

Sojourner Truth's

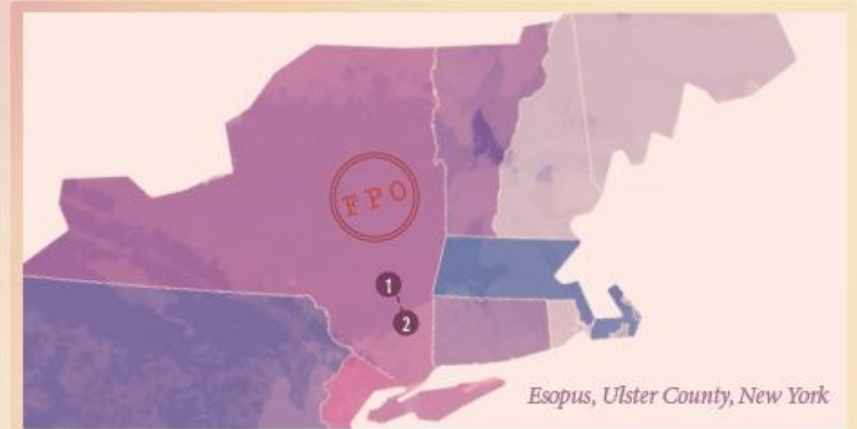
Fight for Freedom



Written by Pamela Tuck
Illustrated by Chris Uribe

The Same Stars and Moon

1808



One night, Isabella Baumfree sat outside with her younger brother, Peter. Mau-Mau held them close. She pointed to the stars in the sky. “Those are the same stars, and that is the same moon,” she said, “that look down upon your brothers and sisters.”



Bell's happiness didn't last long. After a few months, she found out that Peter had been taken to the South. The South did not have laws against slavery. Bell was afraid if Peter stayed in the South, he would never be free. Because of the new law in New York, Bell knew that Peter would have a chance to be free. She had to get Peter back.

After hearing the news about Peter, Bell walked back to Dumont's farm. She knocked on the door. Mrs. Dumont opened it. Bell was so tall she looked down at her former enslaver's wife. Bell later said she felt "so tall within," too.

"I'll have my child again!" Bell said. Mrs. Dumont laughed. "How can you get him? Have you any money?" "No, I have no money," Bell said. "But God has enough."



Ain't I A Woman?

There are two different versions of Sojourner Truth's Ohio speech. Sojourner's friend, Reverend Marius Robinson, published her speech three weeks later, on June 21, 1851 in the Anti-Slavery Bugle. It was titled "On Woman's Rights," and it did not use the phrase "Ain't I a Woman?"

However, Frances Gage, the president of the 1851 Women's Rights Convention, published a different version of Sojourner's speech twelve years later on April 23, 1863. It used the phrase "Ar'n't I a woman?" Gage's version of the speech became famous and was later called "Ain't I a Woman?"

Gage changed what Sojourner had said. She also changed the way Sojourner spoke. Sojourner had a Dutch accent and used formal English and proper grammar. But Gage's version of Sojourner's speech used dialect that was spoken by many enslaved Blacks in the South.

Gage's version of Sojourner's speech was published during the Civil War. Slavery had already been abolished in the North, but abolitionists were fighting to end it in the South. Gage may have altered Sojourner's speech to relate Sojourner's experience to slavery in the South. Historians believe that many white abolitionist women rephrased words of Black women for their pamphlets and literature.

The Independent

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1851

...the most unique and interesting... of the Convention was made by Sojourner Truth, an emancipated slave. It is impossible to transfer it to Gage, or convey any true idea of the effect it produced upon the race. Those only can appreciate it who have witnessed it, who have seen her powerful form, her whole-souled, earnest, and listened to her strong and bold tones. She came forward to the platform addressing the President said with simplicity:

When I say a few words? Receiving an affirmative answer, she proceeded: I want to say a few words about this matter. I am a woman's name. I have as much muscle as any man, I can do as much work as any man. I have been lashed and whipped and chopped and cut, and I can do as much more than that. I have heard much about the sexes being equal; I can carry as much as any man, and can eat as much as any man, and I can get it. I am as strong as any man, but I am not. As for intellect, all I can say is that woman has a great deal of it. Why do we have her little pin heads? You need not be afraid to give us our rights for fear we will get too much;—for we can take more than our pin heads hold. The poor men seem to be in confusion, and don't know what to do, children, if you have woman's rights give us our rights and you will feel better. You will have your own rights, and they won't be so much less. I can't read, but I can hear. I have read the bible and have learned that Eve caused man to sin. Well if woman upset the world, let her have a chance to set it right side up again. God has spoken about Jesus, how he returned woman from him, and she was right. Lazarus died, Mary and Martha came to with faith and love and brought him to their brother. And Jesus wept—and Lazarus came forth. And how came Jesus into the world? Through God who created him and in who bore him. Mas, where is your God? But the women are coming up blessed and a few of the men are coming up with. But man is in a tight place, the poor is on him, woman is coming on him, and surely between a hawk and a buzzard.

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