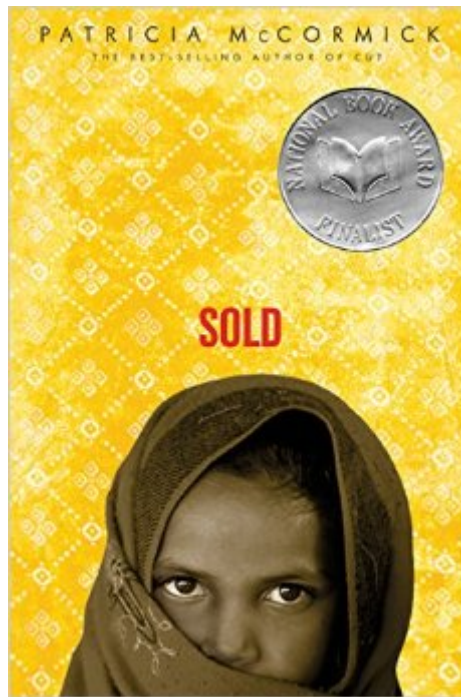


The book was found

SOLD



Synopsis

Lakshmi is a thirteen-year-old girl who lives with her family in a small hut on a mountain in Nepal. Though she is desperately poor, her life is full of simple pleasures, like playing hopscotch with her best friend from school, 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 in the city. Glad to be able to help, Lakshmi journeys 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.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (453 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Written by best-selling author Patricia McCormick, this account of a young girl in India sold into the sex trade is extraordinary. After reading this book, I was stunned by what is occurring to thousands of unsuspecting 13-year old girls in this part of the world. This book will appeal to adolescents and

adults alike in educating about the horrors of a rarely publicized epidemic. You wonder how a value can be placed on innocent children who are being sold for a handful of rupees to help their poor families back home. The book is written in free verse which makes it a unique and very personal way of seeing the world from the main character, Lakshmi's eyes. I can certainly understand why this book is a National Book Award Finalist and hopefully a winner. However, this book is already a winner in my eyes. UPDATE 2014: This book was made into a movie and is currently being screened in several film festivals throughout the world. Hopefully, it will soon be available for worldwide distribution.

Writing about how Nepalese girls are sold into slavery and taken to India to be forced into a life of prostitution is no easy matter -- especially in a YA book. Given the topic, Patricia McCormick manages not only to pull it off, but to pull it off with sensitivity. McCormick is a writer's writer, and the calibre of wordsmithing is a cut above your average YA fare. She first conjures the natural beauty of mountainous Nepal, even though her protagonist, a thirteen-year-old girl named Lakshmi, is dirt poor. Then, for contrast, she describes the claustrophobic penury and filth of Lakshmi's city captivity. In Nepal, our young protagonist lives with her Ama and her evil stepfather (a twist on the Cinderella motif). It is he who ultimately gambles what little they have away and heartlessly sells his stepdaughter into slavery (she assumes she is going off to be a maid and bravely vows to send what she earns home so her Ama can install a tin roof on their hut). After a grueling trip into India, Lakshmi slowly discovers what's up and refuses to partake, but is drugged and forced to acquiesce. There are two scenes where it is clear what is happening, yet McCormick is anything but brutal and ugly while describing these brutal and ugly acts against an innocent child. Nevertheless, a mature and sensitive reader is called for, and the book is recommended more for high school aged readers and adults. Written in free verse, an increasingly popular style of writing in the YA trade, *SOLD* will move you and anger you -- exactly McCormick's intent. It's beautifully written and worth all of the accolades it has received (it is a National Book Award finalist). Highly recommended.

I think this book suffers from an identity crisis that is not AT ALL the fault of the author. I have to say that while the topic of this book is difficult, it is handled in a non-graphic and compelling way. It's beautifully written and is about a subject (girls sold by their poor families in Nepal and taken to India brothels) that needs more public attention. The issue with this book is that being described as a novel and being listed at 250+ pages is misleading. This is more like a novella or even a short story. It is written in an almost lyrical/poetic style that, while strong, makes the best use of white space.

The longest 'chapter' in this book is a page and half long. Most are three paragraphs or less (a few are only a sentence). The rest of the page is left blank. This style of writing is powerful, but I think it should be reflected in the description or in the price. After all, if you were to pick this up but not look inside, you would think it was a normal sized, YA novel, which it clearly is not. It took me just over an hour to read from start to finish. I hate to give this book a bad review because it IS a well-written book but I felt people thinking of buying this should know what they're getting. It is a wonderful story written in a captivating way, but it is also a novella at best and VERY short. I was glad I got this from the library as I would have felt cheated if I had bought it.

This book is a deep and horrifying look at what could happen to any girl in southeast Asia at any time, and that fact alone is why it succeeds. It is an uncensored and very effective view of an unthinkable world, written in first-person and present tense which makes it all the more intense and realistic. I am 12 years old and I have been aware for quite some time of the basic idea of prostitution, but this book deals with the issue on a much more personal level, and as a result it raises the reader's awareness of just how terrible such a thing is. Even the scenes before the introduction to Happiness House make you feel earnestly sorry for Lakshmi as her poor family struggles with the drought and then the monsoon. Even though Lakshmi wants nothing more than to leave, she finds friends in some of the other girls of the harem and a few boys from the city. These characters are all just as interesting as the heroine herself, ranging from the cruel manager Mumtaz to the teenage son of one of the older workers at Happiness House. The more grim scenes throughout the book didn't leave a very pleasant feeling in my gut, but they achieve their goal of honoring the bravery of the poor children who really live through this terrifying situation. While we are left at somewhat of a cliffhanger ending, it is a satisfying conclusion while along the road to it Lakshmi triumphs in all of the ways that matter - from learning how to speak English to standing up to the men who come to violate her every day. Highly recommended for children and adults alike.

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