

Harriet Jacobs (Incidents in the Life of the Slave Girl) – 1861
[Cult of True Womanhood]

✓ The Cult of True Womanhood is an ideal for White women during the mid-nineteenth century. Although Jacobs would not be measured in comparison to the Cult of True Womanhood, she addresses northern White women in her narrative to stress the inequalities enslaved women endure (as women) and to position herself as woman (evidenced by her family, motherhood, family, etc...)

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✓ Authentication (Linda Brent) → narrative purpose
o Jacobs had escaped to freedom when the narrative is published
o Need to protect herself and family (Harriet Jacobs)

o The institution of slavery is still in full force

✓ References to the reader: What is Jacobs attempting to accomplish by addressing the reader?

[Chpt 1: Childhood]

● Characteristics of a slave narrative ● Literacy

[Chpt. 2: The New Master and Mistress]

o Introduced to Mr. & Mrs. Flint

o Property of a child as a child

o Mrs. Flint (what is the effect of Jacobs using this description?)

[Chpt 5: The Trials of Girlhood]

o Jacobs at 15 yrs. old

▪ Gives us a glimpse into the experiences of female slaves in the domestic sphere

o Advances of Mr. Flint (inability to escape his advances)

[Chpt 10: A Perilous Passage in the Slave Girl's Life]

- o [Cult of True Womanhood] – Domesticity as prison & paradise (from manual labor)
- o Purity & Mr. Sands
- o Response to ‘cult of true womanhood’ → purity
- o Jacobs appeals to her readers to justify her decision
- o Brent describes her pious nature to the reader – children are Christened
- o The Cult of True Womanhood is defined by four guiding principles: purity, domesticity, submissiveness and piety (religious faith)

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[Chpt. 14]

- Respectability ● Motherhood

[Chpt 17: The Flight / Chpt 21: The Loop]

- o Linda’s escape / garnett where Jacobs hid for almost 7 years
- o Linda joins Fanny aboard the vessel / she meets her son b/f she leaves
- o She escapes to Philly by boat → then to NY
- o Linda and Ellen spend 2 years living together in Boston
- [Chpt – The Fugitive Slave Law] –
- o Mrs. Bruce sends Linda to New England
- [“Free At Last”]
- o Mr. Flint dies
- o Mrs. Bruce → Linda flees to New England / Linda explains why she refuses to be someone’s property****] – “Freedom