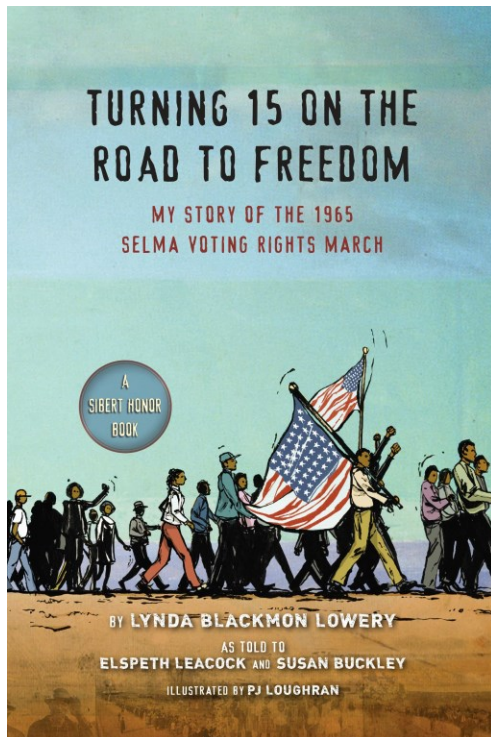


# TURNING 15 ON THE ROAD TO FREEDOM



## Book Summary:

True accounts of the Selma Voting Rights March of 1965.

## Summary of Concerns:

This book contains commentary on racism and violence.

*Juvenile*

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**2**/5

**Teen Guidance**  
BookLooks Review Rating

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15	<p>In those days, you were born black or you were born white in Selma- and there was a big difference.</p> <p>...The Ku Klux Klan stayed away from us. (They were a group of crazy white folks who hated us black people and were determined to keep us out of places- to keep us segregated.)</p> <p>They drove through other black neighborhoods, hiding their faces with sheets on their heads, yelling racial slurs, blowing their horns, and cursing and shooting their guns.</p>
17	<p>When my mother died, I heard the older people say, "If she wasn't colored, she could've been saved." But the hospital was for whites only. My mother died as a result of her color.</p>
22	<p>Bettie and her friends were trying to integrate Selma by going to whites-only places. They sat at the whites-only Dairy Queen and the lunch counter at Woolworth's department store.</p>
23	<p>For years black people tried to register to vote, but they were mostly turned away. Just for trying to register, they could lose their jobs. You see, whenever a black person tried to register, someone would take a picture and then show it to that person's boss. White people could fire black people whenever and however they wanted.</p>
24	<p>They couldn't pass the voter registration test. The tests were written to keep black people from voting. (White people didn't usually take those tests at all.)</p>
30	<p>We could overcome the hate and racism.</p>
31	<p>If one of our parents or grandparents worked as someone's maid, they were bringing the white people's food home and giving it to us to take to jail with us. The white people never knew how much they had helped us.</p>
36	<p>The marchers were singing freedom songs when the state troopers and police attacked them. As Jimmie Lee tried to protect his mother, a state trooper shot him in the stomach.</p> <p>...(That was the hospital for black people then.)</p>
37	<p>(He actually called us by a bad name. White people called us that name a lot, to try and hurt us. But I don't say that word.)</p>
38	<p>The rest of us marched down a little hallway to the sweatbox. The sweatbox didn't have any windows. It was an iron room with a big iron door.</p> <p>They pushed us right in, closed the door, and locked it. I don't know how long we stayed in there. It could have been five minutes; it could have been five hours. All I knew is every one of us passed out from the heat. There was no air. There was no bed. There was no toilet. There was no sink. There was nothing but heat in an iron box. It was dark too- there weren't any lights. We couldn't see anything.</p>
43	<p>The deputies were just mean white men. They didn't have uniforms or anything. Our sheriff deputized any white man who might want to bust our heads. The harder you hit, the more popular you were with him. And Sheriff Clarke was the</p>

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	meanest of them all. He was a staunch segregationist. He believed that he was white and he was right, and that was it. He hated black men, women, and us black kids.
44	<p>The next thing I knew, I felt a man's hand grab me from behind, pulling me backward. I heard him say that hateful word. Then I bit that hand and that's when he hit me over my eye.</p> <p>He hit me twice- hard. I was still kneeling, struggling to get up when he pushed me forward and hit me again, this time on the back of my head.</p> <p>I staggered up and ran- right into the tear gas, but that big white man kept on running after me and hitting me.</p>
47	They took me to Good Samaritan Hospital but there were white doctors there, and in my mind it was not a good day to be around white people. When the doctor sewed up my forehead, I felt every stitch.
62	I knew I couldn't let fear of those white people take control of me.
82	<p>In places like Selma, state laws and procedures made registering to vote easy for white people, but close to impossible for African Americans. First you filled out a four-page application. Then you took an extremely difficult "literacy test," which white applicants usually did not have to take at all. And the registrars, who were all white, could decide that you'd failed even if you knew all the answers.</p> <p>...So it was white voters who elected Governor George Wallace. His slogan was "Segregation no, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever!" White citizens elected our mayor Joe Smitherman, another segregationist.</p>
84	But a trooper shot Jimmie Lee Jackson in the stomach. He tried to run, but the troopers followed and continued to beat him until he fell to the ground. He died eight days later.
86	When the three ministers left the café, a group of white men attacked and beat them with baseball bats and clubs. Two days later, Reverend Reeb died from his injuries.
87	On one of the trips back to Montgomery, Mrs. Liuzzo's car was forced off the road by a carload of men- KKK members. The men shot her in the head, killing her instantly.