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**American Portrayal of Slavery**

In the 1800’s slavery took a big role in society, especially in a little town in North Carolina. A girl named Linda talks about her experiences as a slave and how scarring they really were to her and the other slaves she worked with. The book *The Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Ann Jacobs, portrays American Slavery through the main character Linda, the setting, and the themes that keep reoccurring.

The main character Linda, tells the way of slavery through her eyes, and even some of her own scarring moments. When Linda was born, she was automatically to work in the slave business. Her mother who died when Linda was around seven, was a slave and the kids would follow in the footsteps of their mothers. Therefore, Linda was born into the slave business and worked for Dr. Flint who was a cruel man. He treated Linda differently than any other slave, but in a way that made Linda feel uncomfortable. Dr. Flint was in love with Linda, and because of his feelings towards her, he never beat her but he did rape her. He raped her twice, resulting in Linda becoming pregnant both times. Linda was very young when she got pregnant with her first child, “I was a poor slave girl, only fifteen years old.” (Jacobs 48) A few years after both kids were born Linda decided it was her time to leave the salve business and start her route to freedom. She ended up hiding out in a little attic that was attached to her house, it wasn’t even big enough for her to sit up. Her kids think she left, but Linda has a peep hole where she can spy on her kids from the little attic. She sees that Dr. Flint has stopped by her house many different times to question her aunt and her kids as to where she went. Linda was in this attic for seven years with rats and barely enough food to survive. This portrays how American slavery really was because of how scarring some of the moments were if you were a slave.

The setting of the book *The Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, portrays the difference of classes and how differently the slaves were placed versus the wealth. This book takes place in a small town in North Carolina in 1813 which was the time slavery was very popular. Linda lives a small house that is barely put together with her aunt, while her master, Dr. Flint, lives on this huge plantation that requires many slaves to maintain it. Linda’s house is falling apart and there is barely enough room for her family to live there. She lives with her aunt because when she was at a young age, her mother had passed away. She was already in the slave business because her mother was a slave as well, and that’s how she met Dr. Flint. She was sold to Dr. Flint and his wife, where she worked as a slave on this huge plantation. It was so big that they needed maids, cooks, servants, farmers, and people to maintain the crops. While this was all happening to Linda and the other slaves, Dr. Flint was living the life of luxury and not having a worry in the world. In the book it talks about how Dr. Flint was like and its states, “Dr. Flint is an epicure. The cook never sent a dinner to his table without fear and trembling.” (14). An epicure is defined as a person who takes particular pleasure in food and dining, therefore the slave cook was always terrified to bring a meal to his table because if it wasn’t cooked correctly, he would be beaten.

The theme that keeps reoccurring in *The Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* if violence. In the beginning of the book, Linda talks about how this slave got beaten so hard with a whip because they were accused of things they didn’t do, “O pray don’t, massa’ rang in my ears for months after words. There were so many conjectures as to the cause of this terrible punishment. Some said master accused him of stealing corn; others said the slave quarreled with his wife, in presence of the overseer, and had accused his master of being the father of her child. They were both black, and the child was very fair.” (15) This slave was accused of stealing corn and having relations with the Master’s wife, because of this, this slave was beaten so hard that there was blood on the floor and the walls were covered in gore. Sometimes if the slaves were to disobey the rules, they wouldn’t be given food or water because they didn’t “deserve it.” These slaves were working all day in the sweltering weather and they weren’t even given water because they were slaves, they weren’t considered a person. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* portrays the way American slavery was because of the violence that took place in the book.

In the book *The Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs is a portrayal of American Slavery through the main character Linda, the setting of the book, and the theme of violence. Slavery in the 1800’s was a common reoccurrence especially in a small town in North Carolina. Linda talks about how the experience of her slave life was scarring and how it affected her, her children, and the slaves she worked with.