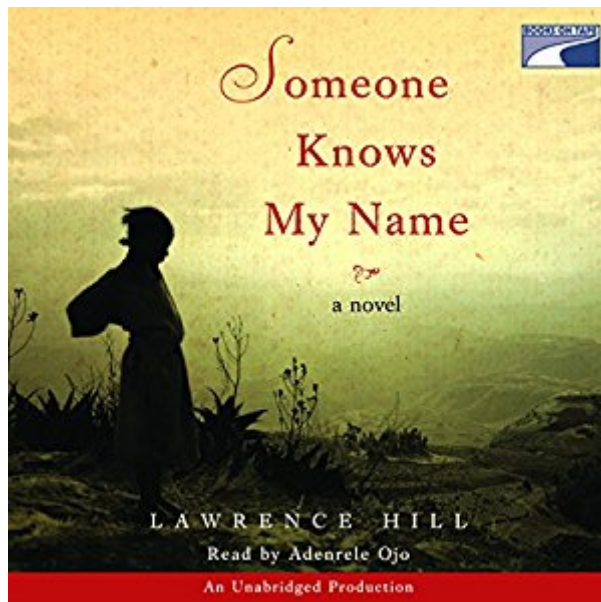


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# Someone Knows My Name



## Synopsis

Abducted as an 11-year-old child from her village in West Africa and forced to walk for months to the sea in a coffin "a string of slaves" Aminata Diallo is sent to live as a slave in South Carolina. But years later, she forges her way to freedom, serving the British in the Revolutionary War and registering her name in the historic "Book of Negroes." This book, an actual document, provides a short but immensely revealing record of freed Loyalist slaves who requested permission to leave the US for resettlement in Nova Scotia, only to find that the haven they sought was steeped in an oppression all of its own. Aminata's eventual return to Sierra Leone "passing ships carrying thousands of slaves bound for America" is an engrossing account of an obscure but important chapter in history that saw 1,200 former slaves embark on a harrowing back-to-Africa odyssey. Lawrence Hill is a master at transforming the neglected corners of history into brilliant imaginings, as engaging and revealing as only the best historical fiction can be. A sweeping story that transports the reader from a tribal African village to a plantation in the southern United States, from the teeming Halifax docks to the manor houses of London, *The Book of Negroes* introduces one of the strongest female characters in recent Canadian fiction, one who cuts a swath through a world hostile to her colour and her sex. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Narration by Adenrele Ojo - nicely done I was hesitant to read this book at first. I'm glad I did.

Appreciative for Mr. Lawrence Hill conviction to bring to light things about the slave trading that

happened in the Americas and elsewhere in the world. Took me two months to read. Had to periodically take breaks because some things angered me. A very good fictional novel about character Aminata's adventures from her home in Africa, to slave boat trip to America, her life as a slave and her eventual freedom. Nice attempt at history lessons. This book stirred all kinds of emotions within me. If the story was true, I would adventure to say Aminata's life was divinely orchestrated to work as a teachable experience for us to read, participate in and maybe garner some hope. Aminata's goal, since being a little girl, was to be a great storyteller (djeli) and that is what she became. I'm saddened that the people who are truly ignorant of the plight of the slaves and the horrible circumstances of their existence will never pick up this book to learn about the atrocities. They will probably remain detached yelling foul play, playing the race card, etc. instead of learning, then acknowledging that many people's lives were adversely affected because of slave trading. This is one reason I'll give this book 5 stars...if more people demonstrate an interest in this book, maybe, just maybe, it will get into the hands of some who may change their view point about slavery, slave trading and the false assumption that this was a great part of history and "those people" were well taken care of and lacked nothing. We did them a favor!!! Yes, I recommend this book.

This is without a doubt one of the best historical novels I've read. Would that all historical novelists might do the amount of research Lawrence Hill has clearly done for *Someone Knows My Name*. The book is epic, following the life of a young girl captured in a small village in Africa and tracing the arduous chapters of her life. She is wise, gifted, resourceful and kind. Her character would be an inspiration to any woman, young or old, struggling to meet the challenges of life. This book is also a well told tale that serves to educate all who read it of the path Africans who were sold into slavery were forced to follow. I would like to see this book introduced as an academic text in schools across our nation. It would serve as introduction to the reality that while racism is a real force to be reckoned with, "race" is an artificial construct created to keep some in power, while exploiting others. What is real, and what is here illustrated, is that ancestry and place of origin are intrinsic to each individual. Our roots call to us, even as our destinies unfold in an entirely unexpected direction. Excellent writing. Exceptional storytelling. Well worth the read.

It is the strength of the central character Aminata Diallo that carries this book. Her story is as heartbreaking as it is inspirational. A happy childhood in an African village is brutally cut short when Aminata is captured by slave traders, made to walk for weeks to the coast, then shipped to America under the harshest and most harrowing conditions. Her intelligence and facility with language are

the only things that see her through a life filled with unspeakable losses. Although fictional, I have no doubt that the cruel details of this character's life align with those of the real women and men who were sold into slavery. I recommend this book highly, particularly given the current cultural conversations around race and the value of black lives. People can argue the hashtag all they want, but there was a time when black lives didn't matter to the majority of white Americans, Brits, and Europeans - a tragedy of epic proportions.

The story was engrossing, and I wanted to see how things turned out for the main character. This was a terrific book with no attempt at sugar coating life as a slave or a black person. I was reading it during the riots in Charlottesville, and it felt especially relevant given the racial climate. I like historical fiction, and at the end, the author explains which parts are true, and which parts are fictitious which was great. This should be a must read for high school students as it brings history to life in an engaging and relevant manner.

Fascinating story of African woman's life. Based on true events in history she travels from her small village to American south to NYC to Canada back to Africa and then to London to help abolitionist bring about end to slavery. Her quick mind sets her apart and opens doors of opportunity that allows her access to many people and places but she never gave up dream of home. Great read.

This book drew a lot of emotion and brought up the undying questioning and longing for many African Americans: Where is 'Home'? Where do I belong? With the popularity of AncestryDNA testing, for which I have participated, this brought a connection to the notion of how African Americans are 'biological and genealogical nomads'. This book gives a written description of 'HOW' people like myself have upwards of 40 different countries in our DNA that don't include 'America'. I loved this book, though I am not an 'Aminata Diallo', I connected with the concept that I am a product of the souls she encountered along her way, bad and good. For this, I am grateful for the story.

The reason I gave 4 stars was because the first three chapters were so disgusting ( as a non-slave) that I thought the whole book might be the same but as I read on it became more and more interesting and a great story. This author has a good imagination without going overboard. Therese Short

I really enjoyed reading this book and once I started I didn't want to put it down. It was intriguing reading and I wanted to keep reading to find out what was next. This even though a fictional account should be mandatory reading for all high school students. Much better than most history books.

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