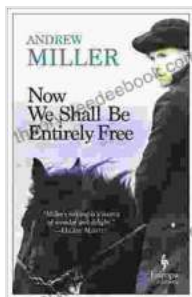


# Now We Shall Be Entirely Free: Exploring the Themes of Freedom and Identity in Post-Civil War America

Harriet Jacobs' autobiography, 'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,' is a powerful and moving account of her experiences as a slave in the antebellum South and her subsequent journey to freedom in the North. Written in 1861, just as the Civil War was breaking out, Jacobs' narrative provides a unique and invaluable perspective on the complex social and racial dynamics of her time.

Central to Jacobs' narrative is the theme of freedom. Throughout the book, she explores the various ways in which freedom is denied to slaves and the different strategies they employ to resist and reclaim it. Jacobs also examines the complex and often contradictory nature of freedom in post-Civil War America, as former slaves struggled to define their own identities and find their place in a society that had long denied them.



## Now We Shall Be Entirely Free by Andrew Miller

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 1189 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
X-Ray	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 330 pages
Lending	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported

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## **The Search for Freedom**

Jacobs' journey to freedom was a long and arduous one. She was born into slavery in North Carolina in 1813 and spent the first 27 years of her life as a slave. During this time, she was subjected to the physical and emotional horrors of slavery, including beatings, sexual harassment, and the constant threat of being sold away from her family.

Despite the challenges she faced, Jacobs never gave up hope of freedom. In 1842, she escaped from her enslaver and made her way to Philadelphia, where she lived in hiding for seven years. During this time, she worked as a seamstress and a nurse, and she became involved in the abolitionist movement.

In 1849, Jacobs finally published her autobiography, 'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.' The book was a critical and commercial success, and it helped to raise awareness of the horrors of slavery. Jacobs' story inspired many people, both in the United States and abroad, and it played a significant role in the growing movement to abolish slavery.

## **The Complexities of Freedom**

Jacobs' autobiography not only provides a gripping account of her journey to freedom, but it also explores the complex and often contradictory nature of freedom in post-Civil War America. After the Civil War, former slaves were legally free, but they still faced significant social, economic, and political barriers.

Jacobs herself experienced firsthand the difficulties of being a free black woman in the post-Civil War era. She was often subjected to discrimination and prejudice, and she struggled to find work and housing. Despite these challenges, Jacobs remained determined to live a life of freedom and dignity.

In her autobiography, Jacobs argues that true freedom is more than just the absence of slavery. It is also about having the opportunity to achieve one's full potential and to live a life of dignity and respect. Jacobs believed that former slaves deserved the same rights and opportunities as white Americans, and she worked tirelessly to promote equality and justice.

### **The Legacy of Harriet Jacobs**

Harriet Jacobs' autobiography is a powerful and inspiring testament to the resilience of the human spirit. Her story is a reminder that freedom is never easy to achieve, but it is always worth fighting for. Jacobs' legacy continues to inspire people today, and her work remains an important reminder of the ongoing struggle for equality and justice.

In 2011, Jacobs was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. Her autobiography, 'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,' is still widely read and studied today, and it is considered one of the most important slave narratives ever written.

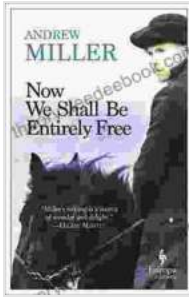
"Now we shall be entirely free." - Harriet Jacobs, 'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl'

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