

## Harriet Jacobs

### Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl



[Peter] took me in his boat, rowed out to a vessel not far distant, and hoisted me on board...They said I was to remain on board till near dawn, and then they would hide me in Snaky Swamp....About four o'clock, we were again seated in the boat, and rowed three miles to the swamp. My fear of snakes had been increased by the venomous bite I had received, and I dreaded to enter this hiding place. But I was in no situation to choose, and I gratefully accepted the best that my poor, persecuted friends could do for me. (p.115)

A small shed had been added to my grandmother's house years ago. Boards were laid across the joists at the top, and between these boards and the roof was a very small garret, never occupied by anything but rats and mice....The garret was only nine feet long and seven wide....To this hole I was conveyed as soon as I entered the house. The air was stifling; the darkness total. A bed had been spread on the floor. I could sleep quite comfortably on one side; but the

slope was so sudden that I could not turn on the other without hitting the roof. The rats and mice ran over my bed.... This continued darkness was oppressive. It seemed horrible to sit or lie in a cramped position day after day, without one gleam of light. Yet I would have chosen this, rather than my lot as a slave.... (p.117)

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