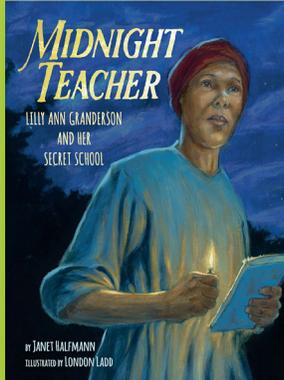


TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

Midnight Teacher:

Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School

written by Janet Halfmann, illustrated by London Ladd

About the Book

Genre: Historical Fiction
(Based on a true story)

***Reading Level:** Grade 4

Interest Level: Grades 2–6

Guided Reading Level: V

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

*Reading level based on the
Spache Readability Formula

Themes: Education,
Slavery, Courage,
Dreams and Aspirations,
Perseverance, Overcoming
Obstacles, Biography,
United States History, Civil
War, African American
Interest

SYNOPSIS

Born into slavery around 1821 in Petersburg, Virginia, Lilly Ann Granderson secretly learned to read and write from her master's children. Lilly Ann read everything she could get her hands on, and through newspapers, she learned of places in the North where slavery had been abolished. She longed to have that freedom too.

As Lilly Ann's reading and writing skills improved, she shared her knowledge with others by starting a school. After toiling for their masters all day, Lilly Ann's students would slip nervously into the night to attend her "midnight" school. Every noise reminded them of the painful punishment they faced if they were found out. But the students were willing to risk any danger for the chance at an education. Over the years, hundreds of enslaved people learned to read and write under their teacher's patient guidance.

Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School is an inspiring testament to an amazing instructor and a pioneer in education. Lilly Ann Granderson's steadfast courage in the face of adversity provides an inspiring model for all who attempt to overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges.



BACKGROUND

Afterword from Janet Halfmann:

“In historical records Lilly Ann Granderson is sometimes identified by the first name Lily, Lillie, or Lila; the last name Grandison; or the name Milla Granson. Her exact year of birth is unknown, although several historical documents support 1821, including her death notice, which states that she was sixty-eight when she died in 1889. There are few records regarding her family history and it is not known if any of Lilly Ann’s family went with her when she was sold as a young child to an owner in Kentucky. During slavery, family members often were sold to different owners, tearing loved ones apart.

It is unclear why Lilly Ann and her students were not punished when her midnight school was discovered. Even though an official said, “they found no law against a slave teaching a slave,” the Mississippi Code of 1823 clearly banned the practice. Perhaps Lilly Ann’s owner, who had the final authority over his “property,” felt she would not turn others against slavery and therefore chose not to punish her. Also, in cities, laws against learning to read and write were not always as strictly enforced as in rural areas. Whatever the reason, Lilly Ann was overjoyed to be able to continue to teach and improve the lives of countless people.

As the Civil War came to an end in 1865, Lilly Ann knew she needed more knowledge to keep ahead of her students. She attended a church-sponsored school for newly freed women in the afternoon and taught in the morning. When a system of public schools began in Mississippi in 1870, she joined its staff and taught at Union School for many years.

In the late 1870s, Lilly Ann took on another educational challenge. The Baptist church wanted to create a seminary in Natchez to train black teachers and ministers, but to succeed, it needed wide community support. Lilly Ann led the effort, going from home to home, talking up the school, and encouraging young people to enroll. By the end of the first school year, in 1878, sixty students

attended Natchez Seminary (now Jackson State University). Lilly Ann also served as a deaconess for Pine Street Baptist Church and a trustee of the Jacobs Benevolent Society.

Lilly Ann and Oliver Granderson had three children together. The couple proudly watched their own children attend school. Their son David, born around 1846, became a teacher and a minister after attending Oberlin College in Ohio. Their daughter Lilly Ann, born on February 25, 1862, headed up the first class of graduates from Natchez Seminary, the school her mother had championed. And like her mother, she dedicated her life to teaching and church work. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the couple’s third child.

Lilly Ann Granderson died of tuberculosis on April 27, 1889 and was buried in the Natchez City Cemetery. Today she and her midnight school are remembered during Civil War living-history events in Natchez.

In a visit to the Chicago home of Lilly Ann’s great-granddaughter Clara Mae Bray and her great-great-grandson Agis Bray Jr. (both now deceased), they remarked to the author that education had been important in the family for as long as they could remember. The family’s history spotlights the influence Lilly Ann had through many generations.

In 1901 Lilly Ann’s granddaughter Jane Anna Granderson was one of the first two college graduates of Spelman Seminary (now Spelman College) in Atlanta, Georgia.

Lilly Ann’s grandson Charles C. Diggs Sr., who moved to Detroit, Michigan, was a wealthy businessman and community activist, and became the first African American Democrat elected to the Michigan State Senate, in 1936.

Lilly Ann’s great-grandson Charles C. Diggs Jr. was the first African American to represent Michigan in the United States Congress, serving from 1955 to 1980. He was a founder and the first chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, a voice for African



American issues.

We can only imagine the many achievements Lilly Ann's students and their families went on to accomplish because of their education—the everlasting legacy of a brave and dedicated teacher.”

The Civil War:

PBS has organized a list of resources from the Library of Congress that offer online collections featuring maps, photographs, speeches, and other primary source documents from the Civil War. Additionally, there are lesson plans and primary source sets for further information and Civil War exploration in the classroom (<http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/civil-war/classroom/resources-library-congress/>).

The Zinn Education Project also offers a list of free resources, lesson plans, and activities to use with students on the Civil War. Lesson plans range from election role play, walking tours with maps, and other handouts that contain primary source documents for students to examine (<https://zinnedproject.org/teaching-materials/?period=1850>).

Blue-back Speller:

Blue-back Spellers were integral for enslaved people who wanted to learn to read and write. This book is mentioned by countless formerly enslaved people in their narratives. It was available, not very expensive, and easy to hide in a hat or apron pocket (http://www.slate.com/articles/life/reconstruction/2017/12/education_during_reconstruction_and_how_formerly_enslaved_black_americans.html) (<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/identity/text8/slavefree.pdf>).

Additional LEE & LOW Women's History Titles:

Seeds of Change written by Jen Cullerton Johnson, illustrated by Sonia Sadler
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/seeds-of-change>

Little Melba and Her Big Trombone
written by Katheryn-Russell Brown, illustrated by Frank Morrison
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/little-melba-and-her-big-trombone>

In Her Hands: The Story of Sculptor Augusta Savage written by Alan Schroeder, illustrated by JaeMe Bereal
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/in-her-hands>

The Storyteller's Candle/La velita de los cuentos written by Lucía González, illustrated by Luu Delacre
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-storyteller-s-candle-la-velita-de-los-cuentos>

Shining Star: The Anna May Wong Story
written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Lin Wang
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/shining-star>

Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree
written by William Miller, illustrated by Cornelius VanWright & Ying-Hwa Hu
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/zora-hurston-and-the-chinaberry-tree>

Catching the Moon written by Crystal Hubbard, illustrated by Randy DuBurke
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/catching-the-moon>



VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Content Specific

Petersburg, Virginia, blue-back speller, plantation, "Lower South," overseer, whippings, Natchez, Mississippi, lashes, slave patrol, patroller, Sabbath, Civil War, Confederate States of America, the Union, Emancipation Proclamation

Academic

ragged, abolished, auctioned, toil, hoed, rebellion, authorities, prying, secluded, pupils, commotion, official, remarkable, slavery

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. **What do you know about the Civil War?** What was happening during the second half of the nineteenth century? What people and events do you know about that are associated with the Civil War?
2. **What do you know about slavery in the United States?** What impact does it have on the United States today?
3. **What does freedom mean to you?** What do you think freedom meant during the Civil War? What does freedom mean now, in present-day? What does it mean to your family?
4. **What does it mean to be brave?** Think about a time when you had to be brave. What did you do? How did you feel?
5. **What does education mean to you?** What does it mean to have a right to an education? Do you have a legal right to an education? Who in the world today still does not have a right to an education?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

1. **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book, *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School*. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?
2. **Read Janet Halfmann's Biography:** Read about Janet Halfmann on the back cover as well as on her website at www.janethalfmann.com. Janet has written over 40 picture books for children. Encourage students to think about how she comes up with new ideas for her books, and what could have been her possible inspiration for writing *Midnight*



Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School.

3. **Read London Ladd’s Biography:** Read about London Ladd on the back cover as well as at his website www.londonladd.com. Have students look into his other illustrations and compare and contrast across books. How are his illustrations similar? How are they different? Does the subject matter influence his illustrations? Have students watch London Ladd’s video about his work on his website, “Man of many colors” (<https://www.londonladd.com/bio/>).
4. **Encourage students to stop and jot in their reading notebooks during the read-aloud when they:** learn new information, see a powerful image, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or hear new words.
5. **Have students quickly write a feeling in their notebook during reading.** After reading, ask students why they wrote that feeling down and have them write a journal entry about it.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- how Lilly Ann Granderson risked her life to teach others
- why she needed to teach at “midnight”
- how she inspired her students to read and write
- why other enslaved students risked their lives to go to Lilly Ann’s secret school
- why education for all people is important and meaningful
- how slavery prohibited basic rights for people and caused many to risk their lives for an education

Encourage students to consider why the author, Janet Halfmann, would want to share with young people this story about Lilly Ann Granderson’s secret midnight school.

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3; and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Where was Lilly Ann Granderson born? Where did she have to go after her mother died?
2. When did Lilly Ann first get introduced to the concept of school?
3. What objects did Lilly Ann use to practice reading and writing?
4. How did Lilly Ann practice reading and writing? What did she have to do? How did she keep her practice of reading and writing secret?
5. When did Lilly Ann first start teaching others how to read and write? How did she teach them?
6. What happened after Lilly Ann’s master died? Where did she have to go? What did she have to do there?
7. What type of work did Lilly Ann have to do for the first time? What happened after Lilly Ann became ill and weak?
8. What did Lilly Ann start to think after she had her son? What did she think about her son’s future? What did she realize that she needed to do?
9. What made it so risky to read and write in Mississippi? What would be the punishment



★ “An unsung hero and literacy champion whose teaching changed many lives . . . An excellent homage to an African-American woman who taught ahead of her time.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“A top choice for any library serving elementary school-aged children.”

—*School Library Journal*

“Halfmann tells the powerful story of Lilly Ann Granderson... the painful but uplifting narrative may spark readers’ curiosity about other enslaved individuals whose stories have not yet been told.”

—*Publisher’s Weekly*

for Lilly Ann if they found her reading and writing with students?

10. Where did Lilly Ann set up her secret school? What time of day did she teach? Why did she need to teach during that time of day?
11. What did Lilly Ann use to teach her students in her midnight school?
12. What did one of Lilly’s students write that brought tears to her eyes?
13. How did Lilly Ann’s students continue her legacy? What did Lilly Ann inspire them to do?
14. Who stopped one of Lilly Ann’s midnight sessions? How did they know that a school was happening? What did the patroller tell Lilly Ann was going to happen as a punishment?
15. What did the official tell Lilly Ann’s master about her punishment? What did the law say about ‘a slave teaching a slave’?
16. What did Lilly Ann do after hearing that she could still teach?
17. What major event happened during United States history while Lilly Ann was still teaching?
18. What happened in Natchez, Mississippi, in 1863?
19. What did Union Army Chaplain Joseph Warren say about Lilly Ann?

20. What did Lilly Ann’s family do to celebrate the Emancipation Proclamation?
21. What did Lilly Ann do after the Civil War ended?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3; and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3; and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. **What does the title *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School* mean to you after reading?** Why do you think the author chose this particular title?
2. **What did Lilly Ann ultimately want for herself and for her students?** For what reason did she risk her life and her students’ lives?
3. **Why did Lilly Ann believe that education led to a better future?** How did education drastically change and improve the lives of Lilly Ann’s students? How did they spread their own knowledge from her midnight lessons to others? Why was that important and why do you think Lilly Ann inspired them to continue to teach other enslaved people?
4. **What did the Blue-back Speller represent for Lilly Ann?** How did the Blue-back Speller act as a symbol in *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School*? What did the symbol represent? How did this small object inspire Lilly Ann for the rest of her life?



5. **Why was reading and writing discouraged, or even illegal for the enslaved?** Why do you think that the slave owners did not want them to read and write? How did Lilly Ann use this as motivation for her teaching?
6. **How did Lilly Ann's commitment to education affect her family even generations later?**
7. **Think about the role geography played in Lilly Ann's education, life, and opportunities.** How did her experience in Virginia, Kentucky, and Mississippi influence her beliefs and impact her own education, as well as her commitment to educating others? How is being sold to a master in Mississippi significant? How does this change her life and perspective?
8. **In a Venn diagram, compare Lilly Ann's experience in Kentucky to Mississippi.**
9. **What makes someone a good teacher?** Do you think Lilly Ann had those qualities? Why or why not?
10. **Why do you think white people in Mississippi during this time period made it illegal for slaves to have an education?** What may have been their motivation for passing such laws? What may have been their prejudice about enslaved people?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

1. **What is one big thought that you have after reading this book?** Think about Lilly Ann Granderson's dedication to teach others, no matter the risk, throughout her life. What is your takeaway from this book? What would you tell a friend about this book?
2. **What do you think Janet Halfmann's message is to the reader?** Think about possible motivations behind Janet Halfmann's intentions to write the book. What do you think she wanted to tell her readers?
3. **Have students make a text-to-self connection.** What kind of connections did you make from

this book to your own life? What do Lilly Ann's experiences, thoughts, and feelings mean to you?

4. **Have students make a text-to-text connection.** Did you think of any other books while you read *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School*? Why did you make those connections?
5. **Have students make a text-to-world connection.** What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world, such as on television or in a newspaper? Why did this book make you think of that?
6. **After reading *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School*, what does freedom mean to you?** Why? How did your meaning of freedom change after reading *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School*?
7. **How does education and the ability to go to school mean to you after reading?** How does your view of education and your right to go to school change after reading *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School*?

ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.

8. **Have each student write three questions about the story.** Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
9. **Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:**
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.



- Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
10. **Have students give a short talk about what education means to them, share a time when they helped someone with literacy, or explain why education should be a right, not a privilege.**
 11. **The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students.** Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9; Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. **Read *Seven Miles to Freedom* (also by Janet Halfmann) (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/seven-miles-to-freedom>) and *Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/frederick-douglass>) along with *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School*.** Analyze the main characters' different actions in these texts and how they are similar. What risks did they take to achieve their goals? What did they have to do in order to overcome obstacles in their lives? How did they demonstrate bravery and courage despite the horrors of slavery? Provide students with a graphic organizer to differentiate the three titles, and then have students write an essay answering the previous questions.
2. **Have students read *Etched in Clay* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/etched-in-clay>) along with *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School*.** Encourage students to think: What do Dave the Potter and Lilly Ann Granderson have in common? How did they use their ability to read and write to pass on their teachings to others? After finishing *Etched in Clay*, have students write a free-verse poem mimicking the style of *Etched in Clay* about Lilly Ann Granderson. Consider having students conduct a research study on other enslaved people who learned to read and write. How did they do it? How did they help others after they learned how to read and write?
3. **Use *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School* along with *Irena's Jars of Secrets* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/irena-s-jars-of-secrets>) to show students powerful historical female figures.** Use a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast Lilly Ann and Irena's dangerous journeys. How do these two women inspire you to fight for what they believe in? Have students write a reaction after the Venn diagram about these important female historical figures to address how and why they risked their lives to change those of others.



4. **Show the illustration where the official comes to speak with Lilly Ann’s master.** Have students write about what she could possibly be thinking. Then, have students write a reflection on what were Lilly Ann’s thoughts and feelings. What do you think is going on in her mind in this scene? Why do you think she is having those thoughts? What evidence in the text influenced you to write what she was thinking?
5. **Write a persuasive letter to Mississippi officials demanding they allow all people to have the right to an education.** Encourage students to think about what goes into a persuasive letter. Have students think about the time period and what they would need to include in this letter to Mississippi officials. Have students think about the following questions before writing their letter: Why does everyone deserve a right to an education? How is it unfair and unjust to refuse people the right to read and write?
6. **Have students write several journal entries from various points in the book: from the beginning part of Lilly Ann Granderson’s life, to the midnight school in Natchez, to her final days of teaching after the Civil War ended.** Ask students to think about what Lilly Ann was experiencing throughout the book, and about how she was feeling and thinking during those periods. What do you think she would include in a journal entry?
7. **Have students listen to and/or read, “The Story of Suzie King Taylor”** (<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/texts/the-story-of-suzie-king-taylor>). Then, have students visualize the scene. What did they see in their minds from listening to the clip? How did the speaker build the suspense? Then, have students write about how Mrs. Woodhouse and Lilly Ann Granderson relate. What did they both have to do in order to teach others?

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9; and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

1. **Have students track Lilly Ann Granderson’s life journey on a map of the United States.** Students can use the book to identify locations where she lived from the text. Have students research other significant events that took place in those areas while Lilly Ann was there. Tie this activity back to question #7 in the Extension/Higher Level Thinking section.
2. **Have students research other important enslaved women and their roles.** How did these women, like Lilly Ann Granderson, fight for their freedom and what they believed in? Why and how was their work important? Have students select one of the females from the following websites, conduct more research on them, and present to the whole class or small groups about their work and how it was impactful during the Civil War (<https://www.civilwarwomenblog.com/african-american-women-in-the-civil-war/>; <https://www.civilwarwomenblog.com/black-civil-war-nurses/>) (<http://msmagazine.com/blog/2011/02/28/the-brave-black-women-who-were-civil-war-spies/>).
3. **Have students read portions of the Emancipation Proclamation** (<https://www.loc.gov/resource/lprbscsm.scsm1016/>). After reading, have students write a reaction to what they read. Why do they think the Emancipation Proclamation was so important? What were the implications for Lilly Ann Granderson and her family?
4. **Have students read about other slave resistances in Natchez, Mississippi** (<http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/58/slave-resistance-in-natchez-mississippi-1719-1861>). How did Lilly Ann Granderson’s own midnight school and mission connect to these other revolts? Why



were these slave resistances important, and how do you think that Lilly Ann’s midnight school was a way to fight slavery?

5. **Have students research different obstacles to education in present-day.** What obstacles prevent children in the United States from getting a quality education? What about in different countries? What are the different factors that get in the way of children going to school? Are there any places in the world that do not allow children to go to school?
6. **Have students pick one of the narratives in “I was not sent to school—never’: The Pursuit of Learning by African Americans before the Civil War”** (<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/identity/text8/slavefree.pdf>). Have students write a reaction to the passage. Why did they select that narrative? How did the narrative make them feel? How did the narrative connect to Lilly Ann Granderson and her students’ experiences?

Arts/Performing Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)
(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. **Have students read about how songs and music were also important to the enslaved before and during the Civil War** (<http://www.pbs.org/mercy-street/blogs/mercy-street-revealed/songs-of-survival-and-songs-of-freedom-during-slavery/>). Like reading and writing, music and song were often outlawed, but enslaved people used them to express their feelings and passed them down from generation to generation. Have students write a reflection after reading the article about how music was influential to enslaved people, and connect the importance of music to Lilly Ann Granderson’s work with her students. How are music and reading and writing integral to literacy?

Home-School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. **Have students ask family members or caregivers if they did something that was risky or dangerous for the benefit of a child/their child.** Lilly Ann Granderson always thought of her son’s future when she taught others in her midnight school. Have students ask family members if they ever did something for their child or another child, even if it was dangerous.
2. **Provide students with a list of other titles from Janet Halfmann.** Have students investigate other titles by Janet Halfmann at their local school library, or with their family through her website (www.janethalfmann.com). What themes do these books have in common? What topics do these books share? How are the characters similar? How are they different? What do you think Janet’s message is for young readers across these books?
3. **Provide students with a list of other titles from illustrator, London Ladd.** Have students investigate other titles by London Ladd at their school library, or with their family through his website (www.londonladd.com). What do you notice about his artistic style across his books? What themes do his books have in common? How does he convey the book’s message through his art?
4. **Have students investigate different organizations in their community that help students and adults with their education, starting with the public library.** What resources are in the community to help people complete their education or get support on learning English and other language-learning skills? Students can bring in their findings and build a map or book of education resources to share with the school library for all families to access.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Janet Halfmann is the author of more than forty books for children, among them LEE & LOW's *Seven Miles to Freedom: The Robert Smalls Story*. Halfmann is drawn to stories about unsung heroes and was particularly inspired by the bravery of Lilly Ann Granderson and her students to risk everything so they could learn to read and write. When she's not writing, Halfmann enjoys working in the garden, exploring nature, visiting new places, especially wildlife areas and living-history museums, and watching movies. Halfmann lives with her husband in South Milwaukee, Wisconsin. You can find her online at www.janethalfmann.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

London Ladd has illustrated several popular picture books, including *Lend a Hand: Poems About Giving*, published by LEE & LOW BOOKS. Ladd works primarily in acrylic print in a painterly style, for which his picture book illustrations have been highly praised. Ladd graduated from Syracuse University with a BFA in Illustration. He carries a sketchbook and paints with him everywhere he goes. Ladd and his family live in Syracuse, New York. Visit him online at www.londonladd.com.

ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at leeandlow.com.

ORDERING INFORMATION

On the Web:

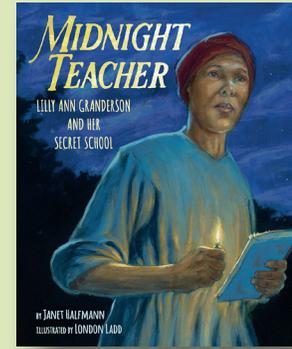
www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering (general order information)

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/midnight-teacher> (secure online ordering)

By Phone: 212-779-4400 ext. 25 | **By Fax:** 212-683-1894

By Mail: Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Book Information for *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School*



\$17.95, HARDCOVER

978-1-62014-163-2

40 pages, 8-1/2 X 10-3/4

*Reading Level: Grade 4

Interest Level: Grades 2–6

Guided Reading Level: V

Accelerated Reader® Level/
Points: N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

THEMES: Education, Slavery, Courage, Dreams and Aspirations, Perseverance, Overcoming Obstacles, Biography, United States History, Civil War, African American Interest

RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/midnight-teacher>

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.