



# The Kidnapped Prince: The Life of Olaudah Equiano

*Olaudah Equiano , Ann Cameron (adapted by)*

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Illustrated with black-and-white archival engravings with an introduction by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

## The Kidnapped Prince: The Life of Olaudah Equiano Details

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# From Reader Review *The Kidnapped Prince: The Life of Olaudah Equiano* for online ebook

## The other John says

As I'm homeschooling my girls, I sometimes come across a book or lesson that makes me think that my own education has been lacking. That happened again as I read this book. *The Kidnapped Prince* is the autobiography of Olaudah Equiano, an African slave in the late 18th Century who won his freedom, got an education and published his story. (Take that, all you bozos who said that Africans were inferior to whites!) Why wasn't this book required reading back when I was in school? Well, one reason is that this is an adaption of Equiano's autobiography. Ms. Cameron edited the story down a bit and rewrote the tale in a language more understandable for us 21st Century types. Anyway, I'm a strong believer in reading first hand accounts of history, and since slavery is such an important aspect of American history, I would recommend that any parent let their child check this one out. Me, I'm going to go look for the original work, to see what I might have missed.

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## Marni says

Our homeschooling has helped me discover quite a few books that make me wish I had been directed more in my reading when I was growing up. I think the general feeling at school through junior high was that as long as we were reading, it was good. But more and more I definitely feel like I wasted a lot of good reading years.

"The Kidnapped Prince" is one of those books. It is a lower reading level, so while the story of Olaudah Equiano's life as a slave is there, it isn't terribly gory or disturbing in detail. He also admits that his life as a slave isn't nearly as bad as it was for many many others, but the lesson that freedom is precious is definitely there.

This is a book that shortly after starting, I knew I would be reading it with my other kids. I also would like to look into the full version, which helped bring about the abolition of slavery in England.

See also "Amazing Grace," a movie about William Wilberforce (a British politician) and his role in abolishing the slave trade. Equiano is portrayed in that.

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## Scott Hayden says

Stolen from his family, sold as a slave and traded within Africa, eventually endured (but wanted to die on) a tightly-packed slave ship, Olaudah Equiano worked hard, suffered betrayal, rebounded, gained an education, practiced business, and eventually bought his freedom. This version of his autobiography is suitable for upper elementary children.

Though this edition doesn't say it, Olaudah eventually worked alongside William Wilberforce in the British abolition movement.

Should I tackle Olaudah's original with its old English?

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**Mia (Parentheses Enthusiast) says**

Little Black Classics, bite-size stories which are adorably tiny and beautiful and look wonderful on my shelf and are only £2 each...

Oh dear.

(R.I.P. My paycheck.)

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**Peter says**

This biography of a man taken into slavery to finally win his freedom is touching. There are no epic or dramatic set pieces just an honest story of his time in slavery. I enjoyed this immensely, never as a book moved me to such inner thoughts as this.

Required reading that will leave you with one thought... why are we so brutal to each other, Why

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**Erin R says**

Originally written in 1789 as an autobiography and then adapted for children by Ann Cameron, this book describes the true story of Olaudah Equiano. Equiano was captured in Africa and taken into slavery. He lived as a slave in England, the United States, and the West Indies before he was able to purchase his own freedom. This is a great book for students to explore the origins of the slaves that came to America. Students will gain insight into how and why slaves were captured in Africa and what the experience was truly like for those who survived. I would most obviously incorporate the book into the classroom by including it as a primary source to use in social studies, but could also use it to teach specific pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading skills as well.

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**Amira says**

I thought that this book was so touching and so thoughtful, and it definitely made me realize how thankful I was to live in a country where most of us are so well off. Olaudah Equiano was captured from a village that was hard-working, honest, and fair to one another, and was sent off to different parts of the world to work for people that aren't really honest, hard-working, and fair. The story shows all of his struggles, and even in the worst times, he still found a way to make it better. He is such a positive, upbeat person in the worst times, and that would probably be my #1 reason if you want to read this book. It's so good!

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## Victoria says

This was a good book to read to my sons as an introduction to the slave trade from an actual former slave's account written in the 1700s.

Olaudah was eventually renamed "Gustavus" which he is often referred to by his masters throughout the book. He begins his story in Africa. The life he had there with his family was different than what stories of tribal Africans, as they were a bit more civilized as sorts.

It was odd to hear how his family also owned slaves (more like they were criminals who worked for them, received a good pay, and were treated well, but they were doing servitude because of their criminal situations).

Olaudah gets kidnapped with his sister whom he is separated from. He is a slave first in parts of Africa and eventually sent to England where he worked as a slave for several owners. As he became a teen, he was working on ships with his masters while also gaining a bit of an education.

While some might argue that Olaudah was treated much better than other slaves that he talks about encountering, all of the stories, including his own, is really tough to imagine and is so sad and upsetting. Olaudah even had to be a slave who transported slaves on ships too.

The things described are done so in a way that it would not outright frighten children, but it is enough to upset your children and to understand how awful slavery is. My sons were in shock because they did not know a lot of what went on back then. They know that slavery still exists too, but hearing some of the story stated while I read this book to them really opened their eyes up to a better understanding, giving them more of a heart towards ending oppression.

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## Gillian says

This book was sooooo sad! It was written by the man who the biography is about. It is a factual life story of Oloudah, an african prince who was kidnapped by slave traders. It is about the agony and distress, and the success he went through as he grew up, and how he finally got what he wanted most: his freedom. I liked this book a lot, actually, a lot more than I thought I would.

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## Sue says

Equiano admits that in his village of origin his father had slaves, and even the slaves had slaves. Women were property. Some kind of karmic circle? for him to become a slave himself. Like Ashley Wilkes declared in *Gone With the Wind*, "Oh, but we didn't treat them that way . . ." to justify why his variety of landowner/slaveholder wasn't that bad.

He uses the term *embrenche* to describe his father's occupation: a combined senator, prince, judge—all in one. I did not appreciate that it appears nowhere else, except in this man's writings; like he made it up. He

also describes a precise method of scarification for this lofty post (peeling the forehead skin down, and then letting it heal creating a unique scar). Couldn't find that anywhere else either.

I almost quit because this thing is so regurgitated. Less than impressed.

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### **LuAnn says**

Very enlightening as to the brutality and injustice of enslaving others and the hypocrisy of even "good" masters without dwelling on it or being too graphic. Yet through it all, Equiano tries to stay calm in order to do what will help him stay safe and attain his freedom. I admire his level-headedness, honesty, enterprise, faith in God and ingenuity. This adaptation maintains Equiano's voice from his original autobiography, which I've read a bit of, yet makes his story more approachable for young readers and those who wouldn't read the original.

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### **Paloma says**

#### **Review in English | Reseña en Español**

This little Penguin book was just ok. I own a couple of editions from this collection and I find that when they are extracts from a larger book, I always end up feeling there is something missing from the text -either more plot, or background, or more in-depth information to fully enjoy the story. I am aware that the idea of this collection is to have small, easy to carry and read editions, but I feel that it doesn't work that well if they are not short stories, novellas or poetry. Therefore, I felt a bit disappointed by *Kidnapped*, the story of an African slave that was taken from his village in the 18th century, served as a sailor and finally became a free man. The thing is, if I had not googled who this person was, I would not have known what we were talking about. This edition is an extract from the autobiography of Olaudah Equiano, which includes only four chapters -his kidnapping, his first years as member of a crew going to the US and back to London, his participation in war, and finally how he was again sold and sent to the US. There is no information on how he became a free man, nor more background of where he was from. The writing was ok -the author is quite eloquent and mixes facts with his thoughts which I understand later served for the abolitionist movement. I guess I was expecting something along the lines of *Roots*, like a small glimpse of a saga, and that was not the case unfortunately. However, I believe the complete autobiography should be more satisfying.

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Esta edición de los Little Back Classics de Penguin estuvo regular. Tengo varios libros que forman parte de esta colección y me parece que cuando el texto es un extracto de un libro más grande, siempre termino con la sensación de que algo le falta al texto: ya sea trama, contexto o más detalles que permitan disfrutar la historia. Entiendo que el propósito de esta colección es tener a la mano libros en ediciones pequeñas, fáciles de leer y de cargar, pero en lo personal creo que no funcionan si no son cuentos, novelas o poesía. Por lo anterior, me decepcioné un poco de *Kidnapped*, que es la historia de un esclavo africano raptado de su pueblo en el siglo XVIII, que luego fue parte de una tripulación, vendido nuevamente a las colonias estadounidenses hasta finalmente alcanzar su libertad. La cuestión es que, si no hubiera buscado en internet quién era este señor, no hubiera entendido de qué se trataba la historia. Esta edición es un extracto de la autobiografía de Olaudah Equiano e incluye solo cuatro capítulos -su captura, sus primeros años como

miembro de una tripulación que viajaba a EUA e Inglaterra, su participación en las guerras contra Francia y finalmente su venta de nuevo como esclavo y su vida en Estados Unidos. No hay más información sobre cómo se convirtió en un hombre libre ni mayor detalle sobre sus orígenes. El estilo del autor está bien -es muy elocuente y me parece interesante la mezcla de hechos y pensamientos, lo que entiendo fue muy importante para el movimiento abolicionista en ese siglo. Creo que el texto no funcionó para mí ya que esperaba algo similar a *Raíces*, aunque fuera una pequeña muestra de una gran saga... y esto no fue el caso; sin embargo, no dudo que la autobiografía completa sea muy interesante.

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## **Colleen says**

really like olaudah's story would love to read his autobiography but probably would not have the patients. this outline is what i hope a perfect wrap up of olaudahs whole story. it was quick to read and you can tell olaudah wrote of his true experiences not trying to make them seem worse than they were. cant believe how he originally got kidnapped and how he spent so much time as a slave in his own country.

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## **Kathy says**

Although this book is adapted by another person I thought it was well written by Ann Cameron and well worth my time to read. My favorite part of this book is when Olaudah Equiano meets his sister again after being sold, but it was a short meeting because after Olaudah and his sister sleep together she is sadly sold again and he never saw his sister again. Because this book was based on a true story and told in first person, I was very happy to feel like these characters were very real. My favorite person is Olaudah Equiano, because of his humility, after being sold so many times and having been mistreated sometimes, he is still willing to work even after he has paid his freedom, which I thought was positively amazing.

Olaudah Equiano is important in this story because it is from his own life perspective of being a slave. He is also important because we can see slavery at its worst and see just how badly people were being treated. He also helps us understand that even though the slave traders thought that they were giving the Africans a better life, they actually weren't.

Over all the book was very intriguing, it was sad in most parts, but in all the book was a very good read. And I encourage readers all around the world to read this amazing book.

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**Sarah says**

A heartbreaking but very important piece of literature that has a lot to teach us. The autobiography of Olaudah Equiano, an African slave during the slave trade.

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