

**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

Harriet Beecher Stowe  
**Uncle Tom's Cabin**

Read by **Liza Ross**

**CLASSIC  
FICTION**



NA417512D

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1	In Which the Reader is Introduced to a Man of Humanity	9:48
2	The Mother	2:44
3	The Husband and Father	6:21
4	An Evening in Uncle Tom's Cabin	8:08
5	Showing the Feelings of Living Property on Changing Owners	12:16
6	Discovery	1:51
7	The Mother's Struggle	6:12
8	Eliza's Escape	4:58
9	The Property is Carried Off	5:34
10	In Which Property Gets into an Improper State of Mind	13:33
11	Select Incident of Lawful Trade	3:43
12	The Quaker Settlement	8:14
13	Evangeline	7:04
14	Of Tom's New Master and Various Other Matters	13:39
15	The Freeman's Defence	14:18

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16	Miss Ophelia's Experiences and Opinions	3:25
17	Miss Ophelia's Experiences and Opinions (continued)	2:07
18	Topsy	12:54
19	Kentuck	4:34
20	'The Grass Withereth – The Flower Fadeth'	6:29
21	Foreshadowings	2:21
22	Foreshadowings (continued)	4:54
23	The Little Evangelist	5:03
24	Death	12:59
25	This Is the Last of Earth	5:19
26	Reunion	10:32
27	The Unprotected	4:14
28	The Slave Warehouse	8:06
29	The Middle Passage	1:34
30	Dark Places	3:40
31	Cassy	7:38

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32	The Quadroon's Story	8:36
33	The Tokens	4:39
34	The Tokens (continued)	2:04
35	Emmeline and Cassy	7:20
36	Liberty	5:47
37	The Victory	10:03
38	The Stratagem	9:46
39	The Martyr	7:39
40	The Young Master	10:26
41	An Authentic Ghost Story	9:47
42	Results	5:44
43	The Liberator	6:32

**Total time: 5:03:02**

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Harriet Beecher Stowe

# Uncle Tom's Cabin

The clear intention of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is to imbue its readers with a sense of profound outrage at the evils of slavery. Published in 1852, it almost immediately aroused a stir of interest and indeed controversy which soon spread beyond the shores of the United States: the novel was the first international best-seller to come out of America. Nor was this intense interest merely temporary. With the conflict between North and South looming ever nearer, and one at least of its causes being the issue of slavery, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* retained and perhaps even increased its reputation in subsequent years. During the Civil War itself (1861-1865), Abraham Lincoln met Harriet Beecher Stowe and is said to have greeted her with the words, 'So you're the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war!'

Nowadays the book is enjoying a resurgence of interest among students as well as general readers, helped in part by modern feminist critics who recognise the

crucial pioneering role in American literature played by Stowe. But there were decades during which the novel was regarded with suspicion, if not hostility, mainly because its portrayal of African-Americans was seen as patronising and inappropriate in a world where racial prejudice had become a key target amongst liberal thinkers everywhere: the label 'Uncle Tom' (used to describe an unnaturally subservient African-American) became a term of abuse. If, however, we use historical common sense and consider what Stowe was trying to do within the context of her times, her achievement should be seen as genuinely remarkable.

What are the lasting qualities of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*? First, the story itself. Stowe tells two parallel narratives about slaves in the possession of the Shelby family: Eliza and George escape with their son Harry to Canada, while Tom is sold on to two successive slave-owners of very different character. The way in which

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Stowe maintains our interest through these sharply contrasting stories is very effective: apart from anything else, it provides her with the opportunity to paint a succession of vivid pictures of different parts of America, including widely varying religious attitudes and (of course) dramatically divergent treatment of slaves.

Cleverly, in spite of the evident seriousness of her theme, she uses nicely observed ironies and other humorous touches to avoid overwhelming the reader either with unalloyed virtue or unrelieved grimness: one thinks, for example, of the primly correct Miss Ophelia who must learn to love the black people she meets in the South – it is not enough simply to hold the politically-correct attitudes – or of the comically humiliating fate which befalls the brutal slave-hunter Tom Loker. Then one has to acknowledge the climactic series of genuinely moving triumphs and disasters which characterise the later stages of the novel: Little Eva's death (incredibly pious as it may appear), the last-minute conversion of St Clare, and of course the powerfully tragic end of Uncle Tom

himself – an end which, in its self-sacrificing, Christ-like intensity, constitutes a deeply-felt and ultimately convincing denouement.

It is clear that for Stowe the answer to the 'slave question' lay in the application of true Christian values and principles – hardly surprising, when we remember that she came from a deeply religious family and married a clergyman – but, even in an agnostic age, one can still respond to the sharp attacks on religious hypocrisy which run through the text of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The central section of the novel is set on St Clare's plantation in Louisiana, and it is here that the real debate on the morality (or otherwise) of slavery is developed. St Clare himself, a sensitive agnostic, is eventually moved not only to grant Tom his freedom (an undertaking prevented by St Clare's premature death) but also to embrace Christian belief. All this is in marked and effective contrast to his wife's unthinking, spoilt egotism: for her, slavery is a God-given right of the superior white race, and actually beneficial to the slaves themselves. St Clare is converted by the example of his own daughter, Eva, and

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by Tom himself, whose noble desire to put his master's well-being before his own is, of course, an expression of Christian virtue. For Stowe – and this may be hard for modern listeners to swallow – childish innocence, of the sort demonstrated by Tom as much as by Eva, is just as powerful a weapon in the fight for truth as the clear, rational thought which first brings St Clare to a realisation of the evils of slavery.

Harriet Beecher Stowe was born in Litchfield, Connecticut in 1811. Her mother died in 1816. She began her career as a teacher but by 1834 had begun to write. In 1836 she married Calvin Stowe: they were to have seven children, but the youngest died of cholera in 1850. This traumatic event seems to have stimulated in her the desire to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) perhaps as a conduit for her intense feelings. Other novels and tracts were to follow during the rest of her long life. She died in 1896.

**Notes by Perry Keenlyside**

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**The music on this CD is taken from the  
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<b>HARTMANN</b> OVERTURES	8.224097
Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Thomas Dausgaard	
<b>FIBICH</b> SYMPHONIES NO 1 & 2	8.553699
Rasumovsky Symphony Orchestra, Andrew Mogrelia	
<b>HARTMANN</b> SYMPHONIES	8.224042
Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Thomas Dausgaard	
<b>BERWALD</b> SYMPHONIES NOS 3 & 4	8.553052
Helsingbord Symphony Orchestra, Okko Kamu	
<b>RUBINSTEIN</b> SYMPHONY NO 2	8.220449
Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, Bratislava, Stephen Gunzenhauser	
<b>RIMSKY-KORSAKOV</b> MUSICAL PICTURE SADKO	8.553858
Moscow Symphony Orchestra, Igor Golovschin	

**Music programming by Nicolas Soames**

Cover picture: The Flight of Eliza by Adolphe Jean-Baptiste Bayot.  
Engraved by Charles Bour. Courtesy of The Bridgeman Art Library, London.



# Harriet Beecher Stowe

# Uncle Tom's Cabin

Read by **Liza Ross**

This intensely dramatic and moving novel has remained a best-selling classic since it was first published in 1852. The slaves Eliza and George make a desperate bid to escape to Canada, while 'Uncle Tom' is sold to two successive and very different owners. Abraham Lincoln himself acknowledged the role played by this seminal text in the Civil War, the aim of which was (in part) to emancipate the slaves of the southern states.



**Liza Ross** has appeared on stage in the West End and in repertory across the country, including *Wings* and *The Front Page* at the Royal National Theatre. She has made many TV appearances including *After the War*, *Poor Little Rich Girl*, *Two's Company* and *The Month of the Doctors*. Her film work includes *Batman* and *The Shadowchasers*. She has worked extensively as a voice artist and has recorded *Gone With The Wind* (unabridged). For Naxos AudioBooks she has recorded Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne of Avonlea*, as well as *The Christmas Collection*.

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Total time  
5:03:02