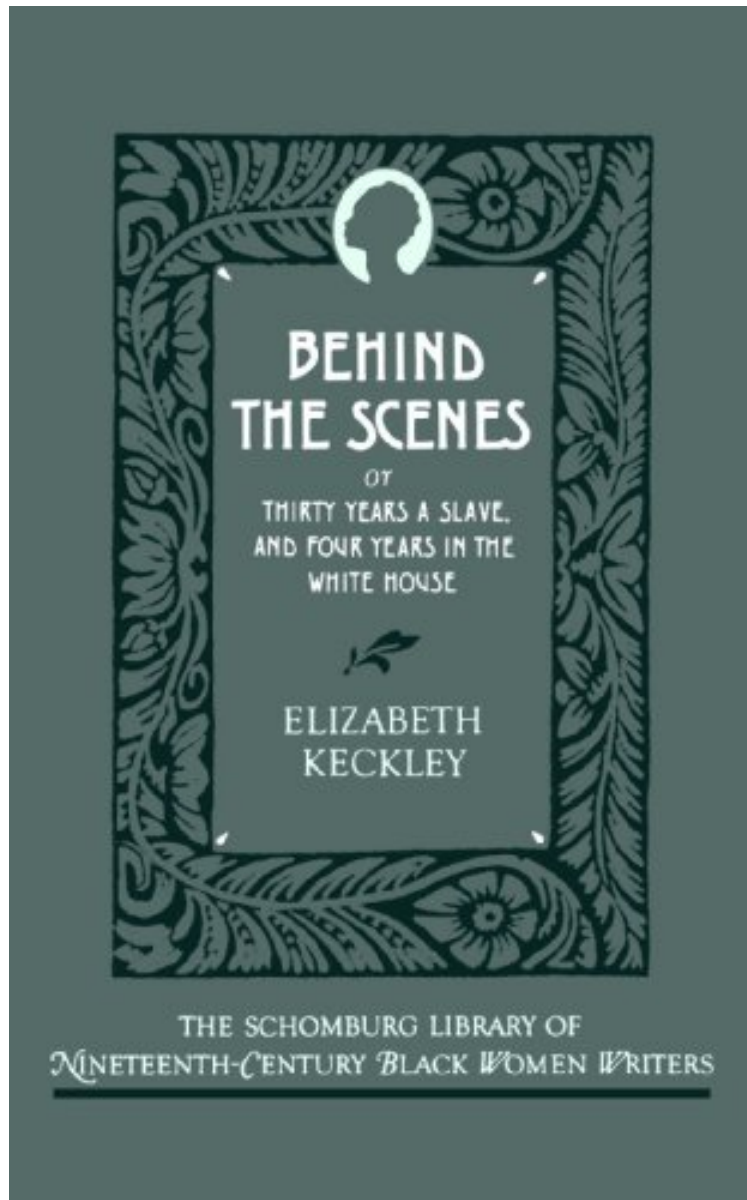


(Mobile pdf) Behind the Scenes: Or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House (The Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers)

## Behind the Scenes: Or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House (The Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers)

*Elizabeth Keckley*

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Behind the Scenes: Or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House* (The Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The fictionalized biography draws heavily on the subject's 19th Century book *By Mae Beth Williams* What a cast of (TRUE!) characters! Mrs. Keckley is the more interesting character. She deals with the obviously difficult Mrs. Lincoln with grace, compassion and humor. As one reviewer noted, after 39 years as a slave, dealing with difficult owners, Keckley had skills and experience for her interesting relationship with Mrs. Lincoln. In doing research to serve as book club discussion leader, I also discovered that Mrs. Keckley thrived for many years in the most lucrative professions available to nineteenth century women. We learn through the book that Mrs. Keckley was a highly accomplished entrepreneur. Integrity and loyalty are among the many virtues of Mrs. Keckley and in the end, they are her downfall. Some reviewers castigate our author for her detailed descriptions of fashion creation and business building while others praise her descriptions of Washington D.C. for the appreciation of the atmosphere of city during the late 19th century. Judge for yourself when you read this one. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *A Lively Look at Mr. Mrs. Lincoln* By Atomic Dog This is penned by Mrs. Lincoln's former seamstress. She was present at every key moment in the Lincoln presidency (ironically, she had served the same role for the wife of Jefferson Davis before the confederacy). I learned more about Lincoln as a man and as a leader from this former slave than I have from all the scholars on the subject. Very well written and researched. This should be required reading for school children. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This was an interesting yet at the same time painful story to read; I'm glad Elizabeth is still being remembered today. *By Mystic by the Lake* This was an interesting yet at the same time painful story to read. Elizabeth really had a hard life, but worked diligently to overcome her slave status and earlier abuses. It was fascinating to read about her close relationship with the Lincoln. It was also sad to read about her hardship imposed on her by Mrs. Lincoln's "Old Clothes" scandal. I know she eventually died alone (her son died during the Civil War). But I am also happy that she is being remembered today. I think Jennifer Chiaverini's novel "Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker" brought attention back to Elizabeth and these memoirs.

Part slave narrative, part memoir, and part sentimental fiction, *Behind the Scenes* depicts Elizabeth Keckley's years as a slave and subsequent four years in Abraham Lincoln's White House during the Civil War. As public drama privately experienced, Keckley's work presents Jefferson Davis and his wife, Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd Lincoln, and even Stephen Douglas and "Mrs. Senator Douglas" in the foreground, with the war, and slavery as the issue that precipitated it, in the background. Through the eyes of this black woman--an ex-slave, seamstress, and dressmaker--we see a wide range of historical figures and events of the antebellum South, the Washington of the Civil War years, and the final stages of the war.

From *Library Journal* The life and times of one remarkable woman encompasses *Behind the Scenes*. Keckley's first 30 years were spent as a slave, and the cruelties and injustices of her life are related clearly and succinctly. This enlightening memoir recounts how she was beaten and how she became a dressmaker to support her master and his family, how determined she was to purchase freedom for herself and her son, how her friends in St. Louis came to her aid, how she became Mary Todd Lincoln's dressmaker and close friend, and her perspectives and experiences from her inside view of Lincoln's White House. Keckley emerges as a calm and confident person who speaks of a very tumultuous period of American history. Reader Ameria Jones does a superb job, reading with a clear, strong voice. The musical performances are provided by David Hab. Recommended. Denise A. Garofalo, Mid-Hudson Lib. System, Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. `Invaluable ... Elizabeth Keckley's memoir of her life as a White House dressmaker for Mary Todd Lincoln ... [is a] curious gem' New York Times Book From the Back Cover Part slave narrative, part memoir, and part sentimental fiction *Behind the Scenes* depicts Elizabeth Keckley's years as a slave and subsequent four years in Abraham Lincoln's White House during the Civil War. Through the eyes of this black woman, we see a wide range of historical figures and events of the antebellum South, the Washington of the Civil War years, and the final stages of the war.