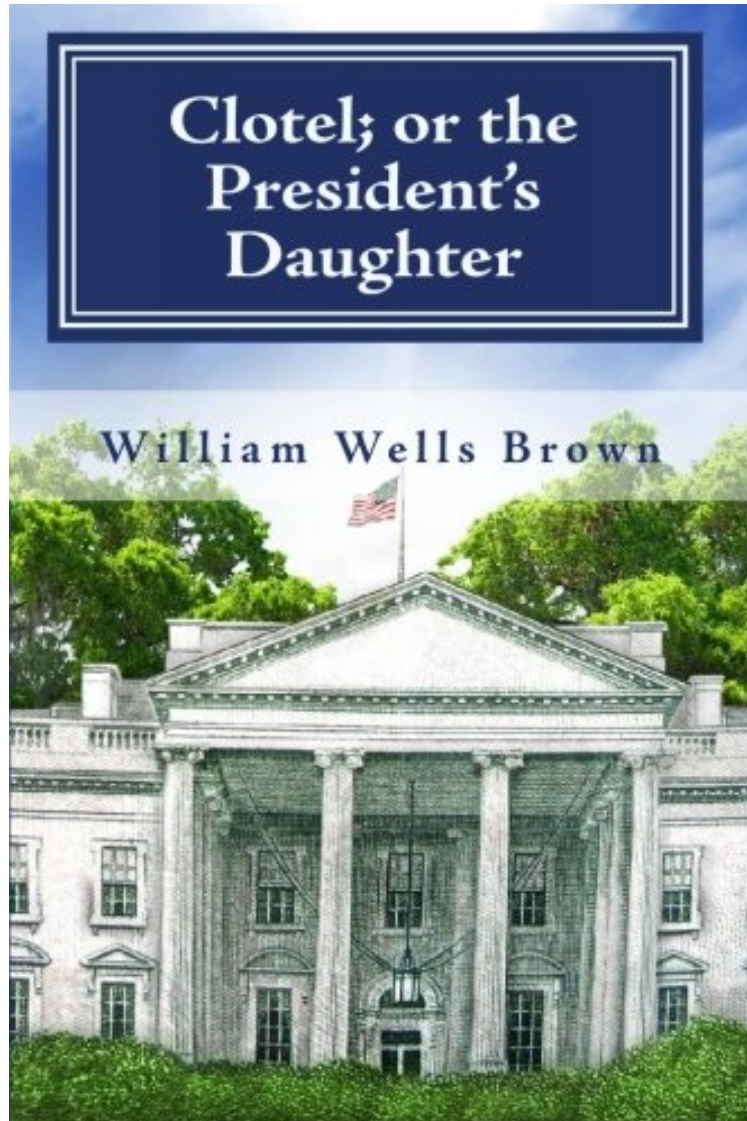


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Clotel; Or the President's Daughter

William Wells Brown

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William Wells Brown : Clotel; Or the President's Daughter before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Clotel; Or the President's Daughter:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. DO NOT BUY THIS EDITION!!By Amber MorrellThis is a review on the printing of the edition, not the actual text. Yes, this edition is the cheapest one available, but you get what you pay for! The text inside looks like it was printed straight from a Word document; it is unformatted, meaning the epigraphs at the beginning of the chapters run in with the text and cannot be differentiated. The type is RIDICULOUSLY tiny -- I'm a young college student without eye problems, but even I had a hard time reading this

book because of how much they tried to cut down on costs. The Penguin Classics edition is 320 pages. This edition is 89 pages. That should tell you just how tiny the type is in this edition. Even though it is "sold and shipped" by , you will get a "print to order" book made using CreateSpace. I ordered this book January 16th, 2016. Inside it says it was printed January 17th, 2016. This is not a quality book. The cover is a pixelated image copy and pasted from Google images that has nothing to do with the text. The back cover text is literally just the first bit of the preface. Terrible, terrible, terrible. Spend the extra seven bucks and get the Penguin Classics version! You won't regret it!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. IMPORTANT WORK IN AMERICAN LETTERS -- JUST DON'T CALL IT A NOVEL

By Nelson H. Wu

What if Founding Father Thomas Jefferson had an affair with a slave and fathered an illegitimate mulatto daughter? Author William Wells Brown uses this as a point of departure for *Clotel*, or the President's Daughter to examine race relations in 1800s America. Often billed as the first novel published by an African American, *Clotel* establishes many of the themes and introduces the stock characters that would populate what scholars refer to as the "slave narrative. This is, then, a seminal work in American letters. Just don't call it a novel. While the narrative contains romance, intrigue, breathless escapes and a cast of memorable characters, Brown is less interested in telling a typical 1800s melodrama than he is in presenting a series of polemical arguments that systematically reveal the peculiar institution as inhumane, un-American and, ultimately, sacrilegious. Time and again, Brown interrupts the story to deliver a pages-long diatribe meant to convince the reader of slavery's evils. As a result, the story keeps tripping over its own agenda. The story doesn't even concentrate exclusively on Clotel and her adventures. Rather, it focuses on Clotel, her sister and their mother, and traces the three women's lives after they are cruelly separated from each other. Clotel becomes a kept woman to a white, liberal-leaning gentleman. Cloistered in her own home, she dreams of seeing her mother, sister and eventually her own child again. This sets in motion numerous daring escapes as Clotel travels across the country, chasing her dreams and her freedom. This brief summary actually makes *Clotel* seem like a page-turner. It's not and Brown never intended it to be. It's a series of polemical essays built around a story. As the introduction to this Modern Library edition notes, Brown wrote the book for a European audience and he has no interest in writing a Dickens-esque or Dumas-like adventure, which is too bad since that's one reason why a more troublesome piece of literature like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, with its propulsive narrative, remains on high-school reading lists while *Clotel* is consigned to graduate seminars and usually buried deep within university curriculum. After all, if you're motivated enough to pick up this book, chances are that you hardly need convincing that slavery can never be justified on any level. Its best, then, to approach *Clotel* as a historical document a snapshot of a moment in time that captures what pro- and anti-slavery Americans were thinking just before the Civil War that would forever change the course of American history.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

fiction essay combined

By Wanda

This novel is interesting even though it is as much narrative essay against the evils of slavery as a piece of fiction. Mr. Brown aims his pen squarely at Christians, challenging them to live their faith. Himself an escaped slave who helped others escape, his story is an authentic indictment of slavery and it's interesting that rumors of Jefferson's children with Sally Hemings were well known long before modern historians had DNA evidence to prove it.

First published in December 1853, "*Clotel: or the President's Daughter*" was written amid then unconfirmed rumors that Thomas Jefferson had fathered children with one of his slaves. "*Clotel: or the President's Daughter*" story begins with the auction of his mistress, here called Currer, and their two daughters, Clotel and Althesa. The Virginian who buys Clotel falls in love with her, gets her pregnant, seems to promise marriage-then sells her. Escaping from the slave dealer, Clotel returns to Virginia disguised as a white man in order to rescue her daughter, Mary, a slave in her father's house. A fast-paced and harrowing tale of slavery and freedom, of the hypocrisies of a nation founded on democratic principles, "*Clotel: or the President's Daughter*" is more than a sensationalist novel. It is a founding text of the African American novelistic tradition, a brilliantly composed and richly detailed exploration of human relations in a new world in which race is a cultural construct.

About the Author

William Wells Brown (1816-1884) was a prominent abolitionist lecturer, novelist, playwright, and historian. Born into slavery in the Southern United States, Brown escaped to the North, where he worked for abolitionist causes and was a prolific writer. Brown was a pioneer in several different literary genres, including travel writing, fiction, and drama, and wrote what is considered to be the first novel by an African American.