



# Sold

*Patricia McCormick*

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## **Sold** Patricia McCormick

Although Lakshmi's family is desperately poor her life still contains simple pleasures; but, when the harsh Himalayan monsoons wash away all the family's crops, Lakshmi's stepfather sends her away to take a job to support her family. When she arrives at "Happiness House", full of hope, she learns the unthinkable truth: she has been sold into prostitution. An exceptional novel suitable for teens and adults.

Lakshmi is a thirteen-year-old girl who lives with her family in a small hut in the mountains of Nepal. Her family is desperately poor, but her life is full of simple pleasures, like raising her black-and-white speckled goat, and having her mother brush her hair by the light of an oil lamp. But when the harsh Himalayan monsoons wash away all that remains of the family's crops, Lakshmi's stepfather says she must leave home and take a job to support her family.

He introduces her to a glamorous stranger who tells her she will find her a job as a maid working for a wealthy woman in the city. Glad to be able to help, Lakshmi undertakes the long journey to India and arrives at "Happiness House" full of hope. But she soon learns the unthinkable truth: she has been sold into prostitution.

An old woman named Mumtaz rules the brothel with cruelty and cunning. She tells Lakshmi that she is trapped there until she can pay off her family's debt – then cheats Lakshmi of her meager earnings so that she can never leave.

Lakshmi's life becomes a nightmare from which she cannot escape. Still, she lives by her mother's words – "Simply to endure is to triumph" – and gradually, she forms friendships with the other girls that enable her to survive in this terrifying new world. Then the day comes when she must make a decision – will she risk everything for a chance to reclaim her life?

Written in spare and evocative vignettes, this powerful novel renders a world that is as unimaginable as it is real, and a girl who not only survives but triumphs.

To research *Sold*, Patricia McCormick traveled to India and Nepal where she interviewed the women of Calcutta's red-light district and girls who have been rescued from the sex trade. She is the author of the acclaimed novels *Cut* and *My Brother's Keeper*.

## **Sold Details**

Date : Published September 15th 2006 by Hyperion Books for Children (first published September 1st 2006)  
ISBN : 9780786851713  
Author : Patricia McCormick  
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## From Reader Review Sold for online ebook

### karen says

another book i'm not sure gains a lot by being written in verse, unless it is just to slow the pacing down to better appreciate the horror. the beginning pre-sale parts were very beautifully descriptive, and then after that become very unbeautifully descriptive. it's a rough subject matter that doesn't get disney-fied... until the end.

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### Petra X says

Beautifully-written with much heartache for these young girls who are sold into prostitution by their families. Sometimes they are sold because of extreme poverty and all money must be spent on the Males of the family. But sometimes, as in the book, they are sold just because the Male wants a new winter coat and a girl is just money wasted in feeding her when she could be sold for cash and no expenses in the future.

The saddest part of the book is the girls weren't "working" for money even. But were really enslaved in form of bonded labour until they could pay of their debts. They had to pay back the madame their price, the costs of bringing them, all the agents, bribes, money paid to their father or uncle who sold them. Then at the brothel they had to pay for every crumb they ever ate, dress they wore, and even for their bedding where they lay down to get screwed by the customer as well as the madame. Add the madame's profit on top of that and they were stuck until their looks had gone and she no longer wanted them.

Escape was scarcely an option. If they didn't get away they would be brought by captors expecting a good monetary reward and their punishment would be extreme, sometimes even to the point of disfigurement. Lesser crimes, like keeping a diary, or talking to someone about their plight brought the fear of a favourite punishment - cut-up hot peppers thrust into the girl's vagina which was then plugged for some hours.

There are American rescue missions but the girls were told these white devils would do the worst things to them that were beyond anything they could imagine so they lied to them that they were happy. There were American customers to, but they couldn't care less, they were just hiring a prostitute.

Eventually the heroine, if she can be called that, does escape to an American mission. It's quite a good part of the book, she makes friends with an itinerate tea seller who gets fired but comes back to tell her the truth of the missions. This is another chance at life. But the reality, outside of a book, is that these girls are nobodies, no-one wants to marry them or employ them. It's the same everywhere, whores are the lowest of the low even if they were only that because they were forced into it.

These missions ought to offer these girls the chance of immigration into America. There they would be educated and from then on their families would be free of the poverty and culture that sold girls like the saying, .....

A girl is like a goat. Good when giving milk and babies, but no need to cry when it's time to make stew.

(view spoiler)

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## **Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says**

"Each year, nearly 12,000 Nepali girls are sold by their families, intentionally or unwittingly, into a life of sexual slavery in the brothels of India."

This author traveled to Nepal and Calcutta for her research, interviewing aid workers and girls who have been rescued from the red-light districts of Calcutta.

The book follows the path of Lakshmi, a thirteen-year-old Nepali girl, as she is sold and makes the journey to India, thinking she is going to be a maid for a rich woman. It's written for young adults, so the writing is extremely spare, but the necessary details are there. Heartbreaking because you know it's true!

If you know any teenage girls who are so self-struck that they don't know how good they have it, let them read this story!! :(

If this were an adult book, I'd give it three stars. For the intended audience, I think it merits the fourth star. I'd like to see the author do more with her research, considering all the travel and interviewing she did. It would be nice to share it with more people in some other printed form more likely to be read by grownups.

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## **Jennifer Smalley says**

If an author is a feminist, does it mean that their writing is automatically regarded as feminist literature? Does nothing but the feminist message radiate from their being? Are they capable of bringing anything less than that into the world? Feminist writers write feminist writings. But it is not always the cut and dry "How To Be A Feminist Handbook 101" type of book. No, sometimes it can touch on problems like sex trafficking and involve a female character's near constant abuse, as seen in the story of Lakshmi in Patricia McCormick's *Sold*.

Now who dares read about the sexual, physical, and psychological abuse of so many female characters and has the gall to call it a feminist work? Well.... The reason why this novel was written must be taken into consideration before the subject matter. This novel was written to call attention to the injustices towards going on in other parts of the world. Because, while fictional, Lakshmi's story is one that many girls can very closely relate to. Lakshmi's life is one pieced together by bits of reality. The novel takes place mostly in a brothel located in India after Lakshmi had been sold by a family member in Nepal, a practice not too uncommon in that part of the world. Lakshmi speaks for all the girls who have been sold. The author's note ends by saying that "it is in their-" the Nepalese girls and women brought into the life of sex trafficking-"honor that this book was written" (265).

The novel was written in a way that makes it seem genuine, with Lakshmi as the narrator. It is the carefully crafted voice of this character that gives the writing an alarmingly real feeling. The short chapters, simple wording, and constant misnomers she would use such as calling a light bulb a "tiny glass sun" (3), or saying "metal wagon" (63) rather than 'car', or "palm frond machine" (95) instead of 'fan,' they all show her to be this naive little girl in awe of the world around her and it makes the reader feel sympathy for her, even before the sex abuse starts.

The writing and use of language in this novel seems to have been very carefully chosen. It was written very well for what it was. There was a line, a line of graphicness, that could have been crossed but it hadn't. And

that made it eerily beautiful and hard not to put down. McCormick wanted her reader to get through this novel with a certain level of disgust that never bubbled up far enough to put the book down but just enough to want to do something. Something to stop these things from ever happening to another girl ever again.

This piece of literature is a genuinely heartbreaking read. Furthermore, it is most definitely a feminist piece of literature as it was written for the purpose of finding justice for these women and girls.

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## **Kaora says**

*My name is Lakshmi. I am from Nepal. I am thirteen years old.*

Sold is the story of Lakshmi, a girl from a small village living with her Ama, baby brother and stepfather. Her stepfather sells her for money to pay gambling debts, and she is brought to the city, only to find out that there is no maid job waiting for her. She has been sold into prostitution.

This story was hard to read. Its really difficult to think about a place where a woman can be sold for \$300, and purchased for a night for the price of a bottle of Coke. Where man will buy himself a nice vest while his child starves.

*A son will always be a son, they say. But a girl is like a goat. Good as long as she gives you milk and butter. But not worth crying over when it's time to make a stew.*

The chapters are short and to the point, but deal with a heavy topic. I felt the short chapters broke it up into manageable chunks and made this a fast read, but one I won't soon forget.

*"Why must women suffer so?"*

*"This has always been our fate. Simply to endure is to triumph."*

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## **else fine says**

1. This book conveys less about the triumph of the human spirit and more about how Americans fix everything. In tone it read exactly like an early missionary novel.

2. I wish people would only write novels in verse if the verse actually served some purpose in the plot or the development of the character, or if the verse was good. In *Sold* it's simply a weird affectation.

3. The fact brought up as an afterthought in the end notes, that Nepalese women are fighting back by educating young village women and patrolling the borders themselves, is by far more inspirational and interesting than the acts of resistance in the story itself. A book about that would be fascinating.

A topic this horrifying deserved a better book.

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## **AMEERA says**

Wow

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## **Melanie (TBR and Beyond) says**

“Simply to endure is to triumph.”

This book was ROUGH. I read it in one sitting but I'm not sure if I should have or not because it was a lot to take in. Amazing book though.

There are obviously some pretty heavy triggers in this book: child sex-trafficking, and graphic sexual and physical abuse (involving children and women).

I knew going into this one that it wasn't going to be a pleasant read. It almost feels wrong to say that I liked the book. It was brutal, it was uncomfortable and worst of all it was something that is happening right now around the world. I was familiar with the topic as I've read a lot of non-fiction books on the topic and studied it a little in University. The topic never gets easier though.

The book is about a 13 year old girl who gets sold into the sex trade by her step-father. She initially thinks she is going to Nepal for a better life, to become a ladies maid. That she will be able to provide for her family and most importantly, her mother. This lie makes the truth all the more devastating. I cried with this little girl more times than I can count.

The book was beautifully and poetically written. The author had a way of drawing you in and making you feel like you are there with that child. Witnessing the horrors first hand.

I recommend this with caution, as the subject matter is intense. This is a YA book and I think it would be fine for a teenager to read, since it will give them a sense of what is going on around the world to so many children. If you are worried about the subject matter, you may want to read it with your teen (or students) so that you can have an open discussion about it and address anything they may struggle with. This is a five star for me but I wouldn't read it again because I don't think I could bare to go on this journey with the little girl in this story again.

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## **Vessey says**

**And so, Love, you launch in vain your insane onslaught: since it will be said - to see me fall yet not surrender - that you managed to kill but failed to conquer.**

Juana Inez de la Cruz

When beautiful things are broken, screams begin. When beautiful things are taken, horror begins. When beautiful minds are bended, there is no tomorrow or yesterday or today. There is only a place a million miles away melting in the darkness, seeming like home, but you know it isn't. It is the death of a broken mind.

***"At first, these recollections came unbidden. Soon I had to work to recall them. But eventually they became threadbare, thin as the blanket on my bed, until one day my heart nearly stopped when I could not summon them up. Still, there is one image that I cannot forget, no matter how I try. Trying to remember is like trying to clutch a handful of fog. Trying to forget, like trying to hold back the monsoon"***

When I was thirteen, I read a book called *Princess: A True Story Behind the Veil in Saudi Arabia*. I felt so strongly about it that it changed my relationship with books forever. Before that I wasn't that much of a reader. Then I read *Princess* and ever since I haven't been able to stop.

Most of the people you will meet will tell you that they sympathize with women's fate, that they are appalled and that they wish it was different. We all do. However, with a part of myself I have always thought "What does that help with? We all talk and talk, but none of us can actually do anything." Which is why I tend to avoid non-fiction regarding certain matters. Including this one. Because it is too much of a reminder that I can't do a damn thing. I feel too much like a voyeur, someone who gets let in on something extremely personal, yet, someone who is merely a spectator. It feels wrong to get to know so intimately someone's greatest pain and at the same time to stay passive, to not be able to even say to those you are reading or hearing about "I'm sorry. You deserve better" You only stay with the feeling of sad eyes, accusing eyes, blood-shot eyes full of pain and anger following you everywhere, whose gaze transfixes you and haunts you from far way and lips whose silence screams louder than the loudest scream. Those are women who have no voice and who have no right to lift their eyes up. They say the woman is a burden, the woman is a sinner, the woman is inferior, the woman is a witch, the woman is weak.

***"A son will always be a son, they say. But a girl is like a goat. Good as long as she gives you milk and butter. But not worth crying over when it's time to make a stew."***

***"Why," I say, "must women suffer so?" "This has always been our fate," she says. "Simply to endure," she says, "is to triumph."***

And it is only those of us who truly know what it means to be a woman (and you don't have to be one to, it is enough to be a human being with intelligence and compassion) that know that the woman is a treasure. I am not among the most impressive representatives of my gender and I certainly didn't do much with the privileges I had the luck to be born with, ones I know that those women would have made a much better use of, so I probably don't have the right to speak on all women's behalf, but what makes me do so is that despite all my personal failings and faults I still have a sense of right and wrong, I still care.

Lakshmi is a 13-year old girl who gets sold to a pleasure house by her step-father who can hardly imagine life without having enough money for gambling and buying himself new coats. She is undone. She is humiliated and abused multiple times. Physically and mentally. She is insulted, threatened, beaten, raped, starved, mutilated.

***"I hurt. I am torn and bleeding where the men have been. I pray to the gods to make the hurting go away. To make the burning and the aching and the bleeding stop. Music and laughter come from the room next door. Horns and shouting come from the street below. No one can hear me. Not even the gods."***



*"Before it starts, you hear a zipper baring its teeth, the sound of a shoe being kicked aside, the wincing of the mattress. Once it starts, you hear the sound of horns bleating in the street, the vendor hawking his treats, or the pock of a ball. But if you are lucky, you hear nothing. Nothing but the clicking of the fan overhead, the steady ticking away of seconds until it is over. Until it starts again."*

*"I clench the sheets in my hands, for fear that I will pound them to death with my fists. I grit my teeth, for fear that I will bite through their skin to their very bones. I squeeze my eyes closed tight, for fear that I will see what has actually happened to me."*

*"Somehow, I am outside myself, marveling at this pain, a thing so formidable it has color and shape. Fantastic red, then yellow, starbursts of agony explode in my head. Then there is a blinding whiteness, and then blackness. Somehow, without warning, the pain is gone. A new pain takes its place"*

She doesn't cry. I have never been strong and this story made me wonder what I would do in her place. Would I suddenly find an unsuspected, latent strength in myself, would I transform into a brave, courageous woman, would I in the end be stronger for it, would it make me see my life and myself differently or I would I get out of it broken and unrecognizable, barely resembling human, dead on the inside, defeated and hurt beyond repair? I was no older than Lakshmi when I faced what it means sometimes to be a woman, but I faced it from the comfort of my home, in the pages of a book. Unlike all those other women, even children, because this is what Lakshmi is. A child at 13. But that may not always be the case. And would this make me bigger or smaller? I was deeply touched by the way Lakshmi bore herself through the whole thing. She doesn't stay defiant and fierce, resisting until the very end. She bends and tries to do the best out of the worst situation she could have found herself in. But she also preserves her compassion and her hope. Her humanity.

*A tear is running down my cheek. It quivers a moment on the tip of my nose, then splashes onto my skirt, leaving a small, dark circle. I have been beaten here, locked away, violated a hundred times and a hundred times more. I have been starved and cheated, tricked and disgraced. How odd it is that I am undone by the simple kindness of a small boy with a yellow pencil.*

I was reluctant whether I should keep using the word *humanity* as equivalent of goodness, but as cruel and stupid humans are in some ways, they are also incredible in others, as Lakshmi herself shows. And since I have been working on being less critical toward my fellow humans and more open-minded, I choose to focus on human race's positives rather than its negatives, hoping that it can do the same for me.

They call women the weaker sex. Women are not weak. Women are gentle. And it is up to those that have power over them whether they will turn that gentleness into weakness, by taking advantage of it, by abusing and crushing it for pleasure and for profit or see the beauty in it, the strength that comes with it, the miracle that can be a woman who is loved, respected and protected. Women might be physically more vulnerable than men, but they can be as fierce lovers and protectors as any man, they feel the responsibilities bestowed on them as keenly and take them equally seriously. In "Jane Eyre" Mr. Rochester tells to Jane:

*"Never was anything at once so frail and so indomitable. I could bend her with my finger and thumb: and what good would it do if I bent, if I uptonore, if I crushed her? Consider that eye, defying me, with more*

*than courage - with a stern triumph. It is you, spirit - with will and energy, and virtue and purity - that I want: not alone your brittle frame."*

Why should we use our strength to make others weaker? When all you are left with is a bruised, abused, broken thing, merely a shell of a person, how does that make you strong? There is no beauty in broken minds. A strong person is one who can see past the veil, past the ostensible and primal. A strong person is not the one who uses his strength to conquer, but one who shares it. A strong person is not the one who uses his strengths to dominate, but who can see the strengths in others' weaknesses and bring them to life. I am ending this review by quoting my friend Jeffrey who says in his fantastic review of "Finding Nouf"

**She let me see the longing in the eyes peering from behind the veils. They are beautiful caged birds...let them sing.**

17.09.2017

Read count: 1

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### **Bobbieshiann says**

I know that this book is young adult and fiction, but it crawled up my skin as I read about a girl who had hope for more but received nothing but pain and suffering. It is a dog eat dog world and she was handed over to be eaten alive. She is from a village where men walk on water and the women fill their buckets up constantly to make sure the river men walk on stays full. She came from nothing and got treated worse when her stepfather sold her off for some bucks. She was raped while drugged and forced to be all she thought was unwomanly. At 13, a young girl suffered mentally and physically. "There is a bucket of water next to my bed. But no matter how often I wash and scrub and wash and scrub, I cannot seem to rinse the men from my body".

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### **Ms.Whitehead says**

*AM I PRETTY?*

*In the days after the hugging man leaves, I consider myself in the mirror. My plain self, not the self wearing lipstick and eyeliner and a flimsy dress.*

*Sometimes I see a girl who is growing into womanhood. Other days I see a girl growing old before her time.*

*It doesn't matter, of course. Because no one will ever want me now.*

Lakshmi is thirteen-years-old. She lives a simple, albeit impoverished, existence with with her Ama, infant sibling and gambling-addicted stepfather in a Nepalese village buried deep in the Himalayan mountains. She is a loving and obedient daughter and the best student in her class, but when a monsoon comes, devastating her family's home and the crops they rely on for sustenance, her simple life takes a catastrophic turn. In order to compensate for the family's crippling loss, Lakshmi's stepfather - who likens little girls to goats, "Good as

long as she gives you milk and butter..but not worth crying over when it's time to make stew" - decides to sell Lakshmi away to a Calcutta brothel for the paltry sum of four hundred dollars.

Early in the novel, Lakshmi's Ama gives her this warning: "it is a woman's fate to suffer (and) simply to endure is to triumph." Told through a series of spare, free-verse vignettes, Lakshmi's story is devastating, and yet somehow she endures, which - considering the myriad horrors she experiences - is most definitely a triumph.

Before writing *Sold*, Patricia McCormick traveled to Nepal and India, interviewing both the families who sell their children (some intentionally, some because they were tricked by unscrupulous traffickers) and the children who have been sold into the trade. Thanks to her first-hand interviews and observations, *Sold* - although fiction - feels intensely real. Lakshmi's story could be that of any one of the 400,000 children currently in bondage, working off their bloated debts in Indian brothels, and it was that realism - mixed with a beautifully simplistic style of storytelling - that led me to devour this novel in one sitting, despite the fact that every single page found a new way to break my heart.

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### **Regan says**

Devastating.

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### **Heather says**

What a powerful, haunting story! Written in free verse from the perspective of a 13 year old Nepalese girl, who was sold from her mountain home to earn a living as a maid in the big city. Lakshmi was saddened to leave her mother and her baby brother, but she was eager to earn a living so she could send money back to her family for necessities like clothing, food, and a new tin roof, for which they were in desperate need. But when Lakshmi leaves, she is not taken to the big city to work as a maid, she is taken over the border into India where she is sold again to a brothel owner. The fact that this type of cruelty exists today is appalling to me. There were times when I was reading and I was thinking that this story took place years ago, and all the problems have, of course, been fixed by now. But then when the author mentions the fact that the girls watched *The Bold and the Beautiful* on tv every day, and the American who came to the brothel brought a digital camera, you realize that the time frame for the story is present day. The Author's Note at the end really brought to light the very real and current problem of sex trafficking in the world today. I remember seeing a Lifetime movie about sex trafficking in another country - cannot remember the name of the movie - but I remember being greatly affected by it. This book did the same thing for me. It was beautifully written - the vivid language brought this book to life, and the character descriptions and feelings were wrought so eloquently. I highly recommend this book - I cried for and cheered for Lakshmi - I cannot imagine what she and others like her must go through. Patricia McCormick captured this problem in real language that teenagers and adults will learn from and appreciate.

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### **Mia Prasetya says**

Heartbreaking, yet uplifting. Kesan yang saya dapat dari buku ini. Sejak pertama kali melihat buku ini di toko buku, I know I'm gonna love this book.

Berkisan tentang Laksmi, gadis kecil dari Nepal berusia 13 tahun yang dijual oleh ayah tirinya sendiri ke rumah bordil. Keluguan, kenafian seorang anak kecil terpampang dengan jelas di buku ini, karena kisah ini dikisahkan dari sudut pandang si Laksmi sendiri.

Buku setebal 310 halaman saya selesaikan dengan semalam karena ternyata isinya cukup ringan dan gaya penulisan yang beda dari novel biasanya.

Laksmi, diiming-imingi bekerja sebagai pembantu rumah tangga di kota cukup dengan permen manis ia sudah sangat senang. Kaki tangan sang pemilik rumah bordil memberitahukan Laksmi, "saat melewati perbatasan, engkau harus memanggilku suami!"

Laksmi yang polos, menurut saja apa kata si paman dan mereka berhasil melewati India dengan aman. Lucunya, di pikiran Laksmi, paman itu sekarang ia panggil dengan paman suami.

Ketika tiba di rumah bordil, tiba waktunya Laksmi berpisah dengan paman suami, nah bagian-bagian ini membuat saya merinding. Tidak terbayangkan bagaimana rasanya seorang Laksmi, 13 tahun dipaksa melayani lelaki berbibir ikan.

Pria berbibir ikan itu melepas gaunku.

Kutunggu diriku untuk melawan. Namun tak ada yang terjadi.

Lantas dia di atasku, dan sesuatu yang panas dan menuntut ada di antara kedua tungkaiku.

(hal 162)

Kira-kira seperti itulah cara penulisan Patricia di novel ini dari awal sampai akhir. Kalimatnya cukup singkat, tapi sudah berhasil membuat saya terentuh, berdebar-debar, bahkan hampir menitikkan air mata.

Rumah bordil, yang di sini disebut dengan rumah kebahagiaan berhasil merebut masa gadis Laksmi, masa di mana ia seharusnya bermain dengan teman-temannya, mengerjakan PR di sekolah. Laksmi mulai terbiasa membutuhkan segenap panca indranya, agar ia buta dengan wajah para lelaki yang membayarnya 30 rupee (seharga dengan 1 kaleng coca cola), agar hidungnya tidak mencium bau amis para lelaki berperut gendut.

Laksmi memiliki beberapa teman di rumah kebahagiaan, salah satunya bocah berbaju David Beckham, seringkali ia mengamatinya.

(hal 204)

Aku tahu, dari segala kegiatannya bahwa dia hanyalah laki-laki biasa.

Namun, sesekali kutemukan diriku membenci dirinya.

Aku benci dia karena memiliki segala buku sekolah dan teman bermain.

Karena memiliki seorang ibu yang menyisir rambutnya di pagi hari.

Dan, karena kemerdekaan untuk datang dan pergi sesukanya.

Namun, kadangkala aku membenci diriku sendiri karena membencinya.

Hanya karena dia seorang anak laki-laki biasa.

Dan si laki-laki biasa ini mengajarkan Laksmi menulis dan membaca, sampai suatu ketika ia memberikan Laksmi sebuah pensil.

(hal 244)

Sebulir air mata bergulir di pipiku.

Aku telah dipukuli di sini,

dikurung,

dianiaya ratusan kali,

dan ratusan kali lagi.

Aku telah dibiarkan kelaparan,

dan ditipu,

dijebak,

dan dipermalukan.

Betapa anehnya, aku telah luluh sepenuhnya oleh kebaikan hati seorang bocah lelaki dengan sebatang pensil kuning.

Baca buku ini kebetulan juga dengan maraknya perkosaan anak kecil yang terjadi di Bali. Betapa saya mengutuk pria ini, karena ia tidak sekedar merobek selaput dara si anak, tapi sekaligus menghempaskan masa depan anak kecil tak berdosa dalam waktu 5 menit saja!!

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## **Anna says**

I'm so torn on this one. Read the entire thing in one sitting - it was gripping and staggeringly beautiful in its descriptions of everyday life - both its sublime and simple beauties and its deepest horrors. I love that it takes on sex slavery in an unflinching way - there's no ducking out on or thinking "oh it isn't that bad" as you read Lakshmi's narrative. But, gosh, the ending kills me. White American to the rescue!

To be transparent - this is a text I'm thinking of taking on in my World Literature class this upcoming school year - so I started googling and researching this morning to try to work through the white savior mentality there at the end and figure out what the heck that was and where it came from. Found some helpful explanation from Patrica McCormick on her website - first of all, that the man at the end was based on someone she knew and this was a "thank you" to him and, secondly, that she wanted to help American audiences to feel empowered to do something. Fair.

I think I'll probably take it on - in part to work through the "white savior" complex at the end - which will be a great opportunity to take on conversations of race, difference, and oppression that matter a lot given context in my classroom (i.e. I'm a white teacher going into my 9th year working with almost exclusively black students). I think that asking questions around author's purpose, sharing McCormick's rationale, and then leaving the question of whether or not this decision sits well with us or if it undermines the idea that oppressed groups can and should be empowered to take on their own problems will probably be my approach. Open to thoughts from friends or others.

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### **Kiwi says**

I don't enjoy writing long reviews. I did really enjoy this book. As a warning, do not have ANY intentions of putting this book down. I was reading it the night after a long flight from the US to the UK, and I thought, "I'll read some before I go to bed." I got to the halfway mark and thought, "Well, what's the harm in reading some more?"

And then it was over. Meaning I had spent far longer than I had intended to reading, and the book had been finished in two sittings--one on the plane and one in bed.

The poetic format manages to describe with beauty events that are horrible and unthinkable to the women I know. The protagonist is incredibly easy to admire.

The ending left me yearning for more, which is just fine by me. The fact that I was left wanting inspires me to get involved more and have a more immediate involvement with the stories out there like this.

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### **Elyse says**

Young Adult book .... one sitting read for adults.

I finished this a couple of days ago. We are taken into a dark underworld — it's clear many victims were made to endure horrific acts.

This isn't an unfamiliar story...yet that doesn't negate its power. Lakshmi is a young Nepalese girl. Lakshmi tells the story....( with a sweet softness that breaks our hearts). Lakshmi gives brief short descriptions: well-told in vignettes.

.....Her wish to buy her mother a tin roof like other neighbors have on their huts....to make her mother happy....to be with her mother.

.....Her Family is poor

.....Her stepfather gambles away their money -and drinks.

.....Lakshmi gets her monthly period/ mother tries to hide her, warn her, teaches her to stay clear of all men — which only lasts for so long.

.....The stepfather sells Lakshmi to a brothel ....( of course she was tricked and lied to)

“A son will always be a son, they say. But a girl is like a goat. Good as long as she gives milk and butter. Not worth crying over when it's time to make stew”.

\*By focusing on one single girl made this story very personal.... but it's ALL PERSONAL.....  
Sex trafficking is horrendous: bigger than our hearts, soul, mind, and spirit can contain. FRICKIN  
AWFUL.... so sad... and makes us angry-ANGRY!!!

The author - must be acknowledged.... she spent a great deal of time in India researching true stories. Names  
have been changed.... but this small book was taken from true facts - from real people's lives.

If I were going to introduce this book to a young - pre-teen- I would not just hand over the book ....I'd read  
it 'with' them ....allowing time for discussion.

Thank you Nat... for the book recommendation.

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### **Emily May says**

**Plot: 4.5 stars**

**Characters: 4 stars**

**Writing: 4 stars**

**Ending: 3.5 stars**

**Overall: 4 stars**

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### **Katie B says**

Lakshmi is a thirteen year old girl who lives with her family in Nepal. She wants to help her family out  
financially by working as a maid in the city but she is sold into a life of prostitution by her stepfather. This is  
a fictional story but is based on interviews the author conducted with aid workers and survivors themselves.

This is a tough book to read but I highly recommend giving it a chance if you think you can handle the  
subject matter. It is written in a simple, almost poetic way and yet so much is conveyed. It's like not a single  
word was wasted. It's the type of book that will stay with me a long time as it is so haunting. Lakshmi might  
be a fictional character but she is the voice of countless victims and this is a book well worth reading.

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### **Whitney says**

While this is a quick read, it does pack quite a bit of punch. This book opens your eyes to what's going on in  
the world.

I think everyone needs to take some time to read this one.

