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# Hang A Thousand Trees With Ribbons: The Story Of Phillis Wheatley



## Synopsis

Kidnapped from her home in Senegal and sold as a slave in 1761, a young girl is purchased by the wealthy Wheatley family in Boston. Phillis Wheatley--as she comes to be known--has an eager mind and it leads her on an unusual path for a slave--she becomes America's first published black poet. "Strong characterization and perceptive realism mark this thoughtful portrayal." --Booklist

## Book Information

Series: Great Episodes

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (72 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

I loved this book more than any other Historical fiction novel that I've ever read! It is the story of a young black girl who is kidnapped from her home in Africa, and taken on a slave ship to Boston Mass. Soon after, she is taken in by the Wheatley family, and treated as a daughter, not a slave. Nathaniel, John Wheately's son, teaches her to read and write. The Wheately's soon realize, that she has a great talent for writing poetry! So, they take her to England to have it published.. Once in England, Benjamin Franklin tells her that now that she is in England, she is free! So, the question is, will she betray the family that has treated her so well? Or will she take her long wanted freedom?

The life long yearning for an unattainable man, unlike what Hollywood would have you believe, does not always end happily, as the main character in *Hang a Thousand Trees with Ribbons*, could explain. Ann Rinaldi's thrilling historical fiction novel about the life of the famous black poet, Phillis

Wheatley, shows the maturation of Phillis from a young girl captured in her homeland of Africa and sold as a slave in America to a lovely young lady with a published poetry book. Upon first viewing of the only son in her new family, Phillis develops very loving feelings towards Nathaniel Wheatley, and the two form a very special relationship, all the time Nathaniel oblivious to her feelings. Everyone, except for the object of her desire, understood and warned Phillis that nothing would come of the crush, but Phillis refused to believe this. Her belief that love would overcome all the racial barriers which separated her from Nathaniel was brought down. Nathaniel, who became a very wealthy merchant, married a beautiful young English woman. Phillis was heart broken, but eventually overcame her hurt and found new happiness in her life. Throughout this book, the reader goes through every one of Phillis' emotions with her, and anyone who believes in the statement "Love conquers all", should not read this book unless they prepare themselves to be disappointed at the end results. Although not finding the love she was looking for, Phillis did find love and the ending of the book is not unhappy, even though the desired events do not take place.

"Hang a Thousand Trees With Ribbons: The Story of Phillis Wheatley" is not one of my favorite books by Ann Rinaldi, but I enjoyed it very much. Having not know anything about Phillis Wheatley, this book told me everything I could possibly ever want to know. The great thing about Rinaldi's books is, that at the end of the story, she tells you what really happened, what didn't happen, who is real, and who is fictional - something many Historical Fiction authors do not do often. The only thing I didn't like was how it seemed Ann Rinaldi did not know if she wanted to make us believe Phillis was a spoiled brat or a young girl who didn't know any better. I still give this book five stars, since this story was told quite well. I recommend.

When I first learned that I had to read this book for school and what it was about, I began being pessimistic about how interesting the book would be. I was very wrong, though...very wrong. This book is a fiction AND non-fiction book about Phillis Wheatley, a girl who was kidnapped at the age of seven by her greedy uncle's people, as the story says. The rest of the book is about the Wheatleys and their kindness, Nathaniel and Phillis's surprising love for him, Phillis's childhood and entry into young womanhood, her relationships with everyone, and how her intelligence made her different from every other Negro. Phillis tries to discover who she is, as she feels white on the inside, Negro on the outside, on the side of the British, and American. She is shameful of her looks, as most teenagers are, but she wishes to be white. Her Negro friends try to tell her, but she never listens. The plot is wonderful!!!! I am astonished at how wonderful this book was and how well

explained it was. I love how Rinaldi makes up her own story at times to fit what she thinks of Phillis. The book is one of the best I have read in a while. I am amazed!!! Now that I know what a great author Rinaldi is, I will now read "The Fifth of March", which is also on my summer book list.

I am always looking for books about Legacy and this one tells a story about a slave, her accomplishments as a poet, and her struggles & challenges. As a young girl then, woman she overcame a lot, had a brilliant creative mind, and was able to record a history in poetry. Yet, in the end her story is tragic. As stated in the book, "We build walls around ourselves. We imprison ourselves with longings."

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