

THE FREEDOM CODE - Excerpt

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Ms Twist and DJ have just exited their classroom when they feel themselves whisked into a whirlwind of sound....as they regain their senses, they look around and see that they're not longer in their school building, but outside on a farm. A cow moos.

[Martha Langston Enters from stage left carrying a basket and singing "Gospel Train" other voices fade out]

MARTHA: Who you? Where ya come from? You wasn't here a second ago!

BOTH: *[Talking over each other in a panic]* Where are we? Where's the school?! What on Earth? Am I dreaming?!

MARTHA: You don't know where you are? What kinda strange clothes... *[She pulls both of them with gentle urgency]* You better come wid me 'fo you get seen!

In a daze they allow Martha to pull/nudge them back to her shack through the up stage door (the classroom), trying to take in the new environment. Martha's husband Roby is lying on the floor.

ROBY: Martha? What you doing here? Who you got with you?

MARTHA: *[She begins to take greens out of the basket]* Master Nathan ordered me out of the fields early so I can get you well. Said, he need his best Boy to fix the door to the barn. This is...

MS TWIST: Amanda Twist and this is D.J. Where -

ROBY: Y'all was following the Drunkard's Path?

MARTHA: Found 'em wandering next to the barn with the Drunkard's Path quilt hanging on it. They must be powerful tired, they don't know where they are! Good thing y'all know the code. How long you been following the Drunkard's Path? The Slave Hunters been thick around here ever since ...Granny and Jr...*[She is obviously upset]*

ROBY: Don't fret Martha. We'll see 'em soon enough –

MARTHA: How?! You can't walk with a nail in your foot! *[Leaves the shack obviously upset]*

ROBY: I'm sorry y'all our family's been having some hard times. My Momma and our son Roby Jr. got... split up from me and Martha... We'll be right back
[Limp – hops after Martha]

DJ: *[As if coming out of a trance]* What is going on? You know them?! Where are we?! What were they talking about?

MS TWIST: No, I don't know them..But I do know what they were talking about and so do you!

DJ: No, I don't! All I do know is that this... is...crazy!

MS TWIST: Listen and think! “Drunkards Path” That was the quilt patch that told slaves to take a zig zag path to avoid Slave Hunters. And remember when we first got here we heard that singing [hums/sings a few bars of “Gospel Train”] that's Gospel Train one of the old spirituals used to pass messages among the slaves!

DJ: Now you sound like them! Am I the only one who has NOT lost his mind?! Listen to me [Slow and overly exaggerated] Where ...is ...the .. .school? WHERE IS CHICAGO?!!!

MS TWIST: SHHHH! Keep your voice down! Look, I know as much about what has happened as you do. One second we were in the school, and the next... we're... on a.. a.. All I know is that we are strangers and everything here is strange. The only clues we have about what on Earth is happening to us is what they said about the codes and that singing we heard.

[D.J. Stares at her blankly or raises an eyebrow.]

They think we're runaway slaves! Remember the secret code's we've been studying in class? They think we're using the secret codes to escape from lavery.

D.J.: Soooo ...either they're crazy... we've gone crazy together or...

[In unison] We've gone back in time!!!

To slave times?!

MS TWIST: To slave times.

DJ: Well that explains the cows, but what do we do now?

MS TWIST: We think. We need to figure out how to get home...Maybe if we can figure out how we got here...

DJ: I just walked out of the classroom and BAM! I'm on planet WHACK A
DO-