Harriet Jacobs

**I. Childhood:**

Linda started saying that she was born a slave, but she did not know until 6 years of happy childhood. She talks about her father, who was a carpenter that finally was allowed to work at his trade and manage his own affairs. She introduces his brother, who was 2 years younger than her and her maternal grandmother. Her grandmother was a little girl when she was captured and sold to the keeper of a large hotel, where she became an indispensable personage. She asked permission of her mistress to cake crackers at night and she obtain it. This business was very profitable, and she saved all the money to purchase their children, but her master died, and her children were divided among her master’s children. She also laid up 3 thousand dollars to her mistress who promised to pay her soon. When she was 6 years old, her mother died and she became the slave of her mistress, who was kind and she even taught her to read and spell, but when she was 12 years-old, the mistress sickened and died.

**V. The trials of girlhood:**

At the age of 15, her master, Dr. Flint, started whispering foul words, trying to corrupt the pure principles her grandmother instilled her. She tells us that under the roof she lived, she saw a man 40 years her senior daily violating the most sacred commandments of nature, without any shadow of law that could protected her. God bestowed beaty upon her, but this was not good, as she called even more the physical attention of her master and the jealousy of her mistress. Dr. Flint threatened with killing her if she was not in silence. She emphasises that she is telling truthfully what she suffered in slavery; and she finishes asking: “Why are ye silent, ye free men and women of the north?”.

**VIII. What slaves are taught to think of the north:**

She starts explaining that slaveholders try to persuade slaves not to escape to the North describing it in the most deplorable condition, sometimes even telling a false story about friends of the slaves that are living in the North. She thinks about why if the Free States want to help them, they continue sustaining a law which hurls fugitives back into slavery. She also admitted that if black man is inferior it is because the ignorance in which men compel him to live: torturing them with lashes. Slaveholders satisfy their consciences with the doctrine that God created the Africans to be slaves but, who can measure the amount of Anglo-Saxon blood coursing in the veins of American slaves? Finally, some people believe that the abolitionists have already made black slaves free, and that they have already stablished a law, but that they masters prevent the law from going into effect.

**XVII. The flight:**

Dr. Flint wanted Linda to sleep to sleep in the great house instead of the servant’s quarter, and her wife agreed with the condition of bringing her own bed. After midnight she jumped out through a window and she arrived to her grandmother’s house, but she spoke with a friend who tried to persuade her not to running away due to the fact that her grandmother and Mr. Sans were trying to buy her with the children, but she decided to continue with her plan. Before going to the hiding-place, she kissed both children: Benny and Ellen. Next morning, Dr. Flint was inquiring for her at her grandmother. She wanted to send her a message, but she could not because everyone who went to the house was closely watched. Before that night, an advertisement with a reward for people with information about her, was posted at every corner.

Personajes:

**Linda:**

In real life it corresponds with Harriet Jacobs. She takes the name Linda Brent to avoid recognition after its publication. Linda is forced to work for Mrs. Flint and Dr. Flint. In order to avoid rape at the hands of Dr. Flint, Linda has an affair with another slave owner, Mr. Sands, and has two children, Benny and Ellen. Linda is a perseverant young woman with a strong sense of her own rights and moral duties, as we can see in her resistance trying to evade Dr. Flint, because she feels that it is her Christian duty to safeguard her sexual purity. Likewise, Linda is a devoted mother with strong feelings of duty towards her children.

**Dr.Flind:**

In real life was Dr. James Norcom. He is Linda’s owner. He is a wealthy doctor, a plantation owner, and respected figure in the community, but Dr. Flint is also a sexual predator. As soon as Linda becomes a teenager, he begins to whispered her foul words. Dr. Flint tries to get Linda to sleep with him, but she refuses to do so. Dr. Flint’s moral contrasts with Linda’s strength of character, disrupting stereotypes that saw white people as “civilized” and slaves as “primitive.”

**Grandmother:**

Linda’s grandmother is the matriarch of her family. An elderly but energetic and hardworking woman. She is so important in the community that she even has the respect of some white people. She uses her status to save money to buy her son, and to protect Linda in any way she can. Although she’s a woman of strict religious principles (what we see when Linda becomes pregnant), she provides her a refuge from Dr. Flint. She is essential for Linda, who always depends on her judgment.

**Mr.Sands:**

In real life it corresponds with Samuel Tredwell  Sawyer. He is a slave owner who is interest in Linda and whom she eventually accepts as her lover, in order to distance herself from Dr. Flint.  Mr. Sands is more humane than Dr. Flint. While Linda sees her children as the centre of her existence, he only visits them when he wants. He buys the children from Dr. Flint after Linda runs away.

**Mother:**

She is Delilah Horniblow in real life. [Linda](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/incidents-in-the-life-of-a-slave-girl/characters/harriet-jacobs-linda-brent)’s mother was a slave. She had a lot of trust in her [mistress](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/incidents-in-the-life-of-a-slave-girl/characters/first-mistress).

**First Mistress:**

She is Margaret Horniblow in real life. She promised to Linda’s mother that she will take care of her children. She takes the young girl under her wing, teaching her reading, spelling and about religion, and treats her so kindly that Linda says she does not even realize she is a slave. However, on her death she does not free the girl leaving her to the Flints.

**Mrs. Flint:**

In real life it corresponds with Mary Matilda Horniblow Norcom. She is Dr. Flint’s wife and Linda’s mistress before her escape. Mrs. Flint is particularly aggressive towards Linda because of her husband’s obvious sexual interest in her and inflicts psychological and physical violence on her.

**Father:**

In real life is called Elijah Knox. Although he is a slave, he works as a carpenter. He tries to impart dignity and self-respect to Linda and [William](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/incidents-in-the-life-of-a-slave-girl/characters/william), as we see when he tells them that they should always obey their parents above their mistress, even though doing so is against the law.

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