

# Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (Barnes & Noble Classics Series)

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Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, by Harriet Jacobs, is part of the Barnes & Noble Classics series, which offers quality editions at affordable prices to the student and the general reader, including new scholarship, thoughtful design, and pages of carefully crafted extras. Here are some of the remarkable features of Barnes & Noble Classics:

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Barnes & Noble Classics pulls together a constellation of influences—biographical, historical, and literary—to enrich each reader's understanding of these enduring works.

In what has become a landmark of American history and literature, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl recounts the incredible but true story of Harriet Jacobs, born a slave in North Carolina in 1813. Her tale gains its importance from her descriptions, in great and painful detail, of the sexual exploitation that daily haunted her life—and the life of every other black female slave. As a child, Harriet Jacobs remained blissfully unaware that she was a slave until the deaths of both her mother and a benevolent mistress exposed her to a sexually predatory master, Dr. Flint. Determined to escape, she spends seven years hidden away in a garret in her grandmother's house, three feet high at its tallest point, with almost no air or light, and with only glimpses of her children to sustain her courage. In the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, she finally wins her battle for freedom by escaping to the North in 1842.

A powerful, unflinching portrayal of the brutality of slave life, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl stands alongside Frederick Douglass's classic autobiographies as one of the most significant slave narratives ever written.

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These two slave narratives expand our knowledge of the differing ways males and females coped with enslavement and later ordeals in flight. This popularly-priced anthology contains the often taught Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl by Harriet Jacobs and the recently discovered A True Tale of Slavery by John S. Jacobs, her younger brother, now reprinted for the first time.

After Harriet's owner, a physician, repeatedly abused her, she escaped his sexual advances for a time by entering into a relationship with a local attorney. Her owner continued to harass her, and she sought refuge in a crawlspace where she lived in hiding. After her escape to the North, she published her narrative.

John S. Jacobs "walked away" as he put it, from his owner, a congressman. He sailed on a whaling ship and educated himself. He then became a paid agent of the Anti-Slavery Society, made a lecturing trip with Frederick Douglass, and finally settled in London, where he remained until it was safe for a fugitive to return to the North. He wrote his story for a London Sunday school journal where it was published in 1861.

This Modern Library Paperback Classics edition combines the two most important African American slave narratives into one volume.

Frederick Douglass's Narrative, first published in 1845, is an enlightening and incendiary text. Born into slavery, Douglass became the preeminent spokesman for his people during his life; his narrative is an unparalleled account of the dehumanizing effects of slavery and Douglass's own triumph over it. Like Douglass, Harriet Jacobs was born into slavery, and in 1861 she published *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, now recognized as the most comprehensive antebellum slave narrative written by a woman. Jacobs's account broke the silence on the exploitation of African American female slaves, and it remains crucial reading. These narratives illuminate and inform each other. This edition includes an incisive Introduction by Kwame Anthony Appiah and extensive annotations.

"From the Trade Paperback edition.

#### Other Books

Church, State, and Race. This book uses the discourse of religious liberty, often expressed as one favoring a separation between church and state, to explore racial differences during an era of American empire building (1750-1900). Discussions of religious liberty in America during this time often revolved around the fitness of certain ethnic or racial groups to properly exercise their freedom of conscience. Significant fear existed that groups outside the Anglo-Protestant mainstream might somehow undermine the American experiment in ordered republican liberty. Hence, repeated calls could be heard for varying forms of assimilation to normative Protestant ideals about religious expression. Though Americans pride themselves on their secular society, it is worth interrogating the exclusive and even violent genealogy of such secular values. When doing so, it is important to understand the racial limitations of the discourse of religious freedom for various aspects of American political culture. The following account of the history of religious liberty seeks to destabilize the widespread assumption that the dominant American culture inevitably trends toward greater freedom in the realm of personal expression.

□ □ □ □ □ . Sally Hadden, *Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolina* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 144, 16. Henry Louis Gates, ed. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, in *The Classic Slave Narratives* (New ..."