

# [Latisha this world and endure such terrifying conditions?](https://assignbuster.com/latisha-this-world-and-endure-such-terrifying-conditions-2/)

[Countries](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/countries/), [United States](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/countries/united-states/)

Latisha JonesMrs. Karen GaineyEng 311 Studies of African American LiteratureJanuary 21, 2018Harriet Jacobs, AMother’s Instinct to ProtectA mother’s love for her childrenone would say is unconditional until death. Motherhood is a given sixth sense to most women, in other words a motherwould do anything in her power to nurture and protect her child.  During slavery, a woman was powerless toprotect and keep her children from harm. Most mothers had to experience thepain of seeing their children beaten or sold, furthermore if they were girlsthe mothers lived with the knowledge that they would experience the same sexualabuse.  Harriet Jacobs was the firstwoman to author a slave narrative in the United States about sexual abuse amongslave women.

Born in 1863 as a slave, Harriet Jacobs was unaware she was aslave until she was six years of age. Harriet states “ They lived together in acomfortable home; and though we were all slaves, I was so fondly shielded thatI never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise, trusted to them for safe keeping, and liable to be demanded of them at any moment” (225). Her father was acarpenter who supported himself and managed his own affairs. A slave herself, her mother was favored by her owner, but as Jacobs wrote “ we all know that thememory of a faithful slave does not avail much to save her children form theauction block” (226).  In her narrative,” Incident in the Life of a Slave Girl”, Jacobs exhibits herself as a blackslave woman whose indomitable spirit as a mother helps her to fight to prepare, and protect her children during slavery.

Being prepared for slavery is animpossibility, how can you prepare anyone, especially your child, to come intothis world and endure such terrifying conditions? In Harriet Jacobs narrativeshe was not prepared by her parents about slavery and the life she would cometo know once she was of age. Motherhood and womanhood was stripped away fromwomen slaves, so there was not any way of giving their daughters the foundationnecessary to prepare for becoming a mother or woman.  Harriet’s quest in preparing her childrenseemed to be different from her mother’s. Upon finding out she was having agirl, Harriet’s “ heart was heavier than it had been before. Slavery is terriblefor men: but it is far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden commonto all, they have wrongs, and sufferings, and mortifications peculiarly theirown” (Jacobs 240). Harriet’s preparation was that she would fight and bedetermined that her children would not be subjected to slavery. Protecting your children is amother’s instinctive inclination.

Harriet Jacob’s courageous acts in protectingher children and herself from the awful acts and punishment of slavery issomething I, as mother, would have done for my children. Additionally, for herto have lived in a small shed under her grandmother’s house with no light norfresh air for several years was the sacrifice that almost any mother would maketo protect her children. Even within the animal kingdom, we can see how mothersprotect their young from all levels of danger.

This instinct is a common bondwithin beasts and humans. A situation occurred where I had to protect myyoungest son from an abuser, I can readily identify with all her protectivefeelings as a mother. In conclusion, I can relate toHarriet Jacob’s sacrifices and decisions she made to protect her children.

Amother goes above and beyond to try to prepare and protect their children forwhat they may face in life. Although, I am a free woman and never had to fearhaving my children being stripped away from me, if put in Harriet’s position Iwould have done the same thing. I can’t imagine not being able to have any sayin raising my children. I truly admire Harriet Jacob’s strength and enduranceduring slavery.

She is an example for all women, of how         a mother’s love is unconditional.  After reading about the life of HarrietJacobs, her choices are congruent with the choices I would make as a mother…Icould personally identify with her.

Works CitedJacobs, Harriet A. Incidents in the life of a slave girl: writtenby herself. Publisher notidentified, 1860.