

# Unveiling the Hidden Resistance: Enslaved Women's Daily Acts of Defiance in the Plantation South

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The history of slavery in the United States is often narrated through the lens of oppression, violence, and dehumanization. However, beyond the overt forms of subjugation, enslaved people devised ingenious strategies to resist their oppressors. In the groundbreaking book, "Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South," historian Erica Armstrong Dunbar sheds light on the remarkable daily acts of resistance carried out by enslaved women.



## Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South (Gender and American Culture) by Stephanie M. H. Camp

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 1317 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 222 pages



**Everyday Acts of Defiance:**

Dunbar reveals that enslaved women employed a wide range of tactics to subvert the oppressive system. These acts of defiance ranged from overt challenges to subtle forms of resistance embedded in everyday routines. Some of the most common strategies included:

- **Work Slowdowns:** By intentionally working at a slower pace or feigning illness, enslaved women could disrupt plantation production and assert their control over their own labor.
- **Poisonings:** As caretakers and cooks, enslaved women had access to household materials that they sometimes used to poison their enslavers or their livestock.
- **Hidden Gardens:** Establishing small, secret gardens provided enslaved women with access to food, medicines, and a sense of autonomy.
- **Obeah:** Blending African spiritual beliefs and practices, enslaved women utilized obeah—a form of spiritual resistance—to protect themselves and challenge the authority of their enslavers.

### **Negotiating Autonomy:**

While resistance took various forms, Dunbar argues that it was ultimately about negotiating autonomy and creating spaces of freedom within an oppressive system. By refusing to submit passively to their enslavement, enslaved women asserted their agency and challenged the white supremacist ideology that sought to reduce them to mere property.

### **Resistance in Slave Narratives:**

Dunbar's research draws heavily upon slave narratives, firsthand accounts of life under slavery. These narratives provide invaluable insights into the experiences, strategies, and motivations of enslaved women. They reveal that resistance was not limited to extraordinary acts but was a continuous and multifaceted response to their oppression.

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"Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South" is a powerful and illuminating account of the hidden resistance that characterized the lives of enslaved women. By unraveling their daily acts of defiance, Dunbar challenges traditional narratives of slavery and highlights the resilience and determination of women who fought for their dignity and autonomy. This book is a testament to the indomitable spirit of those who resisted oppression and shaped the course of American history.

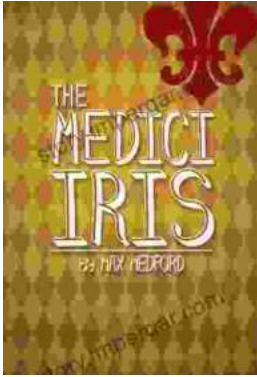


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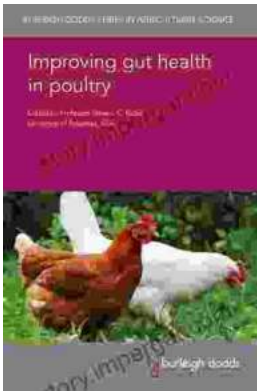
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