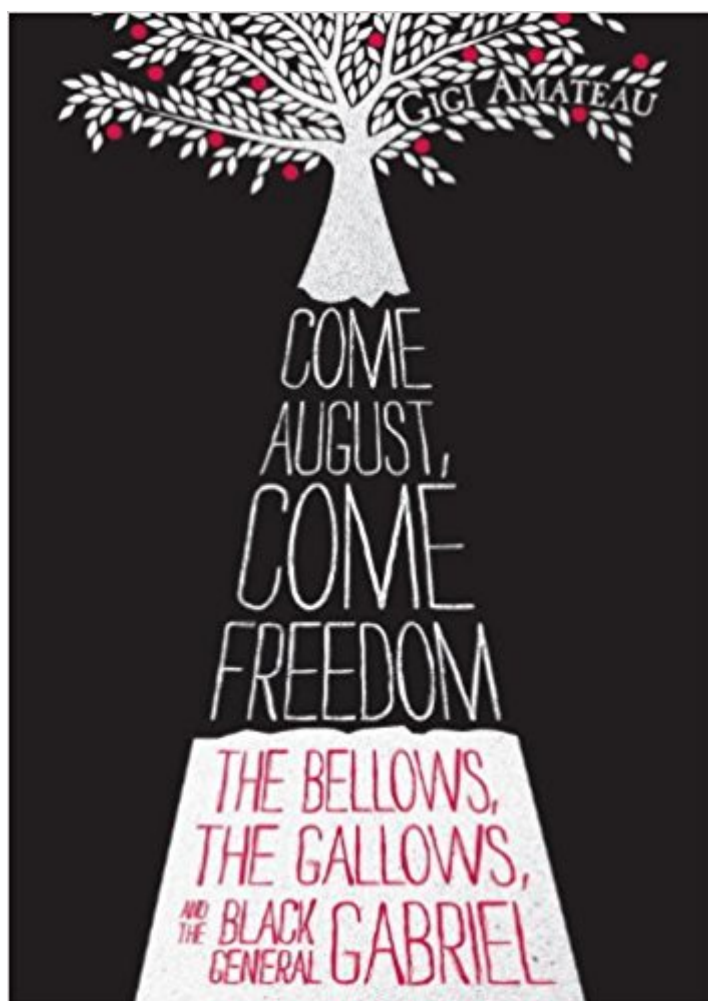


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# Come August, Come Freedom: The Bellows, The Gallows, And The Black General Gabriel



## Synopsis

An 1800 insurrection planned by a literate slave known as "Prosser's Gabriel" inspires a historical novel following one extraordinary man's life. In a time of post-Revolutionary fervor in Richmond, Virginia, an imposing twenty-four-year-old slave named Gabriel, known for his courage and intellect, plotted a rebellion involving thousands of African-American freedom seekers armed with refashioned pitchforks and other implements of Gabriel's blacksmith trade. The revolt would be thwarted by a confluence of fierce weather and human betrayal, but Gabriel retained his dignity to the end. History knows little of Gabriel's early life. But here, author Gigi Amateau imagines a childhood shaped by a mother's devotion, a father's passion for liberation, and a friendship with a white master's son who later proved cowardly and cruel. She gives vibrant life to Gabriel's love for his wife-to-be, Nanny, a slave woman whose freedom he worked tirelessly, and futilely, to buy. Interwoven with original documents, this poignant, illuminating novel gives a personal face to a remarkable moment in history.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 43 customer reviews

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

In 1800, long before the Civil War, there was a slave uprising in Richmond, Virginia, and this stirring fictionalized biography imagines the life of the young rebel leader, Gabriel. Born a slave on a plantation, young Gabriel learns to read with the owner's son, Thomas, and is trained as a

blacksmith in town. But he also witnesses unspeakable brutality: his father is sold away, his mother is whipped, and when Thomas takes over as master, he refuses to allow Gabriel to marry fellow slave Nanny. Inspired by the slave revolt led by Touissant Louverture on Saint Domingue Island, 24-year-old Gabriel calls on his people to fight for freedom, and thousands follow him. With his blacksmith training, he helps forge swords from pitchforks and scythes, but the plot is discovered. The line between fact and fiction is not always clear: Are the slave-owner's journal entries invented or archival documents? But the authentic newspaper reports put the history in context, and the thrilling role of the unrecognized young hero will grab teen readers. Grades 8-12. --Hazel Rochman --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Amateau's prose is appropriately passionate, but it's tempered with disciplined restraint and moments of startling delicacy. Although the subject of this title will call to historical fiction readers who appreciate such thoughtful works as M. T. Anderson's Octavian Nothing (BCCB 11/06), teens who approach history with the poetic insight of Marilyn Nelson will also find Amateau's chronicle rewarding. •Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books (starred review)The thrilling role of the unrecognized young hero will grab teen readers. •Booklist

In this book for younger readers (12 and up), Gigi Amateau tells the beautiful story of a failed slave rebellion in 1800. The story is largely imagined, and yet it is clearly based on meticulous research, and it sheds light on a historical event with which I was not familiar. I am not in the habit of reading books aimed at younger readers. This one I read, though, because I know Gigi and because the book is a finalist for the Library of Virginia's People's Choice Award. Told mostly from the point of view of Gabriel, the leader of the failed rebellion, the story depicts his childhood on a Virginia plantation. It is often the story of betrayal-at the hands of his white playmate who becomes his "master" and his compatriots in the rebellion. But it's also a love story. For me, primarily, it was a history lesson. I would definitely recommend this book for young readers.

I read this book with my middle-schooler for a historical fiction book report. We really enjoyed the story and the accurate historical story line. We live in central Virginia where the story takes place which added to our reading experience.

Truly enjoyed it.

It was a good story from the point of view of the slaves. It was well researched and fiction made believable.

As described, prompt shipping, thanks!

Author Amateau continues to grow as an author. Her descriptions, historical interpretations, dialogues, etc. gave a clear and compassionate picture of what it would have been like for slaves at that time, especially people in slavery who had a sense of their own dignity and worth.

Come August, Come Freedom The Bellows. The Gallows and the Black General Gabriel by Gigi Amateau is a quite wonderful novel for young adults. It tells the true story of Gabriel, a slave born in Virginia in 1776. Gabriel is a literate and strong-willed man yearning for freedom. He is a skilled blacksmith who hires out so he can save up to manumit and marry his true love, Nanny. If he can do so then she and her children will be free under Virginia law, but his plan is thwarted. When he hears of the slave revolt that set Haiti free, he decides that he can muster a revolt that will set himself and his peers free. The book has a number of facsimiles of handbills that are about Gabriel and his slave rebellion. These add to the authenticity of the story and make it all the more poignant. Gabriel fervently desires the American Revolution to be completed so those freedoms apply to himself and all the enslaved. This is a fine example of a tragic story, rife with injustice, bravery and a passionate belief in the inalienable rights of man. The protagonist is admirable and his suffering makes him someone with whom young adults will readily relate. Highly recommended.

I don't read historical fiction. I probably should, but I don't. To add to that, this would not be the book that would propel me into that genre. Not that it's bad, because it's not. It's just a little dull for my liking. In addition the book doesn't match who Gabriel Prosser is, a slave, who took part in the planning of a large rebellion in Richmond in 1800. A very important thing to have happened in that day. In and around those few facts the novel was written giving plenty of room for literary license. And the author took that license and ran with it. I just wish the novel had more 'pop.' Still, the novel was not bad--just dull. The action didn't happen fast enough, the writing while good, was not explosive. And while there is always good and bad in war, that fine line is not made definitive. This novel had the possibility to shock and awe, and that it didn't, makes me sad.

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