



12 Years a Slave: True story of an African-American who was kidnapped in New York and sold into slavery

Solomon Northup

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12 Years A Slave

A powerful and riveting condemnation of American slavery, 12 Years a Slave is the harrowing true story of Solomon Northup who was kidnapped and sold into slavery, enduring unimaginable degradation and abuse until his rescue twelve years later. Steve McQueen's powerful film adaptation starring Chiwetel Ejiofor, Brad Pitt, Michael Fassbender and Benedict Cumberbatch won Best Picture at both the Oscars and the Golden Globes in 2014.

Tricked by two men offering him a job as a musician in New York State in 1841, Solomon Northup was drugged and kidnapped. His life is jeopardy, he was forced to assume a new name and fake past. Taken to Louisiana on a disease-ridden plague ship, he was initially sold to a cotton planter.

In the twelve years that follow he is sold to many different owners who treat him with varying levels of savagery; forced labour, scant food and numerous beatings are his regular fare. Against all odds, Northup eventually succeeds in contacting a sympathetic party and manages to get word to his family. The ensuing rescue and legal cases are no less shocking and intriguing than the rest of the tale.

A true-life testament to tremendous courage and tenacity in the face of unfathomable injustice, Northup's account also provides a rare insight into a murky past being meticulous first-hand recordings of slave life. A new film premiering in 2013, featuring Brad Pitt and Benedict Cumberbatch, is sure to introduce this amazing story to a new audience.

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