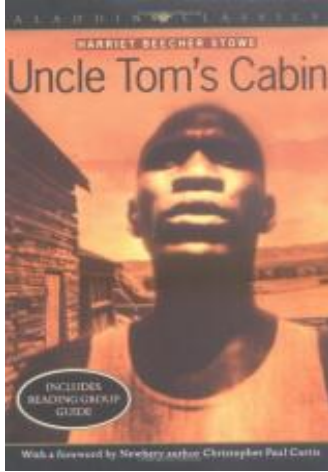


Uncle Tom's Cabin

by Harriet Beecher Stowe



About the Book

Uncle Tom's Cabin was a sensation upon its publication in 1852. In its first year it sold 300,000 copies, and has since been translated into more than twenty languages. This powerful story of one slave's unbreakable spirit holds an important place in American history, as it helped solidify the anti-slavery sentiments of the North, and moved a nation to civil war.

Discussion Guide

1. How do the other people on the Shelby estate react to news of the sale of Tom and Harry? What is Mrs. Shelby's objection? How does young "Mas'r George" deal with the news of his friend's departure? How do the other slaves react?
2. Many different people help Eliza during her flight -- Mr. Symmes, the Bird family, the community of Quakers. What similarities and differences are there among all these people? What reasons does each of them give for helping Eliza?
3. Much of the dialogue in the book is given over to a debate on the morality of slavery. Most of the slave owners feel that they are "above" the slave traders. Is this true? Why do you think that so many members of the clergy defended slavery?
4. Discuss the author's attitude toward her black characters. Do you think this was an acceptable point of view at the time? What do you think would have to be changed if the story were being told today?

5. Miss Ophelia's presence in the story allows the author to address Northern attitudes toward blacks. As St. Clare tells her, "You loathe them as you would a snake or a toad, yet you are indignant at their wrongs. You would not have them abused; but you don't want to have anything to do with them yourselves." Is this a fair assessment of Miss Ophelia's feelings? What happens to change her attitude?

6. Discuss the death scenes of both Eva and Uncle Tom. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different? Why do you think that the author devoted so much time to these death scenes?

7. Children play a large part in the story of **Uncle Tom's Cabin**. What do Eva, Topsy, George Shelby, Harry, and Henrique each symbolize? Would the story have been the same if their characters had been adult?

Author Bio

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Publication Date: June 1, 2002

Paperback: 720 pages

Publisher: Aladdin

ISBN-10: 068985126X

ISBN-13: 9780689851261