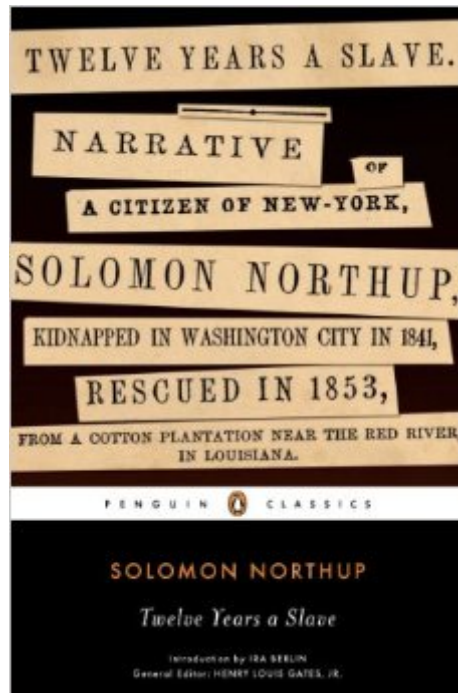


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# Twelve Years A Slave (Penguin Classics)



## Synopsis

Now the major motion picture that won the 2014 Academy Award for Best Picture, starring Chiwetel Ejiofor, Michael Fassbender, and Lupita Nyong'o, and directed by Steve McQueen Perhaps the best written of all the slave narratives, *Twelve Years a Slave* is a harrowing memoir about one of the darkest periods in American history. It recounts how Solomon Northup, born a free man in New York, was lured to Washington, D.C., in 1841 with the promise of fast money, then drugged and beaten and sold into slavery. He spent the next twelve years of his life in captivity on a Louisiana cotton plantation. After his rescue, Northup published this exceptionally vivid and detailed account of slave life. It became an immediate bestseller and today is recognized for its unusual insight and eloquence as one of the very few portraits of American slavery produced by someone as educated as Solomon Northup, or by someone with the dual perspective of having been both a free man and a slave. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Growing up in the North, I had always found it hard to imagine that slavery not only existed in this

country, but flourished. Through the years, I have read many an autobiography or history book concerning slavery and thought I knew it all. And yet I was blind. Until I read Solomon Northrup's "12 Years a Slave." Where has this book been? It is a masterpiece of history, of one man, one free man's life. A true picture of 'The Old South'. Mr. Northrup was a free black man with a beautiful wife and two daughters living in Saratoga, NY. He was lured from his home by slave traders who specialized in the awful practice of kidnapping free black citizens and selling them into slavery. Torn from his home and family, Mr. Northrup endured the worst that can happen to a human being, and still live. And yet, he remained fair and honest, never stooping to the level some of his white masters did. I am not going to rewrite the book in this review because I recommend reading it for yourself. Slavery was and is a vile institution. Solomon Northrup is my new inspiration. This book will shock you. But you will be the better for having read it. My highest of fives.

As slave stories go, this one is, in my view, without peer. Northrup's s captivating tale -- which has gained attention because of the movie that shares the book's title -- is told in exacting detail with an easy prose. He sets the stage masterfully, describing people and places before proceeding into the narrative. Unlike works of fiction, this book is so compelling because, by all accounts, it is true. There is no polemical axe to grind, as with Uncle Tom (a novel at one point wryly referenced by Northrup). Here you see both the brutality of slavery and the moments of kindness by slaves and even some slave owners. Solomon tells the story with clarity and intelligence. The free versions on other sites I found were pretty poorly formatted, so spending a dollar for a polished version on is worthwhile, but this one is not the best of them. Granted, the book is formatted adequately, and any typographical errors in this version seem to be simple reproductions of the original. However, the supporting material is a letdown. I read the version that includes the introduction by novelist Dolen Perkins-Valdez. That introduction is borderline insulting, as it makes only a weak attempt to separate accounts with fictional elements like *Roots* from an authentic account like this one. Worse still, Perkins-Valdez can't resist indulging in repeatedly referencing her own recently released slave novel, even going so far as to quote herself. There are almost no historical elements to this version beyond the main book -- no mention of Northrup after the book, no mention of the writer who helped him pen the book, nothing. There is more information on the writer of the introduction than there is the author. One other oddity worth mentioning: the original book's preface -- the one done by the man who helped Northrup write the book -- has been curiously excised from this version too. That makes this version something less than complete. For those looking for a better version, you might consider *Twelve Years a Slave - Enhanced Edition* by Dr. Sue Eakin Based on a Lifetime Project.

New Info, Images, Maps, which contains a robust amount of supporting material and, better still, is right now the same cost as this version.

I read this entire book in one day. I could not put it down. I came across it while trying to learn more about my town. I was in awe after realizing that all this occurred some 15 miles from where I now live. I believe this book would make an excellent movie. The way this free black man was taken and sold into slavery is so sad and if I had not been looking into old newspaper articles around the area I would have not believed this story. SO many people want to forget about the history of black people but they shouldn't. I don't think anyone can walk away after reading this book and not feel some sort of compassion for the all the souls lost to slavery.

This is an excellent book that is, unfortunately, terribly edited. I refer exclusively to the Kindle edition. It is replete with typos and missing words that frequently interrupt comprehension and that testify to an overall sloppiness that is difficult to excuse. If I had to guess, this was mechanically transformed from a paper to a Kindle edition, with little or no human oversight. This lack of oversight shows on almost a page by page basis - and speaks extremely poorly of the overall quality. This is a real shame, because the book itself is indispensable reading for anyone who wants to \*begin\* to confront the trauma of slavery - a trauma that continues to inflect American and global affairs to this day.

This is the story of Solomon Northup, in his own words, a citizen of New York kidnapped in 1841 and taken to Louisiana as a slave, where he was found twelve years later on a cotton plantation near the Red River. It is a story that will break your heart as Solomon was torn away from his family for over a decade. According to a quote from 1853, when Solomon first published his memoirs, "Think of it: For thirty years a man, with all a man's hopes, fears and aspirations--with a wife and children to call him by the endearing names of husband and father--with a home, humble it may be, but still a home...then for twelve years a thing, a chattel personal, classed with mules and horses. ...Oh! it is horrible. It chills the blood to think that such are." And indeed, this story will both chill--and boil--your blood.

The book itself is great -- absolutely wonderful. But I see that all sorts of folks have rushed it into print in the last month or two, to cash in on the film (which is also great) - This edition is quite cheap and shabby; it doesn't even include page numbers. I'd recommend one of the other editions

(although some of them are probably also shabby... but at least look for one from a reputable publisher. And really: the book itself should be considered a classic. It's beautifully written, and powerful in its descriptions and insights.

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