DISCUSSION QUESTIONS re SOLD by Patricia McCormick

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Background information: SOLD is the fictional story of a thirteen year old Nepal girl who has been sold into prostitution. The story takes the reader on her journey of disillusionment, suffering, torment, life awareness, and rescue.

**Questions:**

1. The author’s purpose for writing this novel was to bring an awareness of the ongoing slave trade of young girls in Nepal. As you read the text, you are exposed to various perspectives regarding their culture through the characters of: Ama, Lakshmi, the Stepfather, and Monica. Discuss how each character views their role in society, their sense of hope (or hopelessness), and how this represents India’s culture in the novel.
2. One of the most profound quotes in the novel states, “Simply to endure is to triumph” (p. 16). How does this statement play out in the life of Lakshmi? What other situations or examples can you think of in present day where this statement also applies?
3. This novel deals a lot with the idea of the “have” and the “have not’s”. Think of other novels with rich characters that represent the have and have not’s and discuss how we can use this in the classroom to enrich our lesson plans? (e.g., teaching character traits, compare/contrast, etc.)
4. Several themes are played out in this novel including corrupt government agencies (police), corrupt political system (women have no value), and overall oppression of a people. How can we use this text and tie it into current political events (cross curriculum connection) in our classrooms?
5. HOPE is a central theme in this text. In several scenes, Lakshmi clings on to a thread of hope with the belief that her situation will change. At one point she almost gives up hope when she says, “This affliction-hope-is so cruel and stubborn, I believe it will kill me.” (p. 256). What are some ways that we can transfer this idea of hope, determination, and perseverance to our reluctant students? How can we transfer this into a theme based Common Core unit?
6. US News Today, and The New York Times are prominent publications that deal with an array of topics including political issues? How can we use those texts, in conjunction with SOLD to make it more relevant to our students?
7. Many of the characters in SOLD are operating in survival mode – from Ama (Lakshmi’s mother), to Pushpa (sick mother of two), to Anita (disfigured prostitute), and even Mumtaz (the madam). Through them, McCormick helps the reader tap into several emotions. How can we use this to teach our students the layers of a character (flat, dynamic, etc.).
8. The topic of this novel lends itself to being a gateway for discussions of other cultures that have sex slavery and other child labor issues (e.g., sweat shops). In this sense, it is truly a multi-cultural work of fiction. How can we bring these topics into our classrooms to educate our students of the monstrosity of child slavery and child labor in other cultures (Africa, China, etc.)? What might this look like in a lesson plan?