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Discussion Questions for *Sold*:

ENGL 7711

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1. How would you introduce this book to your class? What type of warm-up on the first day?

Would you have all students read *Sold*? Girls only?

2. In an interview, McCormick stated that young adults want to know what’s happening to their peers on the other side of the world. Do you find this to be true with your students?

3. How is the formatting helpful? Does writing in vignettes add to the story? Do you think students could be given a writing project to journal using daily vignettes to tell a story? (It would be interesting to see what they would focus on. The mundane? The humorous? I think it could be very telling.)

4. Why did McCormick interject humor into the book? Does this take away from the seriousness/impact of the book?

5. On p. 8—“Ama says…I am to honor and praise him, respect and thank him for taking us in after my father died.” On p. 15---“Never look a man in the eye. Once you are married, she says, you must eat your meal only after your husband has had his fill.” How does this attitude differ from what is expected in our society? Does it differ? Is it wrong because our society deems it to be wrong?

6. Lakshmi lives by her mother’s words – “Simply to endure is to triumph” (16). Is it possible for our students to understand this? Even when they read in the author’s note that each year about 12,000 Nepali girls are sold by their families, intentionally or unwittingly, into a life of sexual slavery in the brothels of India, can students really grasp this?

7. As I read, I had to keep reminding myself that *Sold* is set in modern times. I kept wanting to place the characters in the past. Did any of you guys? I would be jolted back when McCormick would incorporate *The Bold and the Beautiful* and David Beckham.

8. Shaving the girls’ heads who ran away saying they were a disgrace----Is it a disgrace to want a different life? No one speaks for these girls----Is this similar to Nazi Germany? No one sees any of this? Turn a blind eye? Could this happen in our country?

9. Lakshmi describes the poverty in the streets. What does out culture do for those in need? How are they treated? Don’t we just drive by in our nice cars on the way home from a dinner out? Do we become callused to the needs of others? Do we think it could never happen to us? What is our attitude about people in need? Personally. Culturally.

10. Lakshmi says, “Trying to remember is like trying to catch a handful of fog. Trying to forget, like trying to hold back the monsoon” (131). I love the wording of this. One of those things that I kind of just chewed on. How could I use this in class? Journal entry? Warm-up?

11. In the chapter, An Accidental Kindness, she states “But I could feel myself, my true self, give in to the simple pleasure of being held.” Lakshmi says she felt indebted to him---Do we see this in our society? Do we have people in our society in such need for a kind touch that they will accept it from anyone?

12. When given the pencil, Lakshmi speaks about the smells of possibility—“How odd it is that I am undone by the simple kindness of a small boy with a yellow pencil”(182). Does our culture really value education? How could we use the education/the power that we have to make a difference? How do Americans instill the value of education into our young people?

13. Lakshmi states that she would do *whatever* it would take to get out of the brothel. What limits does our culture set? What parameters? How are values identified? Are there universal sins? Are norms based upon what society deems right or wrong? How hard is it in America to live a life that many would not approve of?

14. How do you feel about McCormick having a white man free Lakshmi?

15. As Eli Weisel said, “Let us remember: what hurts the victim most is not the cruelty of the oppressor, but the silence of the bystander.” Worldwide, the US State Department estimates that nearly half a million children are trafficked into the sex trade annually. So now what?...

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Lakshmi was sold by her stepfather to the intermediary for 800 Nepalese Rupees - less than $11.

p. 124 “I decide to think that it is all a nightmare. Because if what is happening is real, it is”

p. 131 “Trying to remember is like trying to catch a handful of fog. Trying to forget, like trying to hold back the monsoon.”

p. 151---David Beckham boy----hates him for having the freedom to come and go as he pleases. Takes his books to look at---not his money---pretends to be in school with Gita

p. 167---“She will maim it (baby)---and sell it to a beggar woman…Softhearted people will give an extra rupee or two if you have a sick baby.” “And so I consider a world so ugly that a child would be maimed for life to fetch an extra rupee or two.”

p. 181---“Monica says that they will thank us and honor us when we go home.”

makes the rag ball for the tea boy

p. 192---“I speak to her in the words Harish taught me. ‘My name is Lakshmi,’ I tell her. ‘I am from Nepal. I am thirteen years old.’”

p. 227---“I will do whatever it takes to get out of here.”

p. 238 revelation that she will never leave

p. 242---gave street boy the card

p. 250---what to believe?---I am too afraid to believe him

p. 256---“I believe hope will kill me”