

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave (annotated and illustrated)

Frederick Douglass



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This fiery autobiography, written as anti-slavery propaganda, told of his struggle to gain freedom, identified his "owner", and became a 19th century national bestseller. Long before Uncle Tom's Cabin opened the eyes of sentimental Northerners to the evils of slavery, Douglass' chronicle inspired the small abolitionist movement and challenged the conscience of the United States to live up to the heroic ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence... "all men are created equal."

The publication of this masterpiece also forced Douglass into exile in England for two years to avoid capture by slave traders. British supporters eventually "purchased" Douglass allowing this great American to return to the United States and live in freedom.

Douglass begins by explaining that he does not know the date of his birth (February 3, 1818), and that his mother died when he was 7 years old. He has very few memories of her (children were commonly separated from their mothers), only of the rare nighttime visit. He thinks his father a white man, possibly his owner. At a very early age he sees his Aunt Hester being whipped. Douglass details the cruel interaction that occurs between slaves and slave holders, as well as how slaves are supposed to behave in the presence of their masters, and that even when Douglass says that fear is what kept many slaves where they were, when they tell the truth they are punished by their owners.

- Complete, annotated edition with illustrations
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