

# Slavery

Literature



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Part In her typical day, Linda was always performing domestic duties and making sure that the food is prepared on time. She would then serve her master food in a table in the piazza which was his favourite resting place. She stood by his side as he ate making sure that Mr. Flint is relaxed all though the eating process. She narrates:

“ He would seat himself there with a well satisfied smile, and tell me to stand by and brush away the flies” (Jacobs and Child, p. 71).

She used to teach herself basic education (reading and writing) without the knowledge of her boss. She imparted knowledge to herself on how to articulate her concerns and better understand the environment she lived in as she planned her exit strategy.

Flint made some sexual advances on Linda as they stayed together; this was done a couple of times as they stayed together but she could not give in to his demands. This made her get into an affair with Mr. Sands to relay a message to Dr. Flint that she is still in control of her own life.

Linda used to take good care of her children, Benny and Ellen, despite the huge workload that Dr. Flint gave her. She tried to make sure that her children are not mistreated by her master's family. She made sure that they are well fed under Flint; she stayed in the Attic for months as she waited for him to sell them out (Jacobs and Child, p. 182).

While under Covey, Douglas used to work in the fields; he found it very difficult doing his work because of the harsh working conditions. He was whipped on a daily basis by his master because of his “ awkwardness.” This whipping continued till one day he eventually collapsed. He used a cart to move farm produce and equipment between the store and Covey's farm. Edward Covey was an evil man who apart from giving the normal kind of <https://assignbuster.com/slavery/>

punishment given to other slaves, physically fought Douglas in instilling hard work. Douglas always worked tirelessly as he was always deceived by Covey that he is having daily surveillance on the fields. Covey also used to creep on them to catch them lazing around.

On Sunday as the rest of the slaves went to church, Douglas remained in the farm sitting down under a tree in his own meditations. This is because he felt less of a human being because of what Covey had turned him in to. He says " I envied fellow slaves for their stupidity, I wished myself a beast" (Douglass and Stepto, p. 96). This shows the level of hopelessness that had got into him.

Douglas' case was a little different from what Linda Brent had in her story because he used to work in the plantations as opposed to Linda's domestic setting. However, Linda opted for the former since it gave her the best opportunity to escape. The feelings I experienced while making the observations are that these people had the roughest of times with their masters. Despite this, they fought from within to gain their freedom; their perseverance eventually paid off as they gained respect and freedom from their masters.

## Part 2

Slavery in these stories is characterised by physical and psychological torture aimed at increasing labour output in the plantations and domestic households. Psychological torture was carried out to make them feel less of humans as they were not allowed to enjoy the privileges other Americans enjoyed.

In Frederick Douglass' story, slaves are seen as property, bought and sold by the masters at will. The highest bidder gets the strongest. This made these  
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Africans feel as if they were animals bought to perform difficult tasks without considering human rights issues. He says that the fact that they are held as property does convey to their minds no idea of injustice, exposure to outrage, or savage barbarity (Douglass and Stepto, p. 185). In Uncle Tom's Cabin, Tom is sold to the southerners and was placed on a boat going down Mississippi River.

The slaves were denied opportunities to gain even the smallest level of literacy; this is a common aspect in all the writings. This was meant to keep them in the dark about what was going on, their sole task was to be labourers in the white owned plantations and in their houses.

He also relates two instances of cruelty; one is a farm owner shooting a black intruder who came in looking for fish while another case is of a supervisor who shot an escaping slave. These two cases are the extremes of slavery. Douglass' story is his own account of the events that transpired in his time; other writers may paint a different picture of slavery without necessarily going to these deepest levels of human savagery. For instance, Olaudah Equiano bibliography titled *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* paints a milder side of slavery as his master favoured him over other crewmen in the battleship. His master sent him to his sister-in-law to attend school and have basic education (Equiano, p. 81).

#### Works cited

Douglass, Frederick, and Robert B. Stepto. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave*. Cambridge (Mass.: the Belknap press of Harvard university press, 2009. Print.

Jacobs, Harriet A, and Lydia M. Child. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Rockville, MD: Arc Manor, 2008. Print.

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