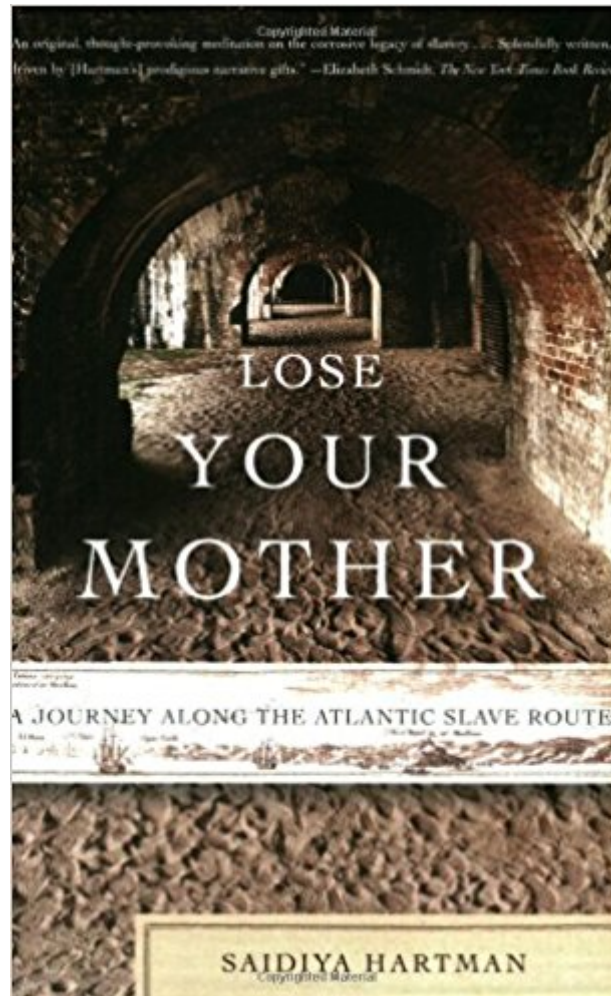




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# Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along The Atlantic Slave Route



## Synopsis

In *Lose Your Mother*, Saidiya Hartman traces the history of the Atlantic slave trade by recounting a journey she took along a slave route in Ghana. Following the trail of captives from the hinterland to the Atlantic coast, she reckons with the blank slate of her own genealogy and vividly dramatizes the effects of slavery on three centuries of African and African American history. The slave, Hartman observes, is a stranger—torn from family, home, and country. To lose your mother is to be severed from your kin, to forget your past, and to inhabit the world as an outsider. There are no known survivors of Hartman's lineage, no relatives in Ghana whom she came hoping to find. She is a stranger in search of strangers, and this fact leads her into intimate engagements with the people she encounters along the way and with figures from the past whose lives were shattered and transformed by the slave trade. Written in prose that is fresh, insightful, and deeply affecting, *Lose Your Mother* is a "landmark text" (Robin D. G. Kelley, author of *Freedom Dreams*).

## Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; Reprint edition (January 22, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0374531153

ISBN-13: 978-0374531157

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 21.1 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 26 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #33,028 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #7 in Books > History > Africa > West Africa #31 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Africa #99 in Books > Travel > Travel Writing

## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. In this rousing narrative, Berkeley professor Hartman traces first-hand the progress of her ancestors-forced migrants from the Gold Coast—in order to illuminate the history of the Atlantic slave trade. Chronicling her time in Ghana following the overland slave route from the hinterland to the Atlantic, Hartman admits early on to a naïve search for her identity: "Secretly I wanted to belong somewhere or, at least, I wanted a convenient explanation of why I felt like a stranger." Fortunately, Hartman eschews the simplification of such a quest, finding that Africa's American expatriates often find themselves more lost than when they started. Instead, Hartman channels her

longing into facing tough questions, nagging self-doubt and the horrors of the Middle Passage in a fascinating, beautifully told history of those millions whose own histories were revoked in "the process by which lives were destroyed and slaves born." Shifting between past and present, Hartman also considers the "afterlife of slavery," revealing Africa-and, through her transitive experience, America-as yet unhealed by de-colonization and abolition, but showing signs of hope. Hartman's mix of history and memoir has the feel of a good novel, told with charm and passion, and should reach out to anyone contemplating the meaning of identity, belonging and homeland. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Hartman journeys along the route taken by captured slaves from the interior of what is now Ghana to the Atlantic coast. With no specific trail to follow from her own lineage, Hartman views her search as a coming to terms with her status as stranger and wanderer in the African diaspora. She meets African American expatriates who have been living in Ghana for 20 years, not fully integrated in Africa but alienated from America. She also meets Ghanians who deride or exploit the desperate longing they see in the throngs of black Americans who visit the slave castles each year. She explores the perspective on slaves and slavery held by Africans versus the African American view and how those perspectives affect diasporan efforts to reconnect and to reckon with history. Reflecting on the complex history of slavery, Hartman integrates memories of her own family's journey to become African Americans from the Middle Passage through the Caribbean to the U.S. An eloquent and thoughtful look at the Atlantic slave trade and its resounding impact on the African American psyche. Vanessa Bush Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I don't know where to start. I accept that I am African. Its my DNA. Its my genetics. Its why I have a high risk of sickle cell, high blood pressure, ect. Its why I have kinky hair. Its why I am made for the sun. I've felt so lost and confused. Presently, I despise the hyphenated American attached to my African. Why? Because I feel mistreated. I see my people getting robbed of life and no convictions. We have the same issues here or anywhere in the world. You can argue with another person over what side of the city they live on. Or debate with a Native American over whos history was the worst. Its no different then our brothers and sisters on the Continent. Its hard for us to comprehend that they will not get it. Nor will we get their pain. Maybe an understanding or tolerance but its life. You were blessed to return to the Continent. Although you visited other neighboring countries, I felt

like Africa was being seen as a country and not an actual Continent where millions of various ethnic groups, cultures, and way of life of people. It's not fair to generalize. It's so sad that so called "Black America" is still having identity issues. You made the DNA testing sound as if it was useless. I know for a fact people have discovered their biological parents, siblings, and yes even their families on the Continent. Whose to say you even descended from Ghanians or the next? If you do fine, but now all of us do. Some of us could be Nigerian, Senegalese, Congo.. and more. To me, Ghana has gotten much better. It's a win win situation for all. I'd say... it's like hey let me promote unity and tourism and I'll help you dual citizenship (Right to Abode) as well as affordable land and more to start your own businesses. Let's not act like countries were built on everyone being gentle and simple minded. Maybe it's the hustler in me. As long as you don't harm me, we are good. In fact, the African Caribbeans were recently granted Ghanaian Citizenship. So it must not be that bad. I'm seeing younger and younger going to Ghana. There is also more countries to experience. You may not like Ghana.. but you may love Congo or something. Thank you so much for writing this book. I learned a lot and I am grateful. You know if we can call someone Asian or realize that Whites proudly boast about being European (celebrating Irish heritage), and even having the world speaking European languages (English and Spanish) due to their colonization and supremacy to divide and conquer... we must not be Anti-African. It's sad.. and it's due to self-hate in our communities. You are so quick to call yourself a social constructed label to separate yourselves from being African. I'm talking to who ever reads this. There is nothing wrong with having your cultures.. but be real with yourselves. Stop denying being African. That's your genetics. You can't change that based off a "race" aka color and a nationality aka geography. Blessings to all. If you want to look for your Continental families. Definitely try Ancestry, 23andMe, FTDNA, and upload to GED match. There is a google chrome scanner for Ancestry to even create an excel for you to find them. They would love to get to know you. Look at the reunion videos online. Join the DNA african descendants FB group and watch your heart opens up even more for your beautiful African selves.

Thank you for your wonderful book. I enjoyed it immensely. Your look at the slave trade from the point of view of the commoner is much needed and provides lots more data on a subject that is often described and presented in ONLY the top down, objective, sterile, them vs. us manner. The information from the bottom, in my mind, is richer. It allows everyday people the luxury of participating in the discussion. They can't say, "I don't know," "I was not involved." Few are correct. When evil is around, all are impacted, then and now. The Transatlantic Slave Trade was that type of evil. Your representation of it is much needed. I am only now in 2015 reading your book. I am sure

your thinking has deepened from your experiences of traveling the slave route AND meeting the descendants. As a black American, I too experience the lingering, un-articulated feelings of "alien," "stranger" in the midst of everybody. Like you, I watch many people, of all races and colors in the US and else where, try to separate them self from the slave trade. It was not me, it was my ancestors, "they say." Your work allows ALL to grapple with the visual and non-visual clues in our midst that the hurt, pain and longing of "losing your mother" is very real and present in contemporary life. We are nowhere near post-racial.

There is something about the way she writes that just has a way of piercing your heart at its core. Her writing is honest and straightforward. i feel like she wrote this book for me that's how deeply I connected with it. As a daughter of the diaspora, a daughter of the enslaved, i appreciate this book so much. No, my wounds aren't healed but I feel like I can move on to healing and take the next generation on to healing and moving forward with the knowledge that I have gained from this book. The ancestors would be proud.

Saidiya weaves a compelling story of the search for one's identity while trying to make sense of the horrors of the slave trade. Her vivid descriptions of the infamous slave castles, combined with a uncanny ability to put you in chains with the slaves waiting for the slavers, create vivid mental images that simultaneously make you want to put the book down and keep reading. Her material is well researched and moves you back and forth from the present to the past to the present, all within the context of a search we all need to take.

Well written but it is to me in content a book written by someone who had lost her perspective to a white-washed ideological understanding of her cultural background. My stars aren't for whether the book is beautiful in words but I'm disappointed with the story.

Seriously a beautiful book, kept me turning pages. It's great if you want to dive more into African American heritage, and the Black Freedom struggle.

If you take the time to read this book you will learn more about the story of the Afrikan than anything MLK or any civil rights figure has ever told or pretended to know..This is the real story and unfortunately it did not begin in Ghana, which is why we as Afrikan desc must teach our children the other story as well The one about Abrahams roots and the history of Arabs enslavement of his

bredren have fun!

I am only half way through the book but since the very first pages I have found it difficult to put Loose Your Mother down. Captivating, brilliant, and necessary.

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