



Twelve Years a Slave

Solomon Northup

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#1 Bestseller

Now a major motion picture directed by Steve McQueen and starring Brad Pitt, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Michael Fassbender, Benedict Cumberbatch, and Paul Giamatti

12 Years a Slave is a riveting true account of a free man captured and sold into slavery in the pre–Civil War South. Solomon Northup’s narrative explores one of the darkest times in American history and captures in vivid detail the unimaginable realities of slavery.

In 1841, the educated musician Solomon Northup, a free man living in New York who is cruelly deceived by the promise of a job in Washington, is drugged, kidnapped, and sold into slavery. Once Solomon arrives in New Orleans, he is given a slave name and soon realizes that any mention of his rights as a free man is sure to bring cruel punishment or death. Denied his freedom and ripped away from his family, he spends twelve emotionally and physically gruelling years on a Louisiana cotton plantation enduring the hardships and brutalities of life as a slave. When Solomon eventually finds a sympathizing friend, a daring rescue is attempted that could either end in Solomon’s death or restore his freedom and reunite him with his family.

When Solomon Northup published this harrowing account of slavery in 1853, it immediately stirred up controversy in the national debate over slavery, helping to sway public opinion in favour of abolition. His book *12 Years a Slave* remains one of the most insightful, detailed, and eloquent depictions of slavery in America. It demonstrates the extraordinary resilience of one man’s spirit in the face of extreme suffering and his incredible will to survive.

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