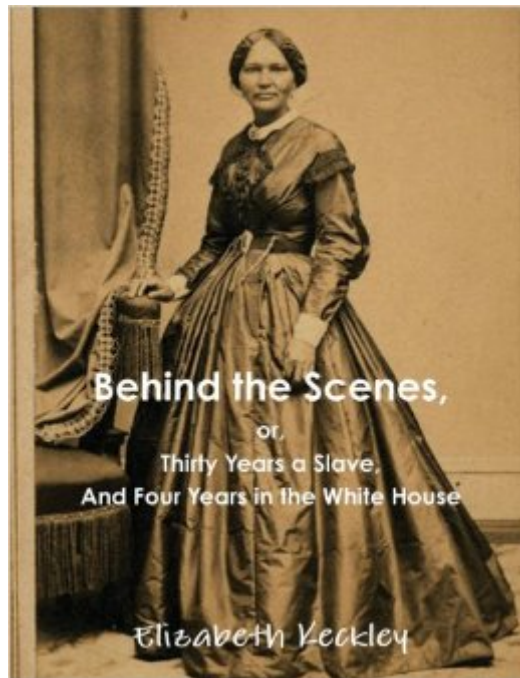


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# Behind The Scenes, Or, Thirty Years A Slave, And Four Years In The White House



## Synopsis

An autobiographical narrative, *BEHIND THE SCENES* traces Elizabeth Keckley's life from her enslavement in Virginia and North Carolina to her time as seamstress to Mary Todd Lincoln in the White House during Abraham Lincoln's administration. It was quite controversial at the time of its release--an uncompromising work that transgressed Victorian boundaries between public and private life, and lines of race, gender, and society.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (12 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Elizabeth Keckley wrote *BEHIND THE SCENES OR, THIRTY YEARS A SLAVE, AND FOUR YEARS IN THE WHITE HOUSE* in 1868. While the book received a great deal of attention when it was published, both she and the book were largely forgotten until the recent publication of *MRS. LINCOLN'S DRESSMAKER* by Jennifer Chiaverini in which she both bases and quotes much of her book. In short, this book is about Mrs. Keckley's life from her birth as a slave through her years as a seamstress and entrepreneur to her relationship with Mrs. Lincoln following President Lincoln's assassination. The second focus is on the character, relationships, and actions of Mrs. Lincoln from her time in the White House to a year after President Lincoln's assassination. It is not at all what one would expect to read from a woman born into slavery. However, there is so much literary beauty in this book that I am including many examples of what I found that fueled my interest. In the preface, Mrs. Keckley explained that she wrote the book to "place Mrs. Lincoln in a better light before the world." She continues that both their characters are "at stake, since I have been intimately

associated with that lady in the most eventful periods of her life. I have been her confidant...and have been party to all her movements." The book includes several letters from Mrs. Lincoln to Mrs. Keckley verifying their close relationship. One, sent from Chicago after the assassination reads, "My Dear Lizzie,...I consider you my best living friend....Always truly yours, M. L." She began by telling the story of her childhood as a slave, born in Virginia. Her father lived on another plantation and was cruelly moved further away. She never saw him again but hoped to see him in heaven.

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