

## **Chapter VI par. 2 Explanation for Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass**

Douglass states in paragraph 2 of chapter VI, “The fatal poison of irresponsible power was already in her [Mrs. Auld’s] hands, and soon commenced its infernal work.” Douglas had just arrived at his new home in Baltimore and met his mistress, Mrs. Auld. This woman had grown up in an environment in which she earned her own, and where slaves were not widely used. As a consequence, she had a natural predisposition to see a man as a man, be he a slave or not. This character trait gave her endearing attributes that Douglass had ever seen in a white woman before. She was so nice and humane to him, in fact, that he didn’t quite know how to deal with the situation at first. However, upon the receipt of Fredrick Douglass into their home, Mrs. Auld’s behavior towards him began to slowly transform for the worse. At first she was very interested in him as a person as she started educating him about the alphabet and words. This came to an abrupt end when Mr. Auld declared that not only was it illegal, but dangerous to teach a slave how to read. From this point, Mrs. Auld began down the road of becoming a typical irresponsible slaveholder. She began to be terse and short-tempered with Douglass, stopped educating him, and even forbade him from educating himself. As time progressed, she lost the desirable qualities associated with seeing him as an equal, and fell into a lazy (and thus irresponsible) mindset that allowed her to treat him as a slave. Her slow acceptance of the institution of slavery changed her, and “... that angelic face gave place to that of a demon.”