



Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (Annotated) (Oshun Publishing African-American History Series Book 3)

By Harriet Jacobs, Linda Brent



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- * Character Breakdown

Originally published in 1861, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* was written by Harriet Jacobs, who tells the true story of her life as a slave in the South, and her decision to runaway in order to escape vicious beatings, sexual abuse, and the possible sale of her children.

Jacobs wrote this controversial account at the urgings of Boston abolitionists, but chose to write it using the name Linda Brent in order to protect the people who aided in her escape -- and evasion of capture -- from being subject to criminal prosecution.

Originally scheduled to be published in serial form in *The New York Tribune*, the serial was canceled after the first few chapters, when it was deemed too sexually graphic for newspapers. The first-person narrative is 80,000 words long, and also touches on long discussed slavery issues such as Christianity and Slavery, the Nat Turner Rebellion, and The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.

- This edition is one of the Oshun Publishing African-American History Series and contains a foreword/historical context by Karen E. Quinones Miller -- author of *An Angry-Ass Black Woman*
- Includes a Study Guide which provides Chapter Analysis, Character Breakdown, and Useful Questions and Answers
- Includes an excerpt of "The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave"



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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Published in 1861, this was one of the first personal narratives by a slave and one of the few written by a woman. Jacobs (1813-97) was a slave in North Carolina and suffered terribly, along with her family, at the hands of a ruthless owner. She made several failed attempts to escape before successfully making her way North, though it took years of hiding and slow progress. Eventually, she was reunited with her children. For all biography and history collections.

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Review

[Of] female slave narratives, Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself* is the crowning achievement. Manifesting a command of rhetorical and narrative strategies rivaled only by that of Frederick Douglass, Jacobs's autobiography is one of the major works of Afro-American literature...Jacobs's narrative is a bold and gripping fusion of two major literary forms: she borrowed from the popular sentimental novel on one hand, and the slave narrative genre on the other. Her tale gains its importance from the fact that she charts, in great and painful detail, the sexual exploitation that daily haunted her life--and the life of every other black female slave...Ms. Yellin's superbly researched edition ensures that Harriet Jacobs will never be lost again. (Henry Louis Gates, Jr. *New York Times Book Review*)

[The book] is a major work in the canon of writing by Afro-American women...Jacobs's book--reaching across the gulf separating black women from white, slave from free, poor from rich, "bad" women from "good"--represents an early attempt to establish an American sisterhood. (Wayne Lionel Aponte *The Nation*)

This may be the most important story ever written by a slave woman, capturing as it does the gross indignities as well as the subtler social arrangements of the time. An introduction is invaluable in clarifying many incidents and personalities...The author writes with passion and insight into the peculiar institution of slavery. Her writing, modern in several respects, prefigures many of the developments in the later literature of the South. (*Kirkus Reviews*)

Review

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Users Review

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Molly Wilson:

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