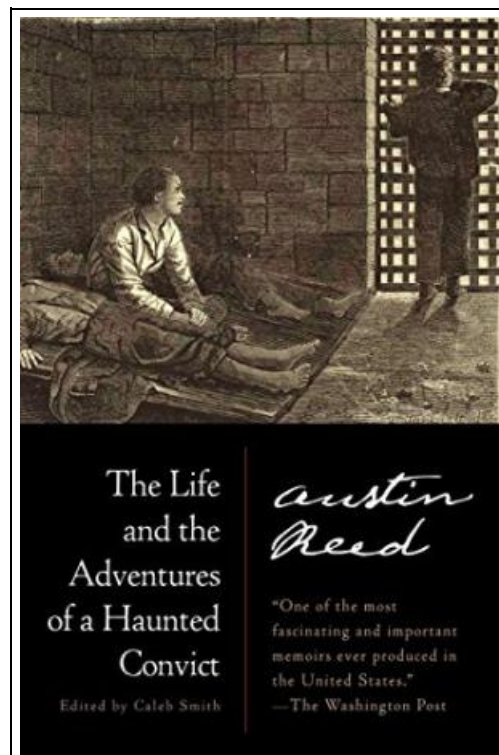


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Random House USA Inc, United States, 2017. Paperback. Condition: New. Reprint. Language: English . Brand New Book. The earliest known prison memoir by an African American writer--recently discovered and authenticated by a team of Yale scholars--sheds light on the longstanding connection between race and incarceration in America. [A] harrowing [portrait] of life behind bars . . . part confession, part jeremiad, part lamentation, part picaresque novel (reminiscent, at times, of Dickens and Defoe). --Michiko Kakutani, The New York Times NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE In 2009, scholars at Yale University came across a startling manuscript: the memoir of Austin Reed, a free black man born in the 1820s who spent most of his early life ricocheting between forced labor in prison and forced labor as an indentured servant. Lost for more than one hundred and fifty years, the handwritten document is the first known prison memoir written by an African American. Corroborated by prison records and other documentary sources, Reed s text gives a gripping first-person account of an antebellum Northern life lived outside slavery that nonetheless bore, in its day-to-day details, unsettling resemblances to that very institution. Now, for the first time, we can hear Austin Reed s story as he meant to tell it. He was born to a middle-class black family in the boomtown of Rochester, New York, but when his father died, his mother struggled to make ends meet. Still a child, Reed was placed as an indentured servant to a nearby family of white farmers near Rochester. He was caught attempting to set fire to a building and sentenced to ten years at Manhattan s brutal House of Refuge, an early juvenile reformatory that would soon become known for beatings and forced labor. Seven years later, Reed...



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