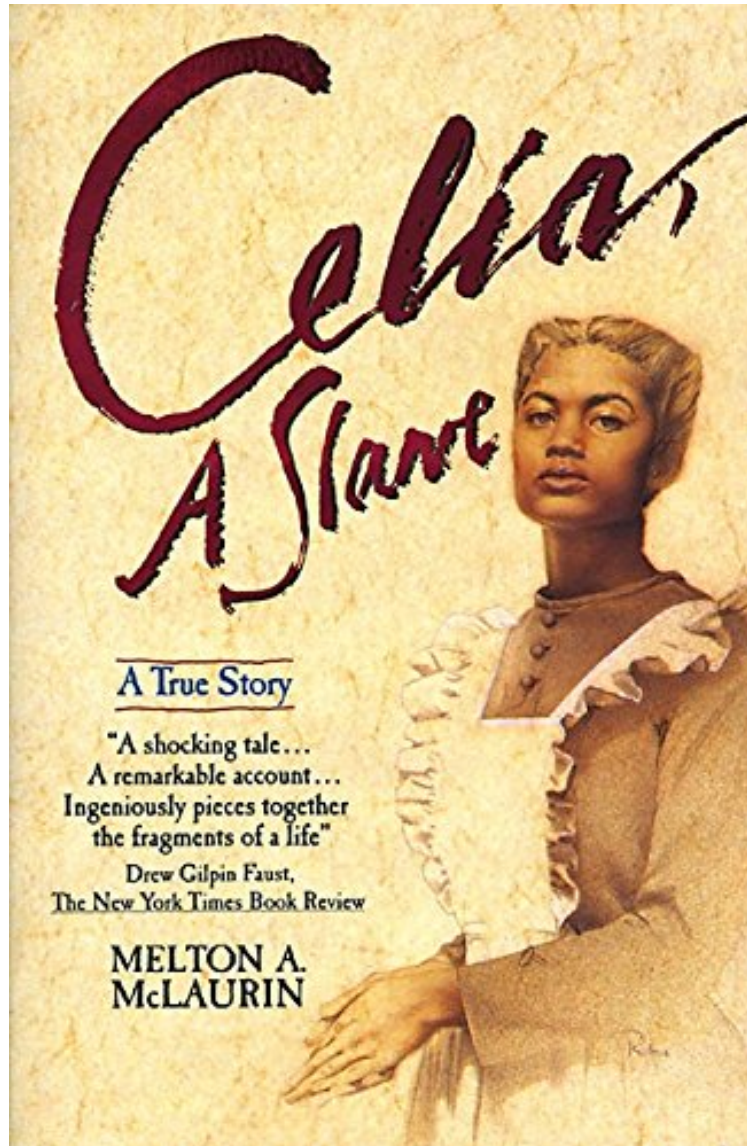


Celia, A Slave

Melton A. McLaurin

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Melton A. McLaurin : Celia, A Slave before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Celia, A Slave:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. CELIA ,THE SLAVE Brings a Forgotten Slave into the Light By Sally T This riveting and slim book tells what it can of the story of Celia, a slave whose tragedy played out in rural Missouri in the 19th century. As he gives us Celia's story, McLaurin clearly explains the history of slavery in Missouri

and how it intertwined with the national politics of slavery. Reading the book for that alone is well worth it. A Missouri farmer buys Celia from an owner whose name is still unknown. The evil of Celia's new bondage is cruelly and fatefully enforced, even as she and her new master travel back to his farm. What happens to her from then on is a reflection of all the evils of slavery. And the fact that there is so much about Celia's life and her identity that cannot be recovered is one of those very evils. Not to be missed! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Celia, A Slave By craberts A masterpiece on survival. Love it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Two Stars By GeorgeOk

In 1850, fourteen-year-old Celia became the property of Robert Newsom, a prosperous and respected Missouri farmer. For the next five years, she was cruelly and repeatedly molested by her abusive master--and bore him two children in the process. But in 1855, driven to the limits of her endurance, Celia fought back. And at the tender age of eighteen, the desperate and frightened young black woman found herself on trial for Newsom's murder--the defendant in a landmark courtroom battle that threatened to undermine the very foundations of the South's most cherished institution. Based on court records, correspondences and newspaper accounts past and present, *Celia, A Slave* is a powerful masterwork of passion and scholarship--a stunning literary achievement that brilliantly illuminates one of the most extraordinary events in the long, dark history of slavery in America.

From Publishers Weekly This moving and masterfully told true story concerns the abuse and execution of a female black slave in antebellum Missouri. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal YA-- A remarkable biography of a young woman who at the age of 14 became the working and sexual slave of her widowed Missouri master. After bearing two of his children, and falling in love with a fellow bondsman, Celia tried to sever the sexual relationship with her enslaver. He raped her; she killed him while trying to defend herself. She was convicted of murder and hanged at the age of 19. McLaurin has masterfully researched judicial, historical, and contemporary materials in preparing this compelling and thoughtful narrative. Enhanced by its sensitivity and brevity, this book is a provocative starting point for discussion of its many ethical, legal, historical, and social issues. It should be required reading for high school students. - Catherine vanSonnenberg, San Diego Public Library Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s Both a well-told historical narrative about a slave girl sexually exploited by her master, whom she later kills, and a thoughtful examination of the moral tensions that strained the fabric of the antebellum South. McLaurin teaches history at the Univ. of North Carolina. At the age of 14, Celia was purchased by aging and prosperous widower John Newsom. On their way back to his Missouri farm, Newsom raped his new "possession" and from then on treated her as his concubine, impregnating her at least three times. Celia endured her master's attentions for years, until she became involved with a fellow slave named George and demanded that Newsom stop. He refused and Celia struck him with a club. The blow proved fatal and a terrified Celia disposed of his body in her fireplace, a crime that was quickly discovered and brought to trial. McLaurin relates Celia's story in vivid prose, using her trial to bring in the larger issues confronting both the South and the North in the 1850's. He writes not only of the slavery question, but also of legal issues ("Antebellum southerners viewed their slaves as both chattels and persons, a paradox reflected in the legal systems...") and of the role of women--black and white--in a white male society ("One of the essential legal differences between slave and free women was that free women were protected from sexual assault by law"). McLaurin's chronicle is tightly focused, with no great--but many small--illuminations, and his style is succinct and meticulous throughout. A straightforward and compelling account of one small historical incident that helps to illustrate the complex issues facing pre-Civil War America. -- Copyright 1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.