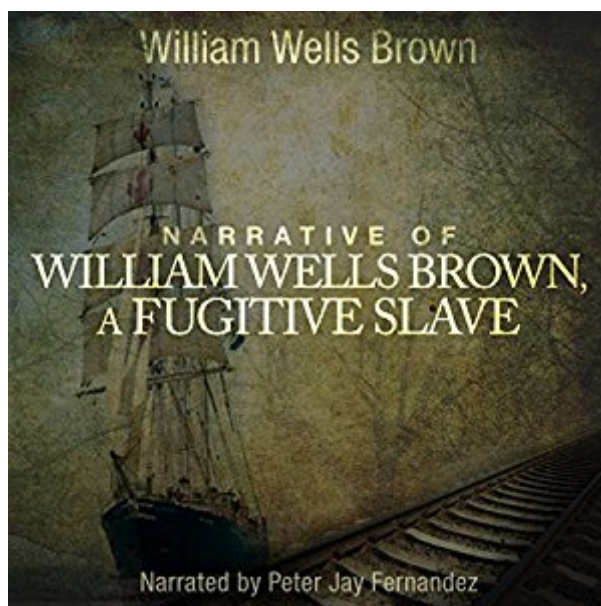


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# Narrative Of William W. Brown, A Fugitive Slave



## Synopsis

"Brother, you have often declared that you would not end your days in slavery. I see no possible way in which you can escape with us; and now, brother, you are on a steamboat where there is some chance for you to escape to a land of liberty. I beseech you not to let us hinder you. If we cannot get our liberty, we do not wish to be the means of keeping you from a land of freedom."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In an introduction to *Twelve Years a Slave*, Eric Foner rated the slave narratives of Frederick Douglass, Solomon Northup, Josiah Henson, and William Wells Brown as being the best of the slave narratives written in antebellum America. The Narrative of William W. Brown is a short narrative of a man born into slavery who escaped a little more than twenty years later. Brown did not have the scars from the peculiar institution as, say, Solomon Northup. Brown did experience the end of a lash, and the agony of trying to please an unreasonable master. Most of the anecdotes that Wells related about the horrors of slavery were incidents that he had seen. The Wells Narrative is only sixty-five pages long. Probably the most important idea to take away from Brown's Narrative is the concept of family. When slaveholders broke up slave families, Southern defenders of slavery argued that the debased Negro was not capable of the kinds of family ties kept by white families. Yet the slaveholders were the ones who were more likely to break up a slave family. Slaveholders encouraged slaves to marry and start families in order to keep them from running away. Southerners knew very well that slaves maintained kinship with emotional ties just as strong as

those of white families. Family privileges for slaves were just one of the many ways used by slaveholders to control their slaves. Brown's Narrative is filled with sadness by slave families who were broken up by slave owners.

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