

# Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl

Chapters 24–30

by Harriet Jacobs

## Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

**Practice words:** ascertain, compunction, cunning, disinterested, imprudent, indignant, instigation, pecuniary, pretext, scrupulous

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### PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Vocabulary Preview ..... 2

Answer Key — Preview ..... 3

**Caution:** share only if self-checking

### OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context ..... 4

Answer Key — In Context ..... 5

**Caution:** do not share with students

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### About the Pre-Reading Activity (open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade):

Students preview 10 words from the upcoming reading, each in a sentence that supports understanding. They choose the best meaning from 3 choices.

### About the Optional Post-Reading Quiz (use after reading, or skip):

Same words, now in real excerpts from the text, with questions that build reading and analytical skills.

### Vocabulary Sections for this Book:

Section 1 · Chapters 1–9 · Linda's childhood and family

Section 2 · Chapters 10–16 · A young woman's perilous years

Section 3 · Chapters 17–23 · The flight and life in hiding

**Section 4 · Chapters 24–30 · The long wait in hiding**

Section 5 · Chapters 31–41 and Appendix · A new life in the North

**Bold = this section.** Other sections are available at [verbalworkout.com](http://verbalworkout.com).



[verbalworkout.com](http://verbalworkout.com)

(all resources free)

**Vocabulary Preview**  
**Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl**  
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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

*Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.*

1. The detective tried to **ascertain** where the suspect had been.

- A. to make a rough guess at
- B. to keep a record of
- C. to find out for certain

2. She felt no **compunction** about lying to her parents.

- A. a pang of guilt
- B. a flash of anger
- C. a trace of fear

3. The fox used **cunning** to slip past the farmer's traps.

- A. calm, steady patience
- B. great physical strength
- C. skill in clever trickery

4. A good referee gives **disinterested** rulings during the game.

- A. bored and uncaring
- B. strict and demanding
- C. free of selfish motive

5. It was **imprudent** to spend all his savings on one bet.

- A. unwise and rash
- B. bold and daring
- C. fair and honest

6. She was **indignant** when the waiter blamed her for the spill.

- A. mildly amused
- B. angry at unfairness
- C. deeply embarrassed

7. The protest began at the **instigation** of a few angry students.

- A. the act of urging on
- B. the quiet approval of
- C. the warm welcome of

8. The family's **pecuniary** worries grew after the factory closed.

- A. relating to health
- B. relating to money
- C. relating to housing

9. His apology was just a **pretext** to get close to her.

- A. a clever plan
- B. a false excuse
- C. a kind gesture

10. My grandfather was **scrupulous** in all his business dealings.

- A. carefully honest
- B. bold and aggressive
- C. calm and patient

**Reading Helpers**

*(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)*

**factotum** — a servant or employee who handles all kinds of work; an all-purpose helper

**fortnight** — a period of two weeks

# ANSWER KEY

## Vocabulary Preview

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| #  | KEY |
|----|-----|
| 1  | C   |
| 2  | A   |
| 3  | C   |
| 4  | C   |
| 5  | A   |
| 6  | B   |
| 7  | A   |
| 8  | B   |
| 9  | B   |
| 10 | A   |

**Vocabulary in Context**  
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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_ / 10

*Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.*

**1** *“I wanted to crawl back to my den, without letting the family know what I had done; for I knew they would deem it very imprudent.”*

As it is used in the passage, the word ‘imprudent’ most nearly suggests that the family would regard Linda’s venture as

- A. openly defiant
- B. selfishly motivated
- C. dangerously rash

**2** *“I knew his cunning nature too well not to perceive that this was a trap laid for me; and so all my friends understood it. I resolved to match my cunning against his cunning.”*

It can reasonably be inferred that Linda intends to defeat Dr. Flint by

- A. overpowering him by force
- B. appealing to his sympathy
- C. outwitting him with her own trickery

**3** *“I expressed a wish for a New York paper, to ascertain the names of some of the streets.”*

The passage most strongly suggests that Linda wants the New York paper in order to

- A. verify exact street names
- B. follow recent news events
- C. improve her own handwriting

**4** *“God bless and reward you, Peter, for this disinterested kindness.”*

As it is used in the passage, the word ‘disinterested’ most nearly describes kindness that is

- A. done only for close friends
- B. done with no selfish motive
- C. done with little enthusiasm

**5** *“He was scrupulous about taking any money from his master on false pretences; so he sold his best clothes to pay for his passage to Boston.”*

In the passage, William is characterized as

- A. bitter and vengeful
- B. reckless and rebellious
- C. principled and honest

**6** *“... he came home very indignant with the stranger lady, because she had called him a negro.”*

Which choice best describes Benny’s attitude toward being called a negro?

- A. offended at an injustice
- B. amused by the woman’s error
- C. embarrassed and ashamed

**7** *“If pecuniary troubles should come, or if the new wife required more money than could conveniently be spared, my children might be thought of as a convenient means of raising funds.”*

According to the passage, Linda’s children are most endangered if the family faces

- A. a threat to its honor
- B. a shortage of money
- C. a danger of exposure

**8** *“Mrs. Flint had rendered her poor foster-sister childless, apparently without any compunction; and with cruel selfishness had ruined her health by years of incessant, unrequited toil, and broken rest. But now she became very sentimental. I suppose she thought it would be a beautiful illustration of the attachment existing between slaveholder and slave, if the body of her old worn-out servant was buried at her feet.”*

Noting that Mrs. Flint felt no compunction primarily functions to

- A. stress her total lack of guilt
- B. explain her sudden grief
- C. excuse her earlier neglect

**9** *“I was exceedingly anxious about Fanny, and Peter too, who was running a tremendous risk at my instigation.”*

Which statement is best supported by the passage?

- A. Peter’s risk stems from Linda’s urging
- B. Peter acts against Linda’s wishes
- C. Peter is unaware of his danger

**10** *“On some pretext of urgent necessity, he offered two boatmen a dollar apiece to catch up with her.”*

The author most likely notes that Peter acted on a pretext in order to

- A. stress how much he paid
- B. show he hid his true purpose
- C. explain the boat’s delay

# ANSWER KEY

## Vocabulary in Context

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| #  | KEY | NOTE                                                                                                                      |
|----|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | C   |                                                                                                                           |
| 2  | C   |                                                                                                                           |
| 3  | A   |                                                                                                                           |
| 4  | B   | Tests the precise older sense — unselfish, not 'uninterested'; one distractor baits that common confusion.                |
| 5  | C   | Character comprehension.                                                                                                  |
| 6  | A   | Character comprehension.                                                                                                  |
| 7  | B   |                                                                                                                           |
| 8  | A   | The irony is the point: she shows no remorse, then stages graveside grief. The answer rests on the literal lack of guilt. |
| 9  | A   |                                                                                                                           |
| 10 | B   | Event comprehension.                                                                                                      |

#### Teacher Context: Chapters 24–30

From her hiding place Linda outwits Dr. Flint with forged letters and decoys while her family works toward her escape and her children's future. After years confined in the garret, she finally boards a ship bound north. The section ends after Chapter 30 so that her arrival in the free states opens the final section rather than closing this one.