



Twelve Years a Slave

Solomon Northup

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The story that inspired the major motion picture produced by Brad Pitt, directed by Steve McQueen, and starring Chiwetel Ejiofor, Michael Fassbender, and Benedict Cumberbatch, *Twelve Years a Slave* is a harrowing, vividly detailed, and utterly unforgettable account of slavery. This beautifully designed ebook edition of *Twelve Years a Slave* features an introduction by Dolan Perkins-Valdez, the bestselling author of *Wench*.

Solomon Northup was an entrepreneur and dedicated family man, father to three young children, Elizabeth, Margaret, and Alonzo. What little free time he had after long days of manual and farm labor, he spent reading books and playing the violin. Though his father was born into slavery, Solomon was born and lived free.

In March 1841, two strangers approached Northup, offering him employment as a violinist in a town hundreds of miles away from his home in Saratoga Springs, New York. Solomon bid his wife farewell until his return. Only after he was drugged and bound, did he realize the strangers were kidnappers—that nefarious brand of criminals in the business of capturing runaway and free blacks for profit. Thus began Northup's life as a slave. Dehumanized, beaten, and worked mercilessly, Northup suffered all the more wondering what had become of his family. One owner was savagely cruel and Northup recalls he was "indebted to him for nothing, save undeserved abuse." Just as he felt the summer of his life fade and all hope nearly lost, he met a kind-hearted stranger who changed the course of his life. With its first-hand account of this country's Peculiar Institution, this is a book no one interested in American history can afford to miss.

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