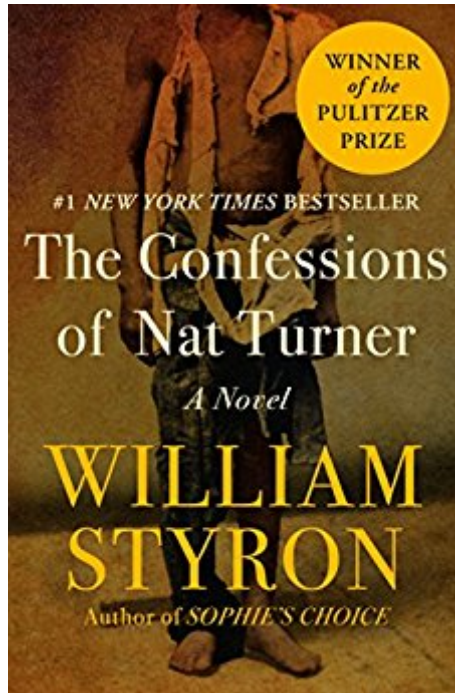


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# The Confessions Of Nat Turner: A Novel



## Synopsis

The magnificent Pulitzer Prize-winning and #1 New York Times bestselling novel about the preacher who led America's bloodiest slave revolt (The New York Times). The Confessions of Nat Turner is William Styron's complex and richly drawn imagining of Nat Turner, the leader of the 1831 slave rebellion in Virginia that led to the deaths of almost sixty men, women, and children. Published at the height of the civil rights movement, the novel draws upon the historical Nat Turner's confession to his attorney, made as he awaited execution in a Virginia jail. This powerful narrative, steeped in the brutal and tragic history of American slavery, reveals a Turner who is neither a hero nor a demon, but rather a man driven to exact vengeance for the centuries of injustice inflicted upon his people. Nat Turner is a galvanizing portrayal of the crushing institution of slavery, and Styron's deeply layered characterization is a stunning rendering of one man's violent struggle against oppression. This ebook features a new illustrated biography of William Styron, including original letters, rare photos, and never-before-seen documents from the Styron family and the Duke University Archives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Won a Pulitzer prize-though written while ago, very relevant in terms of current racial issues. I read it in anticipation of seeing the new movie "Birth of a nation" which is another take on the confessions of Nat Turner. Styron is a great writer.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I had no idea what it was about when I began reading it. I was totally unaware of the controversy surrounding it and was thus able to enjoy it as it was written, avoiding any distractions from pre-conceived notions. I just saw "Birth of a Nation" and while I enjoyed it I found deviations from the book to be an issue. As is usually the case in such instances. I still think it was a good book and well written.

Styron is a master of language, and I'm sure that contributed to his winning of the Pulitzer for this novel. More important to that decision, however, and although controversial, the story is an essential read for every American seeking to understand or empathize with the life of an African American slave in Virginia. The toil, the frustration, the disappointment, the subjugation, the disregard and contempt, the gross moral and ethical inconsistencies with the religious and civil norms of the time. This novel captures all of that, with a bit of insight into an exceptional historical case where slave--who probably was a bit crazy, but nonetheless whom the reader can relate to--acted on the impulses thousands of other slaves surely shared by lashing out and taking revenge on the race that propagated all of those tragedies of American history.

This is a tough one to review. Due to the subject, it is very difficult for one, in this day, to separate the book from the fact that it was written by a white Southerner. Obviously, this issue has been central to public discourse about it, as Styron himself acknowledges in the Afterword. Ultimately though, one has to judge the book on its own merits, right? Without question, Styron writes well. His prose is enjoyable to read in this as well as his other books. In historical fiction, though, characterization and authenticity are important. And the choices he makes for his (version of the) protagonist are questionable. Perhaps predictably, my big questions center on those choices that invited the most controversy in the book's early days. Namely, is there any reason to throw in a homosexual incident? It doesn't seem to fit the character we're watching. Would an educated Nat really have had rape fantasies about a white woman? Is the implication that it's in his nature? You see? One is immediately drawn into the socio-political issues. They're hard not to think about. But here's an even more challenging question. Would I (or anyone else) object to the choices made had

Styron's friend James Baldwin made them? I feel like I end up projecting my own take on slavery and race relations onto the book, including all the baggage that comes with that. Unfortunately, that makes this review so subjective as to be not very valuable. As a sidebar, I wonder if this book has come to be seen as ground zero for the intellectual movement against so-called cultural appropriation? For what it's worth, I'd recommend reading the book.

☺ The Confessions of Nat Turner ☺ • William Styron, 1966 Compelling is the word that comes to mind. This is a work of fiction based upon the actual event of Turner's 1831 bloody insurrection. It is my opinion that a reasonably accurate portrayal of slave life and slave/slave owner relationships is presented. I will say that for my own part that, most of the time I was rooting for Nat. I don't know that I have a clear understanding of Nat's hatred except in the obvious; except for his education, why was his hatred so deep as to cause him to this violence? (In an afterword, Styron states that he believes Nat was insane but that in his novel he did not want an insane Nat) A thought that I had as I read the accounting was what if Turner had directed his energies toward educating other slaves? (Of course this would have been illegal but Nat's owner educated him.) A compelling read and I'm giving it 5 full stars.

I really had a difficult time putting this book down. I was engaging from beginning to the end. I could feel the places in this book from the vivid descriptions. The characters were interesting and I felt the despair they must have gone through.

This book won the Pulitzer Prize and was written about 50 years ago. It is very appropriate to read in today's racially charged climate - and particularly in light of this year's movie called Birth of a Nation that is about Nat Turner and the uprising he led. I think anyone who sees the movie should read the book and visa versa. Form your own opinion. I certainly did.

This is a Pulitzer Prize winning novel by William Styron (the author of Sophie's Choice). It is based on a slave revolt in Virginia in 1831, lead by Nate Turner. Turner's capture and confession is the basis of this book. The novel is told in a 1st person narrative and is largely the work of Styron's imagination. While it is brilliantly written Styron does include graphic scenes of highly erotic obsessions with various white women and one of the most vivid homosexual encounters in modern literature. Probably because of these scenes Styron was savaged by many of the leading black artists of the day but the book has endured the criticism and is, in many ways, an

American Classic. Slavery is an indelible stain on the fabric of American culture. It will never be washed away. Turner is an aesthetic, a religious fanatic, a brilliant, tormented misanthropic, homicidal nihilist. His band of followers slaughters 52 men, women, and children. In retribution the white slaughter 200 blacks. Turner is captured, interrogated, and executed. Instead of inspiring a region wide uprising, he is brought down by his fellow blacks fighting alongside the plantation owners. It is a difficult book to read but it is a book that really should be read.

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