Book Review

By Saunders Redding

WEEP NO MORE, by Janet Stevenson, Viking Press, 625 Madison Avenue, New York. 313 pp. $3.95.

Elizabeth Van Lew, born to slaveholding parents in the 1830's, "risked everything that is dear . . . friends, fortune . . . life itself . . . that slavery be abolished and the Union preserved."

Mr. Redding

These are the words inscribed on her tombstone by her anti-slavery friends.

What risks Elizabeth Van Lew took and how she took them are the subject of this fictional biography by Janet Stevenson.

* * *

FOR FICTIONAL purposes Elizabeth Van Lew's story begins in the second year of the Civil War.

She was then a woman of thirty, dedicated to freedom, and a spy in freedom's cause. It was not easy.

Richmond, where she had been born and which was now the capital of the Confederacy, was under periodic seige.

Everything was closely guarded, Confederate security agents swarmed everywhere, and the normal precautions and suspicions generated in a beleagured city were multiplied by the operations of desperate and ambitious men.

* * *

ELIZABETH'S problem was to be an effective informer, to outwit the opposition, and her job was made the more difficult because she was so well known in the city for her anti-slavery views.

She had advertised these views by freeing the slaves she had inherited, by breaking off her engagement to the scion of a prominent Virginia slaveholder, and by taking into her house, on a basis approaching social equality, a free colored man and his educated daughter..

No Southern sympathizer could conceive of these actions as anything but irrational, and Elizabeth came to be known as "Crazy Bet" — a cause of acute embarrassment to her family's old friends and the butt of rude jokes for the gamins.

* * *

PLAYING THIS role for all it was worth, as well as adopting various outlandish disguises, Elizabeth was able to get into the most closely guarded places and to ingratiate herself with the most security-minded men.

She engineered escapes from Libby Prison; she hid runaway slaves; she ferreted out secret information — troop movements and disposition, matters of Confederate planning — upon which some of the principal stratagems of the Union were based.

Though he had never seen her, Stanton, secretary of war, trusted and praised her. Lincoln himself thanked her.

* * *

MRS. STEVENSON tells this part of Elizabeth's story against a convincingly realistic background.

The evocation of the sights, the sentiments and the conditions of a city in turmoil and of a country in the throes of a disastrous civil war has authenticity, historical as well as emotional.

Where authenticity falls down is in the story of Elizabeth's love.

While she herself remains vital and real, Will Franklin, the captain of Union volunteers — a prisoner when she first meets him — is a stock figure out of romantic melodrama.

He is not a living person. He is a type, easily imagined but never realized, never felt, never brought to life.

The love story Mrs. Stevenson tailors to his measurements, using all the old melodramatic devices — near-fatal illnesses, sliding panels to secret rooms, fortuitous misunderstandings—fails rather badly.

Mrs. Stevenson seems to have labored under the notion that Elizabeth's story had to have a love element. She was mistaken.

Weep No More needed only Elizabeth Van Lew, the historical characters whose lives touched her own, and the authentic background that Mrs. Stevenson so ably evokes.

Our Readers Write

If you have a problem, let us help. Make letters short. Address AFRO Magazine Section, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore 1, Md.

ADDRESS

Big Island, Va.—How can I find out the addresses of some of the outstanding singers. I would like to know how to get in touch with Mahalia Jackson and Clara Ward.

MISS L. E. BROWN

You can always write to recording artists in care of the companies for which they record.

* * *

QUOTE

NEWARK, N.J. — Where does the quotation "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," come from?

MRS. C. BERRY

They are the last lines of Thomas Gray's poem "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College."

* * *

POETRY

SEAFORD, Del. — Will you please tell me the name and the author of the poem that begins: "Tell me not in mournful numbers, Life is but an empty dreams, for the soul is dead that slumbers. . . ."

And please supply the next line.

"Tis from "Psalm of Life" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and the missing line is: "and things are not what they seem."

Your Prayers Are Asked

For a young woman with a spinal deformity and her devoted sister. . . . For a dear brother seriously ill far from his loved ones. . . . For baby Dawn that she may be cured . . . For sister-in-law Dorothy, suffering from cancer. . . . For an only brother, Frank, very ill with kidney trouble. . . . For a kind friend, Fred. . . . For a beloved husband in great pain. . . . For Stephen's mother. . . . For a good son very ill. . . . For a twin sister in her great sorrow. . . . For a devoted brother and uncle that his operation may be successful. . . . For Derek. . . . For little Michele. . . . For a dear Nanny. . . . For Irene's sister. . . . For a brother suffering from an incurable blood disease. . . . For Sophia. . . . For Carol.

And for all sick and suffering people wherever they may be, that it may please God to heal them. And that Peace may prevail in the world.

ENGAGED

ORANGE, N.J. — I am engaged and wear my signet ring on my right hand. My friends say, however, that I should wear it on my left hand. Please settle this matter for me.

PFC THOMAS JOHNSON

The right hand, in this case, is the LEFT hand, third finger, soldier.

FOR PROBLEMS

HARTFORD, Conn. — Please put this notice in your magazine to help those people with problems.

If you have a problem, first ask God's forgiveness for your sins, then read the 121st Psalm and go to church.

IRENE GAYLE

* * *

POPULATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. — This may seem simple, but I have been unable to find it any place. Just how many people are there in the entire world?

JAMES BRYANT

Roughly 2,528,000,000.

* * *

HISTORY WEEK

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Last school year, 1957, while celebrating events in February naturally, Negro History Week was included. This particular class decided to do all related information in poetry.

Through the concerted effort of the group by using encyclopedias and related materials, we came by this poem which might prove inspiring, interesting and timely since so much interest is being concentrated toward the scientific area of education.

George Washington Carver,
from a slave he came
One of America's greatest sons
of fame;
A scientist, an educator and
scholar great
Lived by truth, compassion—
not hate.
So humble and plain, lean and
small
Praise from others, he cared
least of all;
But worked untiring from day
to day
To grow in knowledge the
scientific way.
From peanuts, potatoes and
Nature's pure clay
Made hundred of products, we
use today;
Powders, paints, oils and
creams
Came by visions he had as
dreams.
He hoped as the days went by
Others somehow, he might inspire;
An American, worthy to be
kept in mind
For deeds and acts which helped mankind.

4L - Class
Diggs School

Looking For Someone

If you want to locate missing friends or relatives, enclose $1 in an envelope along with a description of the person, where and when he was last heard from. Send it to Missing Persons Editor, AFRO-AMERICAN Magazine, 628 N Eutaw St., Baltimore, 1, Md. Persons with information concerning these missing people address all correspondence to Missing Persons, c/o AFRO-AMERICAN, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore 1, Md.

MARILYN DAVIS of Baltimore, Md is looking for her mother, Mrs. Hazel Davis, whom she has never seen. Her last known address was 237 Bond St. in 1933 . She use to sing and dance in and around Baltimore and New York. She should be around 40 or 42, light brown skinned, about '5 7" or 8 and a little on the stout side.

* * *

MRS. MARTHA J. BRUNSON would like to locate her two brothers whom she hasn't seen or heard from since 1919. The first brother is Rev. Raymond P. Williams, age between 80 and 85 years old. His last known address was a place called Celler Park, Savannah, Ga., and he worked for a Dr. Walker. His wife's name was Mrs. Sarah Williams.

The other brother is Mr. Judson (Bossy) Williams, age between 60-70 years old. Last known address, Winter-Haven, Florida. He worked for Jackson Lumber Co. Has two sons.

Opra Cooper of Newark, N.J. is looking for her cousin, Johnnie Robinson. He is about 6 feet tall and weighs about 200 pounds, brown-skinned. His last known address was Philadelphia, Pa.

* * *

JOHN WILLIAMS of Baltimore, Md. is looking for Mrs. Glenala Anderson. Her last known address was Baltimore, Maryland. She is light brown-skinned with light brown hair, brown eyes, with a few freckles on her face. She is about 5 feet 8 inches, weighing about 150 pounds.

* * *

JULIA CHEATHAM of Montgomery Ala. is looking for her brother Eddie Howard. His last known address was Cleveland, Ohio. He is very dark, weighs about 200 pounds and is about 5 feet tall.

* * *

FREDDIE OF PHILADELPHIA, Pa. is looking for Mr. Robert Griffith. He left New Castle, Dela., in the 1920's. His mother's name is Mrs. Mary E. and father, John D. Griffit.

* * *

MRS. ELIOSE B. LEMON of Philadelphia, Pa. is looking for her second cousin, Rose Mitchel Montgomery. Her native home is Loan Star, S.C. She has two sisters. Her last known address was Elloree, S.C.

* * *

CHARITY POPE of La Grange, N.C., is looking for her daughter who has been gone for six years. She was last known to be working at the Hotel Cherry and living on Dardalles St., Wilson, N.C. Her name is Mrs. Rebecca Pope. Her maiden name was Dixon.

* * *

FOUND:

Mrs. Cora Bruce, 1703 Crystal Ave., Baltimore 13, Maryland, Telephone Eastern 7-8523 has information sought by Mrs. Agnes Ruth Brown Fisher of Washington, relative to lost kinsmen.

Legal Advisor

By ROBERT WATTS
Baltimore Attorney

A girl I used to date gave birth to a baby in 1953 and now she is asking me to give her money stating that I am the father of the child. Do I have to pay?

Ans. If you are the father then morally you should want to assume your rightful responsibility.

However, under the law if a girl does not bring an action within two years of the birth of the child, or in the case where the alleged father made payments, within two years of the last payment, she cannot recover. It's what is referred to as "barred by limitations."

* * *

My uncle died and the title of his car was in his name only. I have been using the car. How can I get the title in my name?

Ans. First of all, you should not drive the car. You should consult an attorney. If the only asset he owned was the car, and there was no other estate, you can file with the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles.

All the heirs must sign and the car be titled in the one all the heirs agree on.

* * *

I live in New York City and want to get a divorce. I understand from your column that you have to live in Maryland one year. I work in New York but I have a friend in Baltimore who will say I pay her rent for a room there over a year. If this is done, can I get a divorce?

Ans. No. The law requires that you actually be in the State one year and intend to make it your home for an indefinite period. Since you have not lived here, paying rent will not suffice.

The Bridge Table

North-South vulnerable
West dealer

NORTH
♠—A K J 10 9 3
♥—4 2
♦—Q J 3
♣—Q 8

WEST
♠—Q 8 2
♥—10 8
♦—9 8 7 6 4 5
♣—K 5

EAST
♠—7 6
♥—Q 9 7 6 5 3
♦—A 2
♣—J 7 3

SOUTH
♠—5 4
♥—A K J
♦—K 10
♣—A 10 9 6 4 2

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
			2 ♣
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♦	Pass	5 ♥
Pass	5 NT	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: six of diamonds

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing!

Almost every bridge player, when asked what the Blackwood Convention is, will invariably reply: "Oh, it's a simple thing, a bid of four no-trumps is a way to ask for aces."

While this is true, the convention goes much farther than that. Next time you want to test someone on his knowledge of the convention, ask him how is it possible to reach a contract of five no-trump after the convention has been initiated.

The South player in this week's hand used Blackwood to perfection in reaching his five no-trump contract.

The bidding was opened with a spade, South naming clubs, and progressing to the Blackwood convention after the jump raise in spades by North.

Not finding West with two aces, he signed off with a bid of FIVE HEARTS. This is not an ace-showing bid — it is a specific request or demand that partner close the auction at five no-trumps.

The rules state: "if the initiator of the convention wishes to end the bidding at a contract of five no-trump, a bid by him of any unbid suit shall be a demand that partner call five no-trump.

The six of diamond was opened, taken by the ace and the suit continued! Declarer took his king and successfully finessed the 10 of spades.

The spade suit was run, declarer shedding four clubs and discarding his fifth club on the established queen of diamonds. The closed hand was entered via the heart suit, ace of clubs cashed and the king of hearts. Declarer gave up a heart trick in the end.

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HERE IS MILDRED

Do You Get The Message?

Amateur theatricals can be pretty trying at times, but they have a champion in our girl Mildred who says all plays should have a message. Lena disagreed with her — poor Lena.

By Alice Childress

Marge, sometimes I think our friend Lena is the biggest poll-parrott I've ever met.

She is always talkin' about what "they say" and I don't think she has the first thought of her very own.

You know how she carries on about what "they" are wearin' or thinkin' or doin.'

Last night I told her off and I guess she won't forget me in a hurry.

* * *

WE WENT TO see a play that was put on at her church. It was good-intentioned, but whoever wrote it couldn't write, and those who acted in it couldn't act, the curtain wouldn't work and the lights kept goin' on and off at the wrong times.

It was sorry.

What the actors had to say was so mixed up, I guess that's why they couldn' remember the lines.

Oh, somebody off-stage kept whisperin' the right words to 'em.

The whisperin' got on my nerves so bad 'til I was wishin' they'd just holler out and be done with it.

I felt sorry for all concerned but sorriest for myself because I had to sit through it.

* * *

NO, LENA didn't like it either.

We stopped for coffee and started chattin' about the play. "I can't stand these plays with messages!" she says.

Marge, the play was about folks getting' their civil rights.

It really tore me up to see a nice message like that get clobbered in the head all evening.

If ever a message should of been written good and played good . . . that was it!

But Lena didn't even notice how messy everything was done, all she could beef about was "message."

* * *

"MILDRED," she says, ". . .we always have to say something!

Why can't we leave the message alone and just go on and write a play about nothin' in particular, like anybody else.

"It is time for us to write something with no message at all! Messages are old-timey anyway!"

Well, I squared off and told her that I had never seen a play or a movie without a message in my whole life.

I also asked her if she could name one for me . . .Sure, she did! I was glad that she named a movie I had seen!

It was some kind of love story about a girl, who married a rich man . . .No, she did love him but she was p n'.to spend up his loot.

* * *

MARGE, that woman had everything . . .furs and houses and diamonds and servants and all.

"When I see a play, I WANT to hear a message!"

The rich guy was also handsome and crazy about her! The only problem in her life was that she didn't love him!

She met a "poor" fellow who only made about twenty thousand dollars a year . . . and that's when the fur began to fly.

She was cheatin' on the millionaire and havin' a tormentin' good time with the "poor" fellow, but she wouldn't leave the rich guy, because she didn't want to "hurt" him!

* * *

THINGS WENT on that way until the "poor" man settled the score by gettin' himself killed in a plane crash.

After her lover is dead and gone, the girl goes home to money-bags and we feel terrible sorry for her. Marge, we are sorry for her because she has nothing but wealth, swimmin' pools, yachts etc. . .but no love.

I told Lena, "The message in that picture was . . .It is better to suffer a pang of regret rather than go on relief . . .

Or, It is better that a "poor" man be a tender memory rather than a present-problem.

Or, a lifetime of luxury-without-love is worse than twenty years in Alcatraz."

* * *

"WELL," she says, ". . .I am sick of our writers talkin' about race things and I don't want to hear another thing about this race business!"

"You are a liar!" I says "And I won't believe a word you say, until you go and sit in the white waiting room of a Mississippi station and tell that t> the one who asks you to move!

"When you can do that without landing in the jail-house, I guess our writers can get busy and find another message!

"When one of these little, fluffy shows turns out to be a flop, everybody just says it was badly done . . .but whenever a show fails that has something to say about our lives . . .it was the message!

"The good **good** thing that poor fella had in his play tonight was the message.

"When I pay my money to see a show, I want to hear a message; And if you got nothing-at-all to say, then keep still!"

No, she didn't like it! But I guess you know, who isn't worried about it!

Dred Scott After One Hundred Years

- The only Supreme Court case reversed by a war.
- One of three Supreme Court cases reversed by amendment to the Constitution.
- Plessy vs. Ferguson reversed by Supreme Court itself.

A recent issue of the Atlantic Monthly has a piece on "Dred Scott — A Century After."

The Dred Scott case of 1857 is the most famous — or notorious—in all our judicial history.

It is the only one that every schoolboy knows by name, though rarely by its full name, which was DRED SCOTT vs. Sandford.

It is the only one that helped bring on a major war. (the Civil War)

* * *

IT IS ONE of only three decisions in 168 years of Supreme Court annals, that was eventually reversed, not by the court itself, not even, legally speaking, by war, but by amendment of the Constitution.

(The other two were Chisholm vs. Georgia, a minor insult to state sovereignty reversed by Amendment XI, and the Pollock income-tax case of 1895 reversed by Amendment XVI.

* * *

THE DRED SCOTT case deserves to be memorialized after 100 years because it was one decision of the Supreme Court that was reversed in less than 10 years.

It supported slavery because the Supreme Court and the government at that time were dominated by Southerners and it made its decision so unpalatable that the whole country was willing to go to war to reverse it.

Sometimes the Supreme Court reverses itself.

* * *

IN PLESSY vs. Ferguson, 1895, it said that the 14th Amendment guaranteed colored people equality meant "Separate but Equal."

That vicious interpretation began the work of a Southern dominated Supreme Court and afflicted this country until 1954, when Chief Justice Warren said: "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place."

SOUTH'S DISGRACE—An old woodcut engraving of a slave auction during the 1800's.

Mrs. Roosevelt

(Continued from Page 1)

volunteer basis.

"I am concerned with organizing new chapters.

"At that time, the AAUN had only 30 chapters in the United States. Now we have 300 thriving units.

"Our work informs the public of United Nations programs with which they are not familiar — programs that affect them directly in their communities.

"You'd be surprised how little the average American knows of the United Nations programs and how they can be useful to local communities. That's our job—to inform them and to help support the great organization."

* * *

THE CONVERSATION then turned to the part Mrs. Roosevelt played in the cementing of racial relations through her friendship with the late Mary McLeod Bethune.

"She was more than an associate," Mrs. Roosevelt told the AFRO, "She was a real friend. I feel her loss very keenly. We met through our mutual interest in the National Youth Administration in which she did some of her greatest work for her people. As I came to know her better, I respected her — then I loved her.

"No, I don't see many of my old friends, but the younger folk visit me frequently. Paul Murray is a regular caller here at the office and at my home.

"And when I was in Milwaukee recently, I had dinner with Pauline Redmond Coggs and her fine family. She has a handsome little son now." (Pauline Redmond was at one time, a ranking official in the NYA, and one of the coterie of brilliant young colored women surrounding Mrs. Bethune.)

* * *

IN HER present position, Mrs. Roosevelt is busier than she was in her nearly 16-year tenure in the White House.

Annually, she travels thousands of miles, chiefly by plane, addressing hundreds of groups, clubs, colleges and conferences.

She is a member of the board of directors of a number of institutions and organizations (Howard University and the NAACP) and she finds time to write a daily syndicated newspaper column of her activities.

On her recent trip to Russia, sponsored by a newspaper, she wrote a series of articles for which she was widely criticized.

Her observations were impartial, unbiased, factual accounts of what she saw. Any opinion was her own.