

Fearless Benjamin

The Quaker Dwarf Who Fought Slavery

Marcus Rediker and Michelle Markel

Illustrated by Sarah Bachman

Benjamin Lay's remarkable life story can be a lesson in courage and hope for us all.

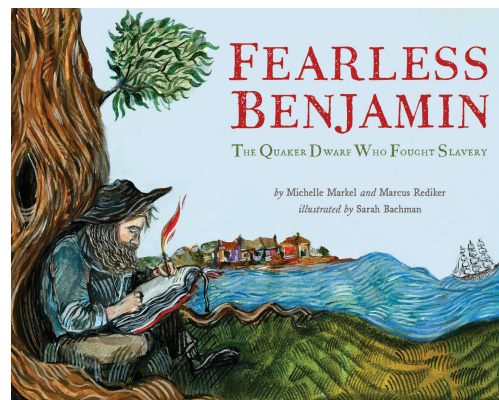
Fearless Benjamin tells the story of a courageous little person, only four feet tall, who fought slavery at a time when almost everyone else accepted it. A shepherd, a sailor, and a Quaker, Benjamin Lay insisted that all people, of all nations and races around the world, were equal. Every human being—rich and poor, men and women, Black and white—deserved respect, love, and freedom. After he protested against his fellow Quakers for enslaving others in violation of the golden rule, “do to others as you would have them do to you,” they banished him from the Quaker meeting. When they ridiculed his small body, he stood up to their prejudice and proclaimed the truth of human decency. He boycotted all products made by the labor of enslaved people. He spoke out bravely against cruelty and oppression. He lived a life of peace, tolerance, and brotherly love. A man far ahead of his time, he proved to be right in the long run, as Quakers and others eventually joined him in opposing human bondage.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Marcus Rediker is Distinguished Professor of Atlantic History at the University of Pittsburgh. His “histories from below” have won numerous awards and been translated into nineteen languages worldwide. He is the author of several works on Benjamin Lay—a biography, a graphic novel, and a play, *The Return of Benjamin Lay*, coauthored with Naomi Wallace. His most recent book is *Freedom Ship: The Uncharted History of Escaping Slavery by Sea* (Viking-Penguin, 2025).

Michelle Markel is the author of several award-winning nonfiction picture books for young people, including *Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike of 1909*, *The Fantastic Jungles of Henri Rousseau*, and *Tomfoolery! Randolph Caldecott and the Rambunctious Coming-of-Age of Children's Books*.

Sarah Bachman is an artist and illustrator from Fredericksburg, Virginia. She draws influence from a wide range of American folk artists, and her work reflects a deep engagement with history, folklore, and the cultural and natural elements of her environment. Primarily a painter, Sarah reimagines traditional tales and creates original works that are vibrant, nostalgic, and expressive.



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