

# READING ACITIVITIES FOR: IF I JUST HAD TWO WINGS

*By Virginia Frances Schwartz*

1. Compare and contrast the **characters** of Phoebe and Liney. What changes do you notice in their relationship throughout the novel?
2. Discuss the theme of **transformation**. What forces are at work to transform Phoebe? What character traits does she have that help her be receptive to change? What holds her back? Who are the most important influences on her development?
3. Discuss the role of **mentor** in afro-American societies (ie. Old Willie). All stories of a hero/heroine's journey usually involved the help and guidance of a mentor. What is Old Willie's role in Phoebe's life?

4, What was the **Underground Railroad**? Where did travel through and where did the end? Find out about the depots in Western Ontario that sheltered slaves (Buxton, Chatham, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Owens Sound, Little Africa, St. Catharines etc.). Arrange a school visit or write to these sites.

More sites: Buxton

<http://www.buxtonmuseum.com/Research/researchmain.html>

Black Canadian experience:

[http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/exhibits/black\\_history/index.html](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/exhibits/black_history/index.html)

The UGRR in Canada:

[http://www.pc.gc.ca/canada/proj/cfc-ugrr/cfc-ugrr1\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/canada/proj/cfc-ugrr/cfc-ugrr1_e.asp)

5. Follow Phoebe's journey by map in the preface of the novel. Research other ways and routes that slaves traveled on. Make up your own map with a fictional character traveling the UGRR. Where will it take you through? What means will you use to travel? Where do you make stops? What is your destination?

6. If you were a slave in the 1800's, would you run away from the plantation, leaving your family behind? Why or why not?

If you were a white settler living in the United States during the time of slavery, would you help runaway slaves? Why or why not?

What help would you give?

Do you know the penalty for helping a slave escape?

Do you think it would be ethical to teach a slave to read and write?