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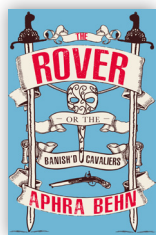
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OROONOKO

APHRA BEHN

- A work of vital importance – one of the founding texts of the novel form, vying for the title of the first English novel.
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First published in 1688, *Oroonoko, or, The Royal Slave* is a short, politically charged novella by the Restoration playwright – and spy – Aphra Behn, and is arguably one of the founding texts of the novel form. Purporting to chart the life of an African prince, Oroonoko, who is tricked into slavery and taken to South America, the narrative follows the Prince through his trials of love, loss and rebellion.

Vying for the title of the first English novel – and certainly the first to be read as an indictment of the treatment of Africans – *Oroonoko* has all the hallmarks of Behn's stage works, which are widely considered to be amongst the most important of the Restoration period.

'All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn which is, most scandalously but rather appropriately, in Westminster Abbey, for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds.'

VIRGINIA WOOLF

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Aphra Behn (c.1640–89), or Astrea, was a poet, author and playwright, and is often cited as being one of the leading lights of the Restoration period. She is remembered today as being one of the first English women to earn a living with her pen, as well as for her work as a spy for Charles II. Her best-known works today are a Restoration drama, *The Rover*, and *Oroonoko, or, The Royal Slave*, a short work of fiction.

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