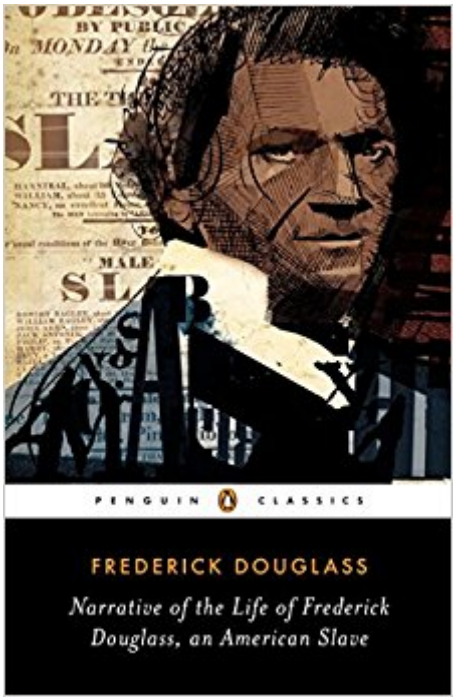
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Narrative Of The Life Of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave (Penguin Classics)



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Synopsis

An updated edition of a classic African American autobiography, with new supplementary materialsThe preeminent American slave narrative first published in 1845, Frederick DouglassÃ¢â ¬â„¢sÃ Â NarrativeÃ Â powerfully details the life of the abolitionist from his birth into slavery in 1818 to his escape to the North in 1838, how he endured the daily physical and spiritual brutalities of his owners and driver, how he learned to read and write, and how he grew into a man who could only live free or die. In addition to DouglassÃ¢â ¬â„¢s classic autobiography, this new edition also includes his most famous speech Ã¢â ¬Å“What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?Ã¢â ¬Â• and his only known work of fiction,Ã Â The Heroic Slave, which was written, in part, as a response to Harriet Beecher StoweÃ¢â ¬â„¢sÃ Â Uncle TomÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Cabin.For more than sixty-five years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,500Ã Â titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust theÃ Â series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-dateÃ Â translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Grade 9 Up-This classic text in both American literature and American history is read by Pete Papageorge with deliberation and simplicity, allowing the author’s words to bridge more than 160

years to today’s listeners. Following a stirring preface by William Lloyd Garrison (who, nearly 20 years after he first met Douglass, would himself lead the black troops fighting from the North in the Civil War), the not-yet-30-year-old author recounts his life’s story, showing effective and evocative use of language as well as unflinchingly examining many aspects of the Peculiar Institution of American Slavery. Douglass attributes his road to freedom as beginning with his being sent from the Maryland plantation of his birth to live in Baltimore as a young boy. There, he learned to read and, more importantly, learned the power of literacy. In early adolescence, he was returned to farm work, suffered abuse at the hands of cruel overseers, and witnessed abuse visited on fellow slaves. He shared his knowledge of reading with a secret "Sunday school" of 40 fellow slaves during his last years of bondage. In his early 20’s, he ran away to the North and found refuge among New England abolitionists. Douglass, a reputed orator, combines concrete description of his circumstances with his own emerging analysis of slavery as a condition. This recording makes his rich work available to those who might feel encumbered by the printed page and belongs as an alternative in all school and public library collections.Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CACopyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

"Having consistently used the book for almost a decade, I can say that it remains the most popular of my required books. The introduction places Douglass in a historical context comprehensible to undergraduates and offers students shrewd insights into how he drafted his autobiography." --customer --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

This autobiography was assigned to me when I was a junior in high school. Three years later, as a sophomore in college, I was asked to read the book again for my class on Black Thought and Literature. I wish that I had taken the time to slow down and analyze Frederick Douglass’ narrative from a literal, analytical, and figurative perspective. Had I done that the first time aroundÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •as opposed to treating the book as another required reading that I needed to speed-read throughÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •I believe that my understanding would have been more in-depth and meaningful. The emotion and conviction with which the author writes is not only poetic and moving, but captivating as well. The imagery, combined with Douglass’ views on religion’s role in the enslavement of black bodies, masterfully paints a story that (in combination with other narratives) has, unfortunately, been lost throughout time. In fact, many Black writers during this period refused to publish their experiences for fear that they will be caught and returned to slavery. In other cases, some writers used pen names to add some anonymity to their experiences.

Nevertheless, such works should be cherished and valued; for they allow us to gain a better understanding of how far our society has come, and how much more needs to be done to ensure a future where everyone is equal (in the truest sense of the word).

This book is well written and a fast read. I was a bit overcome with sadness while reading of everything she went through as well as others during slavery. Not only were they used and abused by white men, but the wives of these men were just as cold and nasty to these slaves. I wasn't on earth at this time, but I dare say I would never treat anyone the way these people were treated. This book is really an eye-opener for me. She kept diaries and eventually used these to write her story. She was not full-blood Negro so she was constantly hit upon by her master because she was attractive. She wound up separated from her children at one point. If you want some deep insight into the history of slavery, you should read this book.

This is a story of a young girl from the south. Black girl who had. A light skin tone. She was tormented by the man who owned her a nd wanted her as his own. In order to get away from him she lived seven years in hiding beneath her grandmother's house. You will fear for her and her family.

Refreshing and eye opening. Douglass spares no details on the cruelty and evilness of slavery. Interestingly, Douglass focuses just as much on the impact slavery had on the psychological being of the slave owner as he does the impact slavery had on the slaves themselves. Do yourself a favor and read this narrative. You will not regret it.

The author offers great insight into the lives of those oppressed by slavery. Foremost is the picture she paints of continuing prejudice in the north even after some slaves had obtained their "freedom". If she were alive today I fear she would still question the meaning of the word "free".

What a terrible life you had if you were colored. Slave holders could do as they pleased with their slaves. We've all read of the atrocities done to blacks. This book shows how one colored woman is hounded her whole life by her "master". Unbelievable what she lived through.

It was very interesting hearing about the life of a slave directly from the man himself without his word being filtered through someone else's perspective. I realize there is always the possibility of

self-aggrandizement in an autobiography. I also realize in cases such as this where some great cause is involved there is also the possibility an author may change or enhance events in the book to support that cause, in this case to support the author's goal of opposing slavery. While those two things are possible, I don't believe Mr. Douglass committed either of those literary sins. What Frederick Douglass wrote seems to fall right in line with everything else I've read about the period and about the institution of slavery. It's gut wrenching to realize that slave owners could mistreat another human being so poorly, even to the extent of treating them worse than their animals. Unfortunately there are people in this World today who are no better and who, given the chance, would treat their fellow man equally heartlessly. Douglas described how living and working under several different masters was a roller-coaster ride of changing conditions to which a slave either adapted or suffered the consequences. Hearing how slavery can change people into a more cruel form of themselves was disheartening and spoke to how slavery hurt people on both sides of the institution.It was sad but not unexpected to learn how religion was used as a curtain behind which slave owners could hide and as a justification for the abuses heaped on slaves. It's not unlike how extremists today use the same justifications for the despicable acts they commit in the name of religion. And while I certainly am not trying to equate aspects of our society today to the plight of slaves, it was interesting to read how some slave owners would allow slaves time to socialize, have athletic contests, visit relatives on nearby plantations and even drink whiskey if they could buy it in order to make the slaves believe their plight wasn't so bad and could in fact be worse. I can see parallels in today's society where we are doing the same thing to ourselves through relentless pursuits of personal happiness, often without regard to other people. Maybe the more things change the more they really do stay the same.I would have liked more detail, especially about Mr. Douglass' escape the the North, however I understand his desire to keep those details hidden given that he wrote this in 1845 when slavery was still in place and when hiding those details might protect those who helped him and/or prevent slave owners from learning his methods so as to prevent future escaped slaves from using his methods. That said however, the book was definitely worth reading and I would recommend it to readers interested in learning more about the institution of slavery in the Southern United States and why it was so important that it be eliminated.

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