic designer, advertising and marketing director, and interior decorator, she holds a Bachelor of Arts in art education with a minor in history. She has written for print and online periodicals on subjects ranging from cooking to pet care. She lives in the Deep South with her husband and as many dogs as space will allow.

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