

PART 5 Voices of the Slave Trade: Students' Monologues

The monologues below were written by students at Lewisham College studying Btec National Diploma Performing Arts. Working with theatre educators the students discussed first-hand accounts, images and other sources. Students used this as a starting point to write and perform monologues from the perspectives of enslaved Africans and other people involved in the story of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Slave character: Abigail Jacobs

Monologue

All I can remember is that it was a cool, dark evening and me and Louisa had been on the plantation chopping and collecting sugar canes from the crack of dawn.

I remember being so exhausted, as the sun was so hot that day, and he had been chopping so much until the whole of our bodies hurt.

But it wasn't me I was really concerned for, it was Louisa. She was pregnant her belly was so big it look like she was gonna have the baby anytime now.

I remember her asking me to be on the look out for any of the masters coming by as she was in so much discomfort and distress from chopping the sugar cane all day.

She told me that she needed a little rest; I told her 'no' and explained it was too risky there are masters everywhere. But just by the look on her little angelic face I knew I had to try and help her. The moment Louisa opened her mouth and release a sound of relief; there he was master Edwards, standing right over her, my heart started beating faster and palms got sweaty. Louisa was in so much pain she didn't even bother to move, and with no remorse he whipped her twice and said get back to work. I can still remember the agonising scream she let out.

This triggered off her pregnancy and she was just lying there crying and bleeding everywhere I couldn't even help her.

Do you know how that felt? I'm supposed to look after

her, she my little sister, she's only 15.

The masters just pulled her inside some old shack screaming.

My poor baby sister!

It has almost been two weeks now and I haven't heard or seen her!

Hayley Walters

Monologue

I feel so much pain I look at the open wounds, I can feel the gasses though my heart.

How I wish, how I wish I could help them. I watch their skinny bodies carrying and chopping at the sugar bane, you can count every rib on their backs. Where they haven't even got a rag for a top. I try to tell them, god loves them and preach to them. Ha I'm lying to myself. Sometimes it makes me question my own beliefs why do they do through this pain and why we are god's people so bad.

Sometimes I try to sneak water to them by hiding a flask under my ground but if I couldn't I would be kicked out and won't be able to help them. When they need me for guideness. One day I will help them escape or I will fight to the day I die. One day THEY WILL BE FREED!!

Lara

Monologue

As I look over, I plan my escape all that I wanted was to go and find my family.

We got separated when we got sold at the slaves market. I find myself alone. As I arrive at my master's farm I met other slaves, they looked like they had been worked really hard. I feared that it was going to be me. I was scared because I was only 15 and not strong enough to work but he still made me work as much as other slaves. It was hard for me as I was hungry and tired and missing my family so much, so I ran and hide then I got caught I feared for my life so much because they could do anything they like with me and the fact that I didn't care no more, I just wanted to die because I rather die than go through with all the stuff they've been doing to me. My master would call me to his room and do stuff that I wasn't old enough to do, I couldn't say no I had to do what he says. Every time he called me to his room my heart would stop and I often get this desire to do something bad to him because he doesn't care whether it hurts or not as long as he's satisfied, and every time I woke up in the morning I knew there was no hope except wake up and do it over again.



Kunto Icinte

My monologue on slave

Awaken from the rising of the sun feeling the breeze as I'm running through the forest to capture and kill my night's dinner. It started off as an ordinary day, except today was the day that me and all the other young men in my village, entered manhood.

Then so suddenly I felt an unusual feeling, I felt I was being watched. Then before I knew it I was surrounded (pause) surrounded by men (pause again) white men. I tried to run back home to my village and alert my family; but I couldn't run fast enough, and before I knew it, I was like a trapped animal, tied up, face down on the ground, in a net. That was the day I was captured. I never gave up hope of looking for my family; I always knew they'll be looking for me. And when we meet again, we will rejoice. But until then I'll be a servant; serving and working hard for the men they call worthy, and to look after my African brothers and sisters captured too.



Roxanne Anijaovah

Slave Monologue

(adapted from story about Olauda Eqviano)

My name is Nancy; I am 24 years of age.

I am a house servant, my husband is Dandridge he is 26 and he is a first rate dining-room servant.

I am very good at sewing, cooking. My job consists mainly at washing, cooking, sewing, drying, sweeping, cleaning etc.

Originally I was born into a wealthy African Family in 1746.

My father was a village chief.

I have six siblings and my father also owned many slaves, but their jobs were different from the kind at work I have to do, for example their clothes lodging and food were hardly the same as ours except they were not allowed to eat with those who were free-born.

When I was eleven I was captured by African slave traders.

I will never forget that day, to me that day was the beginning of the end of my life.

I guess I should count myself lucky because house slaves live better than field slaves: for example we have better food and are given some of the family's hand-me-downs.